

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: February 13, 2020, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Gisselman, Rasmussen, Thao (Lawrence and McElhaney – Excused)

Also Present: Mayor Mielke, Lindman, Wesolowski, Buckner, Alfonso, Niksich, Lenz, Sippel

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and received by the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Noting the presence of a quorum, at approximately 5:30 p.m. Chairman Gisselman called the meeting to order.

Public Comment for matters not appearing on the agenda

No one came forward for public comment.

Approve minutes of the January 9, 2020 meeting

Thao moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Rasmussen seconded and the motion carried unanimously 3-0.

Discussion and possible action on establishing a 15 minute parking space in the 600 block of 3rd Street

Gisselman read a letter received from Emily Voss and Mark and Paula Voss. The staff reports does not object to this request.

Rasmussen noted that we just went through a parking study and sweeping changes to make parking consistent. One of the main complaints from downtown business owners was that parking was inconsistent with 15 minutes in one area, 30 minutes in another, and two hours elsewhere. To create consistency, we changed to 2 hours. She believes people are misunderstanding parking. When one parks in a stall on 3rd Street they do not have to go to a kiosk and pay. They can park up to 2 hours for free. This does not mean someone trying to unload can't be in those spots. We had the inconsistent parking rules because every time someone came in with a request, Parking and Traffic would approve and CISM was on that track as well. We may need to reestablish a public education effort. Establishing a stall as a loading zone for suppliers would make sense but to change for customers does not make sense.

Thao likes standardization and also empathizes with businesses who are looking for convenience and the ability to provide a parking space for those who are quickly coming and going. The letter states support of "15 minute parking stall(s)". She questioned if they were looking for more than one space.

Blake Opal-Wahoske, Executive Director of the Wausau River District, 401 North 2nd Street, explained the request is for one spot. This came to light after standardizing 2 hour on-street parking. The issue businesses are running into is people staying for 1 to 2 hours and not having a spot with a high turnover. This is one of the only blocks on 3rd Street that does not currently have a 15 minute stall. Gisselman does not believe there is a 15 spot in the 400 block either. Wesolowski noted there are 2 in the 300 block, one on each end.

Thao asked if Opal-Wahoske has talked with other businesses in the 600 block. Opal-Wahoske has and stated Kevin Korpela of Downtown Grocery is in favor of having one spot. The River District is working on videos to help educate the community on parking. Rasmussen said the problem is that spaces do not cycle out fast enough and then we have store complaints. She thought all of the angle stalls went to 2 hour parking, other than handicap. Since we left some 15 minute stalls in place there is now a precedence. If the existing spaces are located at the ends of the block, it makes sense to stay consistent rather than adding a spot in the middle of the block. She feels the south end makes more sense as it is closer to Downtown Grocery and Voss.

Rasmussen moved to establish one 15 minute parking stall at the south end of the 600 block. Thao seconded.

Buckner feels it makes sense to have the space on one end of the block if businesses will be using it for loading and unloading. Then any off loading and loading would have some type of protection on one side of the car rather than having parking stalls on each side. He noted that the businesses using the 15 minute spot have to be aware of the no reparking rule.

Paula Voss stated her daughter owns Voss Studios and she owns Voss Holdings, the apartments above. Their situation is unique and parking has been a bit of a problem and will get worse as summer approaches. She feels if the 15 minute parking stall is by Back When, it does not help them. When they take their equipment offsite, they load up one to two cars taking ten trips. To haul down the block would be difficult. They have been parking between cars and loading for the last 7 years.

Rasmussen said if a spot is designated, they may come to use it and find other customers in it so it may not help anyway. Voss said at least there would be a 15 minute spot and they can drive around until it's open. It would help but they also worry about reparking. Rasmussen stated the answer to needing a spot multiple times a day is the parking lot to the south of Downtown Grocery or the lot next to Sweets on 3rd. There is no way to accommodate street parking with these unique needs. If we start tailoring parking to the needs of one property owner we will have the same request from others. Voss would hope everyone remains open enough to what the needs of the community are. Voss has been hearing from a lot of people who are no longer coming to downtown.

