

HOUSE No. 155

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled.

Under the provisions of chapter 135 of the Resolves of the year 1912, entitled "Resolve to provide for an investigation as to the proper apportionment of the cost of widening Humphrey Street in the town of Swampscott", and directing the Massachusetts Highway Commission to report to the general court what portion, if any, of the cost of widening Humphrey street in the town of Swampscott from Monument square to the second beach, so called, should be contributed by the Commonwealth, what portion by the county of Essex, and what portion by the town of Swampscott, said Massachusetts Highway Commission hereby submits its report.

The commission and its engineers have had a number of conferences with the officials of the town of Swampscott and other interested parties, on the ground and also in the office of the commission.

There was also a meeting recently held, which was attended by the county commissioners of Essex County, the selectmen of Swampscott and other interested citizens, at which the question of the improvement was discussed and several suggestions made, but no definite conclusion reached, though there was an agreement that the street, if widened, should be at least 70 feet in width, with a double car track in the centre, and that it should have two sidewalks, each 9 or 10 feet in width.

Swampscott is a town of about 6,000 inhabitants, with a valuation of over \$11,000,000, and with only a little over 20 miles of road. Humphrey street is its main village street, along which all the principal stores are located.

The commission has always felt that it was not good policy for the Commonwealth to spend on any main village street of this character the money available for state highways. It has felt that the cities and towns could at least afford to build and care for such streets, even on main through lines.

Humphrey street is somewhat different, perhaps, from most village streets, in that it begins at the end of the Metropolitan park in Lynn, with its broad driveway, at the junction of a main road leading to the city of Lynn. The portion of Humphrey street referred to in the resolve is narrow, and has one car track in the centre, leaving room for but one vehicle on each side of the car track in many places. Teams are often standing in front of the stores, thus causing a still further congestion. On pleasant days it undoubtedly has a great amount of automobile travel and many teams. No doubt a large majority of the automobiles come from other cities and towns, and, following the parkway, continue along the shore to Marblehead.

The street is not wide enough for the traffic, and should, in the opinion of the commission, be widened. Provision should be made for a double-track street railway location, as it will undoubtedly be required in the near future, if such need does not already exist.

It would seem to the commission that the contemplated improvement could well be made on the same terms on which the other Metropolitan boulevards leading in and out of the Metropolitan district were constructed.

As the resolve requires this commission to make a report, even though, for the reasons above stated, it would not consider it good policy for the Commonwealth to spend any State highway money on such a main village street, it would make the following suggestion, viz.:—

It would seem fair to the commission that the town and the county should furnish the right of way, bear the expense

of subgrading and the construction of the necessary drainage and sidewalks; that the Bay State street railway company should be required to construct a double-track railway and place some suitable pavement within the space occupied by the tracks and eighteen inches outside; and that the Commonwealth should build and pay for the balance of the roadway on both sides of the tracks to the curb, using some form of bituminous macadam or other suitable pavement.

The commission would recommend that, if any widening and improvement are to be made, the width of the street should be increased to seventy feet; that sidewalks 9 or 10 feet wide, with a suitable curbing, should be built on each side; and that a double-track street railway should be constructed in the centre of the way.

The commission's engineers have made a rough estimate of the probable cost of this improvement, from which it appears that it would cost from \$200,000 to \$220,000 to construct the 3,000 feet of road in question in the manner herein suggested.

The commission does not feel that it is as well qualified as the local authorities to estimate the probable cost of land damages.

The commission's suggestion, therefore, is that if the road is not constructed as a Metropolitan boulevard, and the legislature is of the opinion that the Commonwealth should contribute toward the cost of the work, a fair division would be as follows:—

The county of Essex should make the layout and pay the land and grade damages.

The town of Swampscott should do the necessary grading to the finished sub-grade line, build the sidewalks, curbs and retaining walls, construct all necessary drainage, including any changes which may be necessary in the present underground structures and connections.

The Commonwealth should build the roadway above the finished sub-grade, and pay for the same, from a line 18 inches outside the car track to the sidewalk curb on each side.

The street railway company should be given a double-track

location and required to lay suitable girder rails, and to place between its rails and tracks and 18 inches outside thereof, for a total width of 18 feet, some suitable pavement on a proper foundation.

Respectfully submitted,

WM. D. SOHIER,
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JAMES W. SYNAN,

Massachusetts Highway Commission.

Boston, January 1, 1913.