

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: March 10, 2022, at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Lisa Rasmussen, Lou Larson, Tom Neal, James Wadinski
By WebEx: Deb Ryan

Also Present: Mayor Katie Rosenberg, Eric Lindman, Allen Wesolowski, TJ Niksich, Tara Alfonso,
Sarah Watson, Blake Opal-Wahoske
By WebEx: Cord Buckner

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 5:15 p.m. Chair Rasmussen called the meeting to order.

Approve minutes of the February 10, 2022 meeting

Larson moved to approve the minutes of the February 10th meeting. Neal seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Public Hearing: Vacating and discontinuing an alley lying north of 410 North 6th Avenue between Oak Street, Cedar Street, North 6th Avenue, and North 7th Avenue

Sarah Watson, Alder for District 8, stated the majority of the residents she has talked to are in favor of partially closing this alley. The main reason is because it is a very narrow alley with houses close to it. Having a free flow of traffic is problematic to the neighbor's houses as well as safety for children. A speed trailer was placed at the end of the alley that showed a lot of traffic all day and night. With houses close to the alley it is disturbing to the neighbors. They are hoping to partially close the alley as only one house needs it for access to their garage.

Kelley Gabor, 431 North 7th Avenue, owns a house at the end of the alley. Currently the alley is all snowed in. She has had issues with some people going up and down the alley. The alley is so narrow one cannot see around the houses. There were children playing this summer and if her husband had not yelled a pickup truck could have hit a 5-year-old. She has had to call the police because of people who don't live there going up and down the alley. She lives on the north end and does not need the alley.

Patty Orzechowski, 610 Cedar Street, stated her house is close to the alley. If it rains, water ponds and traffic splashes it against her house. Mud was so bad it splashed into her windows and she had to close them in the summertime. It is starting to damage the side of the house.

There were no further comments and the public hearing was closed.

Discussion and possible action on vacating and discontinuing an alley lying north of 410 North 6th Avenue between Oak Street, Cedar Street, North 6th Avenue, and North 7th Avenue

Larson does not have a problem vacating the alley for safety of people involved. If the neighbors want to stop traffic, it would be up to them to barricade the alley.

Wesolowski referred to the map which shows the first three houses off Cedar would still have access to the alley. Watson added that there is only one house that needs the alley for garage access.

Wesolowski spoke with Hebert on what would be allowed for obstructions to close the alley. A fence could be approved by the Inspections Department or landscaping/bushes could be added.

Larson moved to approve. Wadinski seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion on sidewalk encroachment for 628 North 3rd Avenue

Rasmussen noted this item is only discussion of a conceptual idea. Engineering was contacted by Tyler Vogt, who owns a number of local businesses. He is working on renovating the diner at 3rd and Quaw and has ideas for roof top dining. She spoke of other areas where encroachments were approved in the past, such as a window overhang on 3rd Street and sign encroachments. This would be a retractable stairway that when the roof top is not open can be stowed above and foot traffic can pass under.

Tyler Vogt stated he is looking at bringing energy into the northwest side of Wausau. He has an accepted offer to purchase the building. He will have to replace the roof. He wanted to bring this forward before spending money to have someone engineer a rooftop structure. This area has two sidewalks next to each other so it would be easy to get around the stairway. He didn't want to go through the expense of getting this professionally drafted and engineered if the concept isn't something that would be entertained. There is a similar system on the backside of the Landmark building. If this isn't a concept anyone is interested in, he will not strengthen the roof while repairing it.

Rasmussen indicated there has been dialogue with other businesses in the area and there is some excitement among them for the new life this might bring. Vogt would like to share his plans but they are not concrete. He would end up with other properties in the area and has businesses plans for those as well. The whole idea is to bring some energy and a communitive effort to start a grassroots business district.

The fact that there is no boulevard, a double sidewalk, and the stairs moveable is helpful according to Rasmussen. Vogt noted the sidewalk was just replaced. The stairs could be retracted if maintenance is needed.

Neal hopes this eventually goes through. It is a novel idea for Wausau but not novel for other areas. It does not have to be proven as a viable idea. He feels it would be a nice touch for this neighborhood.

When Ryan lived in Kenosha County she had come across a spiral staircase manufacturer. This manufacturer had 2 or 3 staircases outside for over 20 years and there was no sign of rust. She feels a spiral staircase would be a good option. She asked if the stairs could be put toward the back of the property without infringing on the sidewalk. Vogt explained stairs at the back of the property would destroy a ground level patio. Also, mechanicals for the building are at the back of the building.