Thao asked Voss what her options or solutions would be. Voss currently parks and turns her flashers on hoping she will not get a ticket. They rent spots from the law firm, which is where they park 95% of the time, they just load their vehicles on the street. In a perfect world, she would have a parking pass to use when loading. Rasmussen noted that the parking utility only cycles through about once every two hours.

Thao said this system is relatively new and at this point we do not have enough analysis. This will be the first full year in place. She feels the best compromise is to have one stall. Buckner made a good point with the safety concern of having the space at the end of the block versus having cars on each side. After we finish the first full year, Thao thinks we will hear more from other businesses on the true impact. She understands this will not meet all of Voss's expectations, but asked to let this be a potential compromise and re-evaluate it a year from now with. Voss said this will be good for others, especially Downtown Grocery. She will most likely continue to roll the dice as it will not be efficient to go to the end of the block for loading.

Alfonso asked if the alley behind the buildings is a public alley. Voss said the area is too tight and they want Evolutions to have that space. Lenz stated per the GIS map, this is not a public alley.

There being a motion and a second, motion to establish one 15 minute parking stall at the south end of the 600 block carried unanimously 3-0.

2020 Street Construction Projects: Discuss public hearing results and make recommendation

Wesolowski stated that the public hearing was held by the Board of Public Works. A few comments were received but no one appeared in opposition of the projects.

Rasmussen moved to approve the 2020 Street Construction Projects. Thao seconded and the motion carried unanimously 3-0.

2020 Alley Paving Project: Discuss public hearing results and make recommendation

Wesolowski said the public hearing was held by the Board of Public Works. No one appeared in opposition. Both projects were petitioned for. One of the alleys will need storm sewer which Engineering will work with DPW to complete.

Thao moved to approve the 2020 Alley Paving Projects. Rasmussen seconded and the motion carried unanimously 3-0.

Discussion and possible action on repealing and recreating Chapter 12.40 of the Municipal Code, Street Excavations

Wesolowski explained that the Engineering Department, along with the Inspections Department, have been working through redeveloping Chapter 12.40. The proposed new chapter includes a lot of what was in the existing code. The existing code was piecemealed and this will simplify the code. It includes the same insurance requirements and bonding requirements. The major change is taking responsibility from the plumbing inspector to the Engineering Department as Engineering will have better ability to monitor upcoming large projects. Staff is proposing a change to the draft. Under Section 12.40.020 there are subsections a and b. Staff would like to add another subsection related to permits. TDS is anticipating a large project this year. If we make them obtain a permit for every 3 blocks it would be hard to manage. Staff would like have flexibility by adding language stating large scale projects are to the discretion of the Engineering Department to issue the number of permits applicable.

Thao remembered when there was a proposal several months ago to bury utilities at the old incubator site and questioned what this flexibility would mean. Wesolowski stated permits may be more like a 6 block area rather than every 3 blocks. The contractor would have to have detailed plans. Thao asked if Council would still have oversight when permits are issued. Wesolowski stated permits would be issued through the Engineering Department. Rasmussen clarified that Council currently does not approve install of utilities. The instance Thao had referred to was an easement across property. These borings would be within City right-of-way. Lindman explained that TDS is looking to install 140 miles of fiber in the ground. This is what staff is referring to when speaking of large scale projects. Other utility work would still have to get a permit for every three block area. Staff wants to be able to manage permits appropriately and with a little bit of flexibility.

Rasmussen indicated there would still be requirements that the contractor repair and restore pavement, and stand behind the quality of the compaction and pavement for three years. About a year ago there was talk about problems we have had with plumber openings not repaired in a timely manner or not compacted properly. She questioned if there is enough language in the new code to address those problems. Wesolowski stated the contractors are required to have a bond with a three year guarantee. A sinkhole would develop within the first 3 years. Rasmussen would support having the means to fine a contractor if something is left unattended or if the work is subpar.

