

Subject: Status of Town Projects
October 25, 2023

The decision on the addition of the Shelby sidewalk was finally made at the town board meeting last Thursday. The proposed sidewalk on NC 106 will not be located on the side of the road where the Shelby Place Homeowners Association land is situated. The board decided to locate the sidewalk on the opposite, north side.

Unlike the original design, the new sidewalk route will not require private property permissions; it will be located on the existing NCDOT right-of-way. The proposed sidewalk will meet all ADA and environmental requirements. It will tie into the existing sidewalk by the post office and go to Cobb Road. Our staff will continue to work with the folks from the Southwestern Regional Planning Commission to secure grant funds for the sidewalk.

This sidewalk project illustrates the challenges facing the town in building sidewalks on our major corridor roads. Admittedly, we had a jump start and change of plans that cost the town some money and staff time. But these kinds of situations go hand in hand in creating some public facilities. I want to thank the Shelby Place Homeowners Association for their willingness to consider the town's easement request. The Shelby HOA Board also put time and energy into deciding that the easement was just not feasible from their perspective.

Like several other projects in process that are funded by external grants, this sidewalk project will take time to get underway. In the coming months, town staff will address the grant program's administrative requirements.

The Poplar Street waterline installation is close to completion. The lion's share of the funds for this project, as well as the Gibson Street water and sewer line project, were secured from the Covid ARP federal funds. It took over a year to complete all the reports and approval signatures. A similar process impacted the Gibson Street project. That project, too, is now underway.

A state/federal grant also funded the Dog Mountain water project. Our town engineer and a consulting firm have been working all this year on design specifications and reports that state officials must approve. That process should come to an end at the beginning of 2024, and construction will ensue at some point during the year.

The town received state funding for replacing the pre-clarifier tank at the water department and another grant to dredge Mirror Lake. Funds were allocated in this year's budget to do the design work for the pre-clarifier tank. That design phase should be completed by the end of the year. That first step will help move the project forward.

As for Mirror Lake, people are already asking me why there isn't the dredging equipment at the lake. I respond, not so fast; we haven't even gotten official notification from the state for both the pre-clarifier and Mirror Lake Project. The state budget was approved only a few weeks ago. Now, state administrators will begin the process of formally notifying towns and counties about the grants they have been awarded. That notification process might take several months. Our staff will have to go through the initial planning and administrative process before any work can get underway on these major projects.