

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: March 13, 2025, at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Chad Henke, Lou Larson, Michael Martens, Tom Neal, Sarah Watson

Also Present: Eric Lindman, Allen Wesolowski, TJ Niksich, Jillian Kurtzhals, Dustin Kraege, Lori Wunsch

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 Henke called the meeting to order.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approve minutes of the February 13 and February 20, 2025 meetings

B. Action on Stormwater Maintenance Agreement with 210 Developers, LLC at 225 South 18th Avenue

Neal moved to approve the consent agenda. Martens seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on parking restrictions on Hamilton Street between 10th Street and 12th Street

Neal mentioned this is one block away from his house and moved to approve. Larson seconded.

Henke drove this and could see where the problem would be. There being a motion and a second, motion to approve passed 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on parking restrictions on 12th Street between Hamilton Street and Steuben Street

Larson moved to approve. Watson seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on bicycle use on sidewalk on Randolph Street and Burek Avenue

A map was provided with the proposal that would allow bicycles to use the sidewalk when rounding the corner going from Randolph to Burek as proposed in the Safe Routes to School Plan. For the most part, this proposal would use existing infrastructure except for westbound bikers. It is proposed to add a 12' wide driveway style ramp for bikes to get on the sidewalk. They would enter back onto the road using the parking lot driveway ramp.

Larson moved to approve. Neal seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Discussion on collaboration with NTC for the development of a Burn Tower

Kopp explained this would be a training facility where they could train firefighters on a consistent basis in the Wausau area. There is not a training tower/burn tower in Marathon County. They have been collaborating on different venues with Northcentral Technical College to make something happen closer to home rather than the facility in Lincoln County. This would be something where we could still stay in service and still train. They currently train in their stations, but it becomes difficult depending on weather, space, and parking. This would also give the ability for live burns, which is something they do not get a lot of exposure to anymore. They do not get a lot of structures or vacant buildings like they used to where they can simulate fires or live burns. This is something Kopp has had his eye on, and he has met with leadership at NTC a few times. NTC is willing to move forward on this project with funding with the ask on the City's part to find property to do this on.

One of Kopp's goals has been to turn the City into an ISO 1 City. We are currently ranked 2. If we ever get to a 1, we would be one of the few. This would be one of the things that would give us necessary points to get closer

to that goal. We would be able to train the newest firefighters to veteran firefighters and use a facility that is ideal for different types of training that we cannot do inside of our fire stations.

Neal asked about the timeframe to accomplish this and the budgetary implications. Kopp said this is in the infancy stage. NTC Leadership reported that they have set aside money for 2025-2026 to move forward with this. He doesn't necessarily have a detailed start date; he is trying to look for ways to do this. Instead of looking for property to purchase, he has been looking at property the City already owns so it would not affect the budget. The idea behind this is to start small and start with the training tower. He would like an area so that in future years there could be future growth to the training facility, such as classrooms, bathrooms, recruits could have ambulances there, or a place for apprentices to stay and respond to for experience. These are dreams for future years. For now it is about starting small and staying within the budget.

Watson asked if the lot where the greenhouse was on Grand Ave would be a potential site or if Kopp had potential ideas where this could go. Kopp believes NTC would probably like it closer to their campus or near the highway. They have props they keep at the Merrill site that would be hauled back and forth. The neighborhood comes into play when looking at sites, for instance, the amount of traffic, distracting drivers, and fire trucks making noise. He has been looking at the property off 84th Ave where the Police Department has a storage shed or the old incubator property. There would be enough room on the Grand Ave property for this but there would not be enough room to build a station if we ever get to that point. Plus, this location would cause a lot of rubberneckers and possibly car accidents. He would like someplace off the beaten path. He looked at the property behind the new Water Treatment Plant, but that has wells underground. There are properties in the Industrial Park, but the focus has been on the Police Department property and the Cleveland Ave property.