Rasmussen moved to amend the draft code by adding the subsection requested by Engineering to create a large project exception that allows Engineering to decide the zone for which permits would be issued and the quantity of permits needed on large scale projects. Thao seconded and the amendment carried unanimously 3-0.

Rasmussen moved to approve repealing and recreating Chapter 12.40 of the Municipal Code, Street Excavations, which includes the amendment. Thao seconded and the motion carried unanimously 3-0.

Discussion and possible action on a resolution supporting the 2020-2024 Transportation Alternatives Program applications for the east-west segment of the Business Campus Trail

Sippel indicated that the City applied for 2020-2024 Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant for the east-west Business Campus Trail segment, the main spine running east-west of the proposed Business Campus Trail system from 72nd Avenue to the existing trail leading to CTH O. TAP grants reimburse up to 80% of approved project costs. We applied for this and the 72nd Avenue portion of that trail in the previous cycle. The 72nd Avenue portion was awarded TAP funds and is expected to be constructed in 2023. This application is to continue on that and to build the east-west spine. A resolution supporting the application is needed as part of the application. The City commitment is broken down in the resolution, if the grant is awarded. Based on WisDOT funding availability, we would expect design to start in fiscal year 2023 if awarded.

Rasmussen supports submission of applications for grants as any time we can get a grant that covers 80% of our costs is obviously a good thing. A while ago we recognized providing safe bike and walking accommodations in the Business Campus is key with the amount of truck traffic. Construction of these trails both for worker wellness programs and for residents in adjacent subdivisions is a big help. The TID plans for the Business Campus contemplate this trail.

Rasmussen moved to approve a resolution supporting the 2020-2024 Transportation Alternatives Program application for the east-west segment of the Business Campus Trail. Thao seconded and the motion carried unanimously 3-0.

Update on Highway 52 Parkway Landscaping Project

Lenz stated the plans are progressing for the Highway 52 Parkway Landscaping Project and are at 90%. These build off the preliminary plans and concepts that went through Plan Commission. A public open house was held and plans were displayed in the lobby for several weeks. The hope is to have the plans done soon and bid out for construction this summer.

Rasmussen stated the additions to the median are limited to plantings. She does not want people to think this is rusty birds 2.0. This upgrades the space and provides continuity without having grass to be hand mowed and boulders to mow around. Lenz stated this is just for landscaping elements. It uses similar features as the median east of the freeway but it will look different. There will not be public art bid as part of this but there is the potential to add art in the future.

Discussion and possible action on a Preliminary Resolution to vacate and discontinue a portion of right-of-way at Curling Way near Townline Road

Niksich explained that during the construction of Townline Road, Curling Way was realigned and this right-of-way is no longer needed. If vacated, the right-of-way would go back to the adjoining property owners. Gisselman asked if that would be the City. Lindman stated some of the land was initially owned by the railroad. The railroad gave the property to the City and it was then dedicated to right-of-way. Kraft is looking at building a parking lot in this area.

Rasmussen moved to approve a preliminary resolution to vacate and discontinue a portion of right-of-way at Curling Way near Townline Road. Thao seconded and the motion carried unanimously 3-0.

Future Agenda Items

Thao would like capital improvements for 3rd Avenue from Stewart Avenue to Thomas Street on a future agenda. She would like to learn what was done in the past and if 3rd Avenue is up for any capital improvements. She feels there may be good opportunities to lift up the area. This is a major vessel as far as mobility and she would like to see how we can light up the corridor. Lindman stated staff will look at the history. Rasmussen feels this is a good idea as the neighborhood group has asked for improved lighting as lighting adds safety and is also a first catalyst to renewal.

Adjourn

Thao moved to adjourn the meeting. Rasmussen seconded and the motion carried unanimously 3-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:15 p.m.