

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: May 13, 2021, at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Lisa Rasmussen, Tom Neal, Debra Ryan, James Wadinski, Lou Larson

Also Present: Mayor Katie Rosenberg, Eric Lindman, Allen Wesolowski, TJ Niksich, Tara Alfonso, Cord Buckner, 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 Rasmussen called the meeting to order.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve minutes of the April 8, 2021 meeting**
- B. Action on Easement to WPS Corporation for burying electrical conductors to serve the Wastewater Treatment Facility**
- C. Action on Preliminary Resolution to vacate and discontinue the unpaved alley abutting 205 and 209-211 Short Street and 1202, 1210 and 1212 North 3rd Street**
- D. Action on Stormwater Maintenance Agreement with Westside Real Estate LLC at 7333 Stewart Avenue**
- E. Action on Temporary Access Agreement with WPS Corporation at 112 East Wausau Avenue**

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

12th Avenue Sidewalk Project: Discuss public hearing results and make recommendation

Rasmussen noted that a public hearing was held regarding installing sidewalk between Randolph Street and Merrill Avenue alongside of the Urban West apartment complex. A letter was received from the owner and is included in the packet. This lies within District 7 and Rasmussen has had massive requests for sidewalk in this block. It would give a continuous sidewalk between Merrill Avenue, Randolph Street and 12th Avenue. Nearly every resident of the Village Cooperative signed the petition. Even though the developer feels they do not want to pay for or maintain the sidewalk, it is a plus for the neighborhood. It is an important linkage between Wausau West and Merrill Avenue. There is a lot of foot traffic since they opened Subway and Briq's. Before Urban West was built the Board of Village Cooperative and Rasmussen held an in-person meeting with SC Swiderski's representative to address concerns about various design considerations. They were told then the residents at the Village and the neighborhood wanted sidewalk, so they have had a number of years to adjust.

Larson asked if there is sidewalk across the street; Rasmussen replied no. Ryan added that one side of the street has homes and no sidewalk. The mailboxes are similar to rural mailboxes. Urban West was built across the street. The south side of Randolph has baseball fields. This is an area where people walk to Subway or Briq's and she has seen people walking in the street. With the way the homes are across the street, she feels it would be easier to put sidewalk on the Urban West side. She feels for safety reasons we need to proceed with the sidewalk. Rasmussen agrees and feels the lack of sidewalk has been problematic. She believes a second building is planned, which means traffic flow will go up. There will be added conflict between cars and pedestrians.

Neal moved to approve the 12th Avenue Sidewalk Project. Ryan seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on Storm Sewer Easement with Aedifix Builds, Inc. at 201 and 205 Short Street, 1201 North 2nd Street, and 1204 North 3rd Street

Wesolowski explained this storm sewer is existing. When the parcels are sold to the developer, we want an easement to maintain the storm sewer in the future.

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

Discussion and possible action on 72nd Avenue Business Campus Trail Memorandum of Agreement with WisDOT

Niksich stated we are in the midst of designing a trail along 72nd Avenue that goes under the interchange of Hwy. 29, which is WisDOT right-of-way. Therefore, a memorandum of agreement is needed to maintain the trail through that right-of-way. The agreement describes the responsibilities of the City and WisDOT.

Larson drives the area every day and does not see a lot of people walking. He does see people walking north of International Drive and he would someday like to see sidewalk there. Niksich explained there is a trail master plan for the Business Campus; this section of trail was funded first. Rasmussen said the area has become more walkable as businesses in the area are promoting wellness. There has also been feedback from the Morgan Creek Subdivision; they appreciate the City working on the trails to keep people off the road.

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

Discussion and possible action on parking restrictions on the south side of West Wausau Avenue from 1st Avenue to Cherry Street

Rasmussen has received a number of calls from UMR about access to their building being disrupted by vehicles stacking in the area. Wesolowski started looking at this because of truck stacking. This section is the main entrance for UMR. The existing signs on the south side are not currently in the ordinance so the posted parking restrictions are not enforceable. The north side of the road is listed in the ordinance. Wesolowski met with UMR and the property management. They would like to maintain no parking on the south side. They would like the 15 minute loading zone placed midblock in front of the entrance. Wesolowski recommends keeping no parking on the south side between 1st Avenue and Cherry Street, with the exception of two 15 minute stalls.

