

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: June 4, 2020, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Larson, Neal, Rasmussen, Ryan, Wadinski

Also Present: Mayor Rosenberg, Lindman, Wesolowski, Buckner, Niksich, Alfonso, Groat

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. Lindman called the meeting to order.

Select a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for 2020-2022 term

Ryan nominated Rasmussen for Chair. Seconded by Wadinski. No other nominations received and a unanimous ballot was cast. Lindman turned the meeting over to Chair Rasmussen.

Ryan nominated Larson for Vice Chair. Neal nominated Wadinski. A secret ballot was taken with three votes for Wadinski and two votes for Larson. By committee vote, Wadinski was appointed to Vice Chair.

Establish Regular Meeting Date and Time for 2020-2022 term

Rasmussen said traditionally CISM has met at 5:30 pm on the second Thursday of the month, which allows for most items to be placed on the first agenda the following month for Council. The date and time has served well and the 5:30 time is reasonable for people working. Lindman asked about starting at 5:00. Rasmussen offered 5:15 as she works until 5:00. The committee agreed by consensus to start at 5:15 on the second Thursday of the month.

Approval of minutes of the April 9, 2020 meeting

Ryan and Larson indicated they will abstain from this vote as they did not attend this meeting. Rasmussen noted that all members besides her are new to CISM. Neal asked for Rasmussen's feeling on the accuracy of the minutes. Rasmussen indicated the minutes accurately depict the meeting. Neal moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Wadinski seconded and the motion carried 3-0-2 with Ryan and Larson abstaining.

Discussion and possible action on an easement to WPS for burying electrical service across City owned property at 110 East Thomas Street

Lindman stated TDS is in the city placing fiber optic lines. They have 10 to 12 crews, which will be ramped up to 16. Last year they put their main line in. They have easements throughout the city. One easement is at 110 East Thomas Street. Typically, WPS will bring in power from the street. In this case, power is at the alley. WPS is proposing to bury a line at the far west side of the property so TDS will have power to their box at the southwest corner of the property.

Larson realizes there has been a lot of digging in the area already. The digging that has been done was done without soil testing. This is digging alongside a Brownfield. For the safety of the neighborhood and the people working, he would like the soil tested and remediated if need be before further digging. He noted the site would probably be tested anyway for development.

Rasmussen spoke of the easement near 1300 Cleveland. WPS bored rather than trenched. They drilled from underneath so that soil was not disrupted. Larson would be amenable to this.

Neal moved to accept the easement to WPS for burying electrical service at 110 East Thomas Street with the stipulation that the access be bored in and not dug. Ryan seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on temporary parking changes in the area commonly known as the River District for an expressly limited time period to assist the reopening of businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic including:

- (a) Adding two 15-minute stalls in the 300 block of North 3rd Street adjacent to the existing 15-minute stall located approximately mid-block.**
 - (b) Eliminating the 15-minute stall on the north end of the 300 block of North 3rd Street.**
 - (c) Closing 2 - 3 parking stalls located in front of restaurants along the 300 through 600 blocks of North 3rd Street to allow increased outdoor food and alcohol service and seating options on the 300 through 600 blocks of North 3rd Street**
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Rasmussen stated this filtered through from Public Health and Safety. At the last Council meeting, changes were passed which will be active from now through October 31 to help restaurants increase their capacity and have people dine outside. The same group has asked to make temporary modifications to parking downtown to allow for easy in and out for curb side pickup with parking stalls cycling out more quickly. A Wednesday night event was also approved where the street will be closed and tables placed in the parking stalls.

Item A:

This is for curb side take out parking spaces. Ryan moved to