Larson does not think a spiral staircase would be good for carrying up food, dishes and such. Vogt added that it would not be retractable. Larson is excited about this and interested to see what will be done with the other buildings.

While this is very intriguing, in most situations Wadinski would not be in favor of blocking the sidewalk. However, in this case the boulevard is concrete and people would still have access around it. He imagines there are other hurdles if this is approved, such as how to get items up and down safely and how to keep people from dropping things off. If Vogt can figure out potential problems, he feels this is a great idea for this location.

Rasmussen would be willing to consider this as Vogt has a good track record of controlling his premises. What she is hearing from the committee is this is a good idea to pursue. Vogt will let his architect know and get something drafted.

Neal spoke of a club in downtown Fort Worth that built a roof top bar. When that was first proposed he remembers concerns voiced about people throwing stuff off. That never came to fruition. This is a novel idea and has appeal to draw people to it.

After seeing this option, Ryan does feel like a retractable staircase is a good idea. She asked if Vogt was planning to keep the old diner. Vogt has been doing a lot of carpentry work and has tried to keep a lot of the old flair.

Discussion and possible action on creating ordinance Section 12.44.070 Installation of Parklets

Rasmussen stated the one parklet used last summer did well. It seems the stakeholders have come to a meeting of the minds where they all can live with the parklet. The parklet is an important addition to the downtown because it creates additional outdoor seating. The Assistant City Attorney was asked to amend the ordinance language from temporary to permanent.

Larson moved to approve as the parklet last year was very successful and well used. Seconded by Neal.

The only negative feedback Wadinski received was that some feel that block is prime parking and parklets take away parking spots for quick access. As long as there is review of each parklet, Wadinski is okay with the ordinance.

Rasmussen said stakeholders worked out a plan to shift the parklet location. Initially, complaints were coming from businesses there were not open in the evening. When she walked out of the stakeholder meeting, she felt there was more positive dialogue then when they first began.

Ryan has heard from other businesses that feel forgotten about. This is only available for restaurants and other businesses might want to do something similar. Rasmussen said the parklet concept is available City-wide. Many places on the west side have parking lots and would not need a parklet. Ryan noted it must be a full-service restaurant, which limits what businesses can use it. Per Rasmussen, dining venue is the whole point and parklets would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve passed 4-1 with Ryan the dissenting vote.

Discussion and possible action on approving Governmental Responsibility Resolution for Application of an Urban Nonpoint Source (UNPS) and Stormwater Management Construction Grant

Niksich explained every year an update is provided to CISM on the Stormwater Annual Report. The last two years he has discussed the recently approved Total Maximum Daily Loading (TMDL) of phosphorus. The last study found a large gap between where we should be and where we are for phosphorus reduction. During the next permit cycle, expected in 2024, TMDL will be taken into account, and we will have to take measures to start reducing phosphorus output. To assist with that, we will be applying for a grant through the DNR, a 50-50 match up to \$150,000, to convert a current dry pond into a wet pond. There would be a permanent pool of water which would help solids settle out and reduce the amount of phosphorus sent into the Rib River. Part of the scoring for the grant is getting support. He has received a letter of support from the Stormwater Coalition and hoping to receive letters from a couple of other entities. Another part of scoring is having a resolution approving the Project Engineer to take actions on the grant. Passing of the resolution would greatly increase chances of getting the grant.

Rasmussen asked if this pond was located by Strawberry Fields and Niksich confirmed. Rasmussen added the presence of this does not affect traffic. Neal asked if there would be a need for a filtration system at discharge. Niksich stated that adding a pool of water would act as a filtration system. As water comes in, it will disperse and give time for solids to filter out. This is one of the cheaper ways to filter water. As the particulates fall out of the water, Neal asked if they would accumulate and over time back up. Niksich explained that every two years each publicly owned pond is inspected. If there is heavy vegetation or heavy sediment, DPW cleans the pond. A pond meets its life cycle and needs to be cleaned up when it gets to 2/3 capacity.

Ryan asked how much water would be in the pond and if there is a concern of danger to area children. Niksich said there would be about a 5' pool of water. The pond could be put in with or without a safety shelf. A safety shelf would be a slope of 10:1 extending for 10'. It would prevent people from sliding into it but is not as efficient. The proposed design would provide a safety shelf so there is not as much of a danger and not more dangerous than the nearby river.

Wadinski moved to approve. Neal seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Adjourn

Neal moved to adjourn the meeting. Larson seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:55 p.m.