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South Union proceeds with study

By Josh Krysak, Herald-Standard
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During a brief meeting Wednesday, the South Union Township supervisors authorized the township engineer to proceed with the preparation of an environmental document for the Matthew Drive improvement project.

The project, which will include upgrading the road from two to four lanes with additional turning lanes, is part of an upgrade undertaken by the township, the state Department of Transportation, the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority and WideWaters Development Group, the developer for the Home Depot project.

According to Supervisor Robert Schiffbauer, the environmental document is just the next step in the process of the upgrades and will cost the township about \$11,000. He said PennDOT may reimburse the township the money.

Schiffbauer said the project must continue to move forward so the township can use \$1.6 million in highway improvements from WideWaters, which hopes to complete the Home Depot by mid-January. Schiffbauer said the funds will not be available to the township if the project does not begin before the Home Depot is completed.

"We are not sure of the exact figure that will be needed to complete Matthew Drive, but it will be several million," Schiffbauer said. "Hopefully, it will be done in the next few years."

McMillen Engineering will prepare the environmental document over the next three months, and PennDOT has agreed to expedite the document processing for the project

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due to the time constraints.

Schiffbauer said the township will seek authorization to proceed from the Federal Highway Commission and noted that the township is discussing the project with Kmart and Lowe's, both located along Matthew Drive, as well. He said that when completed, the new road will allow traffic to move more freely along an already congested stretch of highway.

The supervisors also discussed creating a fireworks ordinance for the township after receiving complaints from area residents about fireworks over the Fourth of July weekend.

Schiffbauer said that in the past, the township has issued permits for fireworks and collected a \$500 bond from the party in case of damage. He said the only current requirement for a permit to display fireworks is that the supervisors feel the party setting off the display is competent.

Township solicitor Jack Purcell said he will review the situation and will have something more substantial for next month's meeting.

"The issue of location is important. Not every place is appropriate to set off fireworks," Purcell said.

"Our main concern is to set up a procedure for safety," Schiffbauer added.

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