

Veterans Memorial Highway Association
Minutes
North Zone Meeting
Held Friday, February 10th, 2012
Bold Center
8702 – 91st Avenue
Lac La Biche, Alberta

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by Chairman Barry Morishita

In Attendance: The list of attendees is attached and forms part of these minutes.

Chairman's

Report: Chairman Morishita reported on the goals and objectives of the Association which follows the outline of the Strategic Plan developed in 2011. The governance plan is almost complete. The communication program by holding this meeting is to get more involvement by the members. The holding of these zone meetings is an important part of the plan. One of the goals of holding the zone meetings is to gather information on issues and concerns with Highway 36. The Association has become a member of the Ports to Plains Alliance so we are informed on the developing north/south trade issues between Canada and the United States. A branding idea with cooperation and support of the Royal Canadian Legion is being considered whereby stories of local veterans would be depicted at road turnouts and rest stops along Highway 36. The Association is also looking for opportunities to support local initiatives by municipalities along Highway 36.

Issues and

Concerns: Mr. Uganecz from Lac La Biche County stated that he feels that Secondary Highway 881 should be recognized as a Primary Highway and renumbered to Highway 36 from Lac La Biche to Fort McMurray. The highway is presently maintained to secondary highway standards although this highway is use like a primary highway. It would reduce confusion for truck traffic in that when they get on Highway 36, they stay on Highway 36 all the way up to Fort McMurray. Lac La Biche County built that road which goes east and around Lac La Biche from Highway 36 to connect to Highway 881.

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They also built a staging area of approximately 8 to 10 acres which gives truckers a place to rest prior to moving their loads to Fort McMurray. The group discussed whether the Association could get support from the AUMA and AAMD & C to pass a resolution at their conventions to request the Province to change Highway 881 from a Secondary Highway to a Primary Highway and renumber it to 36. Mr. Uganecz also stated that the four bridges between Highway 28 north to Lac La Biche on Highway 36 need upgrading for heavier traffic. If possible we should try and get industry support for these improvements.

Frank Sloan from St. Paul County stated that the intersection of Highway 36 and Highway 28 needs attention for safety reasons. The intersection due to the way it is built has a hill and curve near the intersection. When coming from the east on Highway 28 the traffic comes upon someone turning onto Highway 28 from Highway 36 quite quickly. This intersection sees its share of accidents. Maybe lowering the speed limit would help but it should be studied at the very least to see what type of correction could be made to make the intersection safer.

Willie Babiuk from Two Hills asked if those who travelled from the south had any issues with the intersection of Highway 45 and Highway 36. The intersection is built very wide to accommodate long heavy loads but it can be confusing to the general traveller. He wonders if there is some way to mark the intersection better to help travellers.

Eugene Uganecz stated that at the intersection of Highway 881 and Highway 36 just south of Lac La Biche there should be either a 4-way stop or lights. If you are waiting to get onto Highway 36 turning south or wanting to cross Highway 36 you may have to wait quite a long time before traffic going north and south breaks to give you an opportunity to make the turn or cross. People do get impatient which can lead to a safety issue.

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Other issues discussed is the small amount of distance between railway lines and Highway intersections at Highways 13, 14 and 16. The intersection is so close to the railway tracks that long loads are sitting on the tracks waiting to get across or turn. This is a major safety concern which has to be recognized and action taken. Maybe moving switching areas could be considered by the railway. Escort Car Training needs to be upgraded. Presently there is no recognized industry training for pilot car operation. Alberta Transportation produces a handbook for a person to read and that is all there is. Another problem is it appears more oversized loads are travelling in the dark which creates safety issues to other traffic. There is a need for turnout lanes and rest stops along Highway 36. Every one to two hours there needs to be a rest area. Maybe the Province would consider some type of 3P proposal which would see more rest areas built. Rest areas and turnouts provide a necessary service in that other traffic can pass when the high loads are on the road.

Chairman Morishita told the group that all the items discussed will be added to list generated from other zone meetings. When the list is compiled it will be presented to the Minister for discussion and hopefully action.

Adjournment: Chairman Morishita thanked everyone for their attendance and comments. The input is very important to this Association.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Secretary - Treasurer