Message

From: Van Der Wiele, Cynthia [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=4C52C782530C4CC789036FCE35BE0B9D-VAN DER WIE]
Sent: 4/16/2019 1:29:49 PM
To: Powell, Duncan [Powell.Duncan@epa.gov]
CC: Calli, Rosemary [Calli.Rosemary@epa.gov]; Mcgill, Thomas [Mcgill.Thomas@epa.gov]; Harper, Cecelia [Harper.Cecelia@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: Ridge Road Request for latest EPA comment

Importance: High

Duncan: I believe this is a project you took on back in October (?)

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United States Environmental Protection Agency

"The environment and the economy are really both two sides of the same coin.
If we cannot sustain the environment, we cannot sustain ourselves."

Wangari Maathai

From: Dan Rametta <ramettadan@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2019 9:11 AM
To: Van Der Wiele, Cynthia <VanDerWiele.Cynthia@epa.gov>
Subject: Request for latest EPA comment

Good morning, Ms. VanDerWiele,

In order to corroborate the below news report that quotes Pasco's RRE project manager Sam Beneck (erroneously refers to him below as 'Bennett') stating: **"The Fish and Wildlife Service and the Environmental Protection Agency say the past objections have been withdrawn"** can you send me the EPA's comment to the last ACOE Public Notice to SAJ-2011-00551 (SP-TSH).

Thank you.

Dan Rametta

http://www.suncoastnews.com/news/ridge-road-extension-hits-fast-lane/article_1816c904-5ae1-11e9-a895-8758c47660c9.html

The long-anticipated extension of Ridge Road could be completed by May 2020.

DADE CITY –

STEPHANIE PORTER-KAHN

That information is according to Project Manager Sam Bennett, who addressed the Pasco County Commission during its April 8 meeting.

The county has spent more than two decades trying to win approval to extend Ridge Road to the east, from its current eastern end, at Ridge Road-DeCubellis Road, to the Suncoast Parkway. Environmental activists have been opposing the project because most of the route of the Ridge Road extension runs through the Serenova Tract, part of the Starkey Wilderness Preserve, which is under the control of the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

According to Bennett's report, the biological assessment for the impact of the Ridge Road extension has been completed and there was a "positive response" to the public notices on the project.

Bennett added all the points of information that had been requested last year has been addressed.

"We have some really good news based on that public notice," Bennett said. "This is good news I hope you are proud of. **The Fish and Wildlife Service and the Environmental Protection Agency say the past objections have been withdrawn**. A majority of the comments that were received overall were in support of the project."

He said there had been a meeting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, which operates the Suncoast Parkway and other toll roads in the state, staff on March 28.

The Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over the permit for the Ridge Road extension under the federal Clean Water Act.

Bennett said what he calls "the largest single task" of the project – the Fish and Wildlife Service consultation – should be completed by July 15.

The timeline given by Bennett also includes completion of the environmental assessment and a statement of findings on Sept. 9.

"We are really looking forward to a Sept. 23 permit decision," Bennett said. "That is based on the best available information, typical time frames, as well as the required time frame on the Fish and Wildlife Services consultation."

Bennett said he was going to be focusing on getting the construction started "as quickly as possible" and staging a "construction celebration" sometime in October, once the project begins.

"We will be underway in October if we hit those other milestones," he said.

Bennett said the bidding for the construction will be done with incentives and disincentives.

"The way that works is you add the base costs to the number of days multiplied by $15,000," he said. "We also have incentives and disincentives for completion of specific milestones."

Bennett said the contractor would earn incentives for each day the project is ahead of schedule, but would lose $15,000 for every day the project lags behind under the current proposed bidding specifications.

He said the project's first incentive toward completion will include four lanes from between Moon Lake Road and Town Center Boulevard and will add a second entrance-exit to the River Ridge school complex.

"That is a major challenge in the afternoons," Bennett said. "That would be completed by Aug. 10, 2020, which would be the start of the school year."

A second incentive, which was proposed by County Administrator Dan Biles, would target a two-lane opening of Phase I, allowing two-way traffic between Moon Lake Road and Suncoast Parkway prior to the 2021 Atlantic hurricane season, on June 1 of that year.

County officials have been saying the Ridge Road extension is needed to give a third evacuation route to the east, to go with State Road 54 and State Road 52.

The third milestone would be completion of the project on or by May 31, 2022.

Biles said a resolution for County Commission approval should be ready later this month