Kopp said 2 acres would be the minimum if we just focused on the ISO standards and getting points. They require 2 acres with a training tower on it at a minimum. Ideally, he would like something with a few more acres for future growth. Another site was the old VA clinic off 32nd Avenue. The building has been for sale for some time and has dropped in price. This site is not ideal because it is close to a neighborhood. But it is close to the highway and a Fire Station.

Henke asked what part NTC would have. Kopp stated they have secured funding and are committed to helping with equipment as we move forward. They are open to what the funding would be used for and how we determine needs as we move forward. Training towers can be kept rather inexpensive or can get very expensive depending on the different things we use. He sees it being on the lower end and not so much technology involved. Once a property is picked, he would move further with the committee at NTC. If this is the only one in Marathon County, there is a potential that other departments would use it and pay a fee. It could be a source of revenue.

After discussion on the next steps, Henke suggested Kopp bring forward 3 top choices ranked in order.

Update on the proposed Fleet Maintenance Facility and possible location

Lindman explained there have been discussions at the Finance Committee about the MBX property on Cherry Street as a possible option. The property is still being looked at and there is further background investigation being done. There are other options we continue to look at. We looked at the Menards Plaza, but they were not willing to give it up. With Barrientos there were about 18 different properties looked at. We continue to look for properties to hopefully narrow it down and find a site to move forward with. Larson asked if the Cherry Street property was going to be bid on. Lindman stated we are still doing due diligence, and he will keep the committee up to date. If it looks like it will be a feasible fit, it will ultimately go to Finance. One challenge with the site is the parking lot. After further site investigation, we will reach out to the owner of the parking lot. Larson indicated the owner of the West Street property reached out to him a while back. Lindman had a discussion with the property owner and had asked him to come back with a price. Lindman has not heard back from him.

Neal is concerned with the Cherry Street property as it could potentially be a prime riverfront development property. He feels it would be a hard sell. There could be real interest in the property if we were to gain possession of it.

Josh Holland, who lives on the corner of Hamilton Street and 12th Street, asked if he missed public comment and was allowed to speak. He noted the defense for the parking restriction had a lot to do with the width of the street. He questioned the size of the City plows. Kraege explained that the plows vary but the machine that runs this route has a 12' plow blade on the front with a 10' wing on the side. The wing is on an angle, so they are probably about 16' wide when plowing.

Hollard has 2 young children and lives on the corner. This is one of the only little inclines in the area, so people walk up and down it to get a little cardio boost during their walk. There is probably more foot traffic than car traffic on the street. He does not think there is too much of a reason for anyone to drive down the street unless you are a resident. His concern as a parent is the street becomes less safe for people if cars are limited to one side. As a case study this morning, both his and his wife's cars were parked on the same side. He heard a car slowly come up one side, hit the corner and saw there was open space to go down the street and hit the gas. People often do that. With the number of kids on the street, it affects safety. He asked if a non-year-round option was considered. He feels making a year-round restriction is excessive for something that affects people half a dozen times a year. It would be making a year-round restriction that affects residents on a daily basis in order to be more effective for a plow less than a dozen times a year. If it is decided that this restriction is needed, he requests to look at a seasonal restriction from December through February. There would also be less foot traffic during this time. He feels that with the current overnight parking restriction, there are already things in place to restrict vehicles being in the way of plows. The residents have now been given a notice that this is on the City's radar. Given that notice and the current parking restrictions, he asked for a chance to make changes themselves before a year-round restriction is implemented that would affect the residents on a daily basis.

Henke explained that action was already taken. This would go to Council before there is a final vote. Amendments can be made to it yet, but it would go forward as it was written. It can be discussed further or brought back after Council has had a chance to talk about it. We may need to bring it back to committee. Neal noted that there is a step called reconsideration that can be taken where it can be talked about again.

Adjourn

Larson moved to adjourn the meeting. Neal seconded and the motion carried 5-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:40 p.m.