Rasmussen said part of the issue is truck traffic to the plant behind UMR. Those vehicles are supposed to make entry to the plant off of Bridge Street but there is confusion with out of town truck drivers. The neighborhood would like trucks stacking on Cherry and not on West Wausau. Wesolowski has noticed that when semis pull in, they park across the crosswalk on the east end. The crosswalk will be marked with pedestrian crossing signs and no blocking the crosswalk. Rasmussen feels the plant should notify their drivers that they should be making entry off of Bridge Street. Wesolowski spoke with the plant manager and facility manager at Graphic Packaging. They tell the truck drivers to come in that way. They do not have access off Bridge Street as it is tight to get around the building. They tell the drivers to come in on West Wausau and exit to the south. It is a complicated issue as there is not a lot of area for trucks. He did ask the plant manager to tell truck drivers to stack on Graphic Packaging's lot. This would be hard to do as there are different independent drivers every day. There may be consideration of stacking on Cherry Street but then there would be truck traffic on Union. Rasmussen feels we first need to solve the problem at UMR as employees have ducked between trucks to get to their vehicles.

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

Discussion and possible action on petition for street lighting on 5th Avenue between West Street and Garfield Avenue

Rasmussen noted that these two blocks are currently under construction and the residents have requested additional street lighting. We look at a number of things during street design; safety, lighting, tree canopy, bike/ped friendliness, proper visibility, mitigating removal of mature trees, etc. Decorative lighting can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. We have to budget and borrow for it ahead of time. It takes time to get the lights so it would have to be planned for in design. We had trouble getting lights in a timely manner last year. She questioned if there is a compromise solution to help manage the darkness without installing decorative lighting. She asked if there was a midblock WPS power pole where a LED fixture could be installed. Residents

in attendance indicated there are no overhead lines in these blocks. Lindman stated WPS would have to drop a pole and get power. Wesolowski would have to get a cost estimate for this work. There are currently lights at the intersections and no midblock lighting, which is consistent with the policy set by this committee. Rasmussen said the last time the committee looked at the criteria was before the full scale change to LED fixtures. We now have the ability to install and convert to LED, which costs less. She feels lighting requests should be considered if we have the ability to install LED fixtures on top of a power pole. When a street is under construction, it is the ideal time to convert to LED.

Neal is sensitive to requests for lighting as it is generally a legitimate need. He is interested in knowing the cost associated with adding a WPS power pole. He requested decorative lighting when Washington Street was under construction, but it was not budgeted. At that time he asked if we could at least put in the infrastructure so it could be added in a future budget. He asked if the same could be looked at in this area. Wesolowski noted decorative poles, with conduit and base, cost about \$5,000 per light. There would be four on each side, in each block for a total of 16 lights. Rasmussen added that when lights are knocked over they are expensive to replace. We need to make sure we have neighborhoods properly lit and safe but also have to keep an eye on cost. Borrowing \$80,000 would be over 3 cents on the mill rate not counting what it costs to run. The core issues is darkness and we might be able to get there in a more economical way.

Larson is all for making neighborhoods safer but he doesn't see where they requested decorative lighting. Rasmussen commented that the petition asks for the addition of street lighting; decorative lighting is referenced in the staff report. She noted that certain neighborhoods have received grant funding for decorative lighting. If the concern is darkness there is a better way. Ryan said the road is dug up and now is the time to add a new pole midblock. The neighborhood is not looking for fancy lights, just more light.

Per Wesolowski, the cost will depend on where WPS brings power from. It could be several thousand dollars but not near the cost of decorative lighting. He did receive a call from Toni Case, owner of 626 South 5th Avenue. Her property is midblock and she does not want a light. She feels it would be too bright for her tenants and would like to consider low level lighting. Rasmussen said every neighbor wants the lights with the exception of one. She asked if the light could be off set and not in front of her home. Wesolowski indicated it could be placed between houses. Rasmussen said if the cost does not require a budget mod and the committee favors the light, staff could go ahead with getting it installed. Neal asked if staff could get back to the neighbor and talk about downward projecting lights.

Wadinski thought WPS charges the City the same per pole whether it is the old incandescent or LED. Wesolowski explained WPS does not give a credit when switching to LED. They do not charge to replace. They replace burnt out lights with LED. Wesolowski noted decorative lights are owned by the City; they are metered, and the City is billed for usage. WPS charges the City per pole for wooden poles. Wadinski is not opposed of midblock lighting but does not want to approve without knowing the cost. He would not support decorative lighting. Rasmussen asked the completion date for 5th Avenue and if staff could research, report back a cost in June and still have time to get it done with the road project. Wesolowski said the project will go relatively quick as it is only two blocks. Poles could be installed after curb and gutter is in and before restoration. Staff can work with WPS on a time frame, but he cannot guarantee we will have time to get it in if we have to bring this back next month.

Neal noted the guidelines are 600'; this is just at 600'. When it gets that close it is a relevant discussion about need and a priority. Ryan feels this is the perfect time for additional wiring. The cost of a pole and running wire is probably minimal compared to decorative lighting. She feels it is worthwhile to do now.

Wadinski moved to approve the installation of LED fixtures midblock on WPS poles. Seconded by Larson and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on converting Washington Street from 1st Street to 4th Street to two way traffic and construction of a temporary road

Niksich explained that in 2019 the City adopted the Wausau Center Urban Design and Transportation Master Plan, which included several recommendations. One was making Washington Street two way with bike lanes and parallel parking on both sides. Staff is not recommending this now but would plan on that for the future once the area is redeveloped. Staff would like to see the area changed to two way and a temporary road put in to facilitate traffic as the development comes into play. Option 1 is turning Washington Street to two lanes with two way traffic without adding additional parking. Option 2 is two way traffic with an additional lane and adding parking on the north side of Washington. Option 3 is to do nothing.

Rasmussen mentioned there is no parking on Washington Street today. Throughout the project the Penney's Ramp and Sears Ramp are to remain. There is a municipal lot behind the Federal Building. There is no impact to existing parking. Adding a drive lane to get traffic flow without extra right-of-way for a bike lane and parking at this time would be a cost effective option. Niksich said the added option for parking is due to a lot of businesses requesting additional on-street parking. With recent additions of 15 minute parking spaces and approval of parklets, this would allow more opportunity for people to park nearby.

Lindman explained when the mall comes down, the north side of Washington will remain. We will expand Washington to the south and make it two way traffic. We are still working on cross sections on what the total right-of-way width will be. We would put asphalt down and stripe it for parking and two way traffic. The businesses said it would be very helpful to have parking on this street. Rasmussen asked if there would be parking on the temporary street. Niksich clarified parking would be on the north side. Wesolowski said this is just for a temporary road. Staff will bring a full cross section back.

Ryan asked if WOZ is planning on having underground parking. It is Niksich's understanding that WOZ does plan on having some underground parking. This is a temporary measure to bridge the gap while the development is taking place. Rasmussen has received feedback that the public will appreciate two way traffic for the entire distance. Niksich stated there will be a lot of demo going on in the area and this will allow a buffer between the demo and existing roadway.

Neal asked why the temporary road couldn't be same the profile as the final design with parking on both sides, bike lanes and two way traffic. He questioned what the difference was in terms of cost. Niksich indicated as a temporary measure staff felt it would be fiscally responsible to do as little as possible. Additionally, by adding parking on the south side, there wouldn't be any sidewalk for people to use to get in and out of their vehicles. Rasmussen asked if we are reserving enough right-of-way to put the full project in when the time comes. Lindman said cross sections are being developed. Once the mall is down and we determine the amount of right-of-way needed, WOZ will deed over the property and the city will convert it to right-of-way. Once cross sections are put together, this will come back.

Wadinski asked about the number of parking stalls. Niksich said it will be between 7 and 15. Staff did not dive too far into this before knowing which option to proceed with. Rasmussen feels parking should be maximized.

Larson supports Option 2 because during this process the downtown businesses will be stressed enough and more parking will help.

Larson moved to approve Option 2. Seconded by Wadinski.

Ryan would like to plan on additional parking but expects the sidewalk on the south side could potentially be a construction zone. She does not think it will be appealing to residents.

There being a motion and a section, motion to approve Option 2 carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action approving the 5-year street plan; 2022-2026

Rasmussen explained that each year the committee takes a look at the 5-year plan and the list of back logs. Every year completed streets are removed and a year gets added. Wesolowski indicated the proposed streets for 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 stayed the same as previously approved. The committee had agreed to look at higher volume streets in need so Wesolowski looked at the collector and arterial streets that are not a part of the state highways system. Two candidates are West Randolph from Burek to Merrill and South 11th Ave from Thomas to Flieth Street. Both streets are collectors, have higher volume of traffic, and the pavement condition is poor. Both serve residential and commercial properties. Both have undersized utilities and the water laterals are lead. Amongst all the streets, these two rose to the top.

Rasmussen feels West Randolph has lived its life with the amount of truck traffic. 11th Avenue also has truck from Kolbe and Kolbe. Larson does not have a problem with the list, but is concerned with how nonaggressive we are attacking streets in the city. On 21st Avenue every time it rains half the block is under water. The south end of the road is almost gravel. He noted possible stormwater charges and asked how the city could charge a fee when stormwater sits in the yard. He would like to see more secondary roads that have been neglected.

Rasmussen stated before the recession the City used to reconstruct 4 to 5 streets a year and would borrow considerably more towards CIP. We could add streets but there are two ways to pay for it; take on debt or raise taxes. Homeowners get assessed for reconstruction which makes some unhappy. Residents love asphalt overlay because it's free to them. Larson said the major concern he heard when he was campaigning was to fix the streets. Rasmussen noted there is a hope of a very large infrastructure proposal that is circulating in Washington. If passed in Congress, we could get infrastructure aid. Engineering is trying to have a few streets ready to go.

Wesolowski reminded the committee that Eau Claire Boulevard has been surveyed and could be ready. Staff is efficient and can get streets out quickly. We are ready to add streets when more money is available. It may be a struggle to get the three proposed streets for next year as other capital projects will fight for money. There are other needs coming up that will also come out of the capital budget. Rasmussen added road projects will compete with the new facility at DPW. We may opt to borrow more but it would increase the debt load.

A map was provided showing road ratings, with red being the worst. Wadinski drove almost every red street on the map. A couple may not make it 5 years. He feels we need to take time and work on streets that are red. Discussion followed.

Larson inquired about McIntosh Street between Prospect and the railroad tracks. Niksich stated funding is available and staff is working on the plans. This project will be bid out in June and completed later this fall. Larson asked about 17th Avenue from Stewart to Elm. Wesolowski plans to apply for STP Urban funding for this, which is a 70-30 match. STP applications are due in the fall. Wesolowski feels 17th Avenue will score high. Wesolowski noted that next year 6th Street from Horseshoe Springs to Evergreen will be overlaid through the DOT. The DOT will pay 50%; however, the City's share is still \$600,000. We will have to budget for this as a capital project. The Business Campus Trail is another DOT project that will take place next year and have to be budgeted for. Stewart Avenue from 48th to 72nd is planned for 2024 construction.

Lindman indicated the capital budget is due in June. Staff is already working on 2022 projects and into 2023 projects. Years 4 and 5 of the 5 year plan are more flexible. Making changes to the early part of the schedule makes it difficult for staff. Once streets are on the list, we back off on maintenance knowing the street will be reconstructed. So there are implications when changes are made to the 5 year plan. Lindman stressed the importance of having a 5 year plan staff can rely on.

Wadinski moved to approve adding the proposed streets for 2026. Seconded by Neal.

Ryan spoke about streets where the sewer lateral was cleaned and lined and noted that could be pursued as a quick fix. From the Water Commission she learned there are about a hundred lead laterals replaced in a year. At this timeline, it is estimated to be 90 years before we have complete lead lateral replacement. She asked about

Community Development funding for low income neighborhoods. Wesolowski indicated Community Development Block Grant funding will be used on McIntosh Street this year and no special assessments will be levied.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve adding the proposed streets for 2026 carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion on options for pedestrian crossing improvements at 12th Avenue and Stewart Avenue

Wesolowski indicated crash data since 2011 included one pedestrian incident on 12th Avenue and one incident on Stewart Avenue for a total of 2 in 10 years. These were minor incidents. Currently, the crossing guards turn on the flashing lights. The overhead lights flash and yellow lights flash on the 15 MPH signs. These remain on until the crossing guards leave. Wesolowski spoke with the crossing guards and they are not dissatisfied with the existing system as most people obey it. There hasn't been any close calls lately but they do feel some improvements could be made. One option would be Rapid Response Flashing Beacons (RRFB). RRFB's could be added to the pedestrian signs on the side of the road, in the median and on the overhead. With this option, we could add push buttons so a pedestrian can operate it at any time. These would have to be timed. The crossing guards would have a manual switch to use as they may need more time. The Electrical Department could install this; it would cost approximately \$15,000 for the equipment. Wesolowski spoke with the DOT and this would not require permits.

A second option is the Hawk System. There would be a push button on the side. When a pedestrian pushes the button, lights would flash yellow, flash red and then turn all red. The all red would be a stop condition. Residents would have to be trained and learn to stop. It would require a permit from the DOT and a traffic study would have to be done to warrant it. We would have to sign an agreement with the DOT to install and maintain the system. The existing arms would not support this system. New bases and new arms would have to be installed. It would cost about \$150,000. Rasmussen asked if stopping traffic would create a bottleneck at 17th and Stewart. Wesolowski does not believe it would be any worse than it is now as they have to stop for a crossing guard. He feels during peak times we would still need crossing guards. During off hours it would provide pedestrians a safer crossing.

Wesolowski would like to try RRFB. People have become used to the current yellow flashing lights. There would be eight flashing lights to catch attention. \$15,000 would be a stretch in this year's budget or we could budget for it next year. Wadinski perceives this as similar to the flashers at 500 Grand Avenue and that is a great system. Neal likes the on demand aspect and feels it would be very effective.

Wadinski moved to approve Option 1 regarding RRFB. Seconded by Ryan.

Ryan has recently read about crosswalks and legal suits when not having the beeping system for the visually impaired. She asked if that could be added. Wesolowski said this is not stop controlled. That would be an advantage to the Hawk System. He doesn't think we could add the beeping system without a stop control. Ryan said there are a number of residents on Stewart Avenue that feel like they are taking their life in the hands when trying to cross. This would solve a major problem, especially during the fair.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve Option 1 carried unanimously 5-0.

Future Agenda Items

Larson would like to hear how plans for the future DPW building are coming along. Rasmussen said there may be a joint meeting of CISM and Finance to hear the report from the Fleet Study. Larson would like CISM to get an update first. Lindman will provide an internal report next month.

Neal would like to see preliminary street concepts around the Mall so we can start looking at options.

Ryan would like to see which streets will get an asphalt overlay so she can let her neighborhood group know. Wesolowski noted CIP money is being used for the intersection of Merrill Avenue and Randolph and for the overlay of Burek Avenue. There will be other streets that DPW will complete.

Neal would like to get a feel for how DPW will proceed with patching potholes. Lindman will have Kraege talk about DPW's process.

Adjourn

Larson moved to adjourn the meeting. Neal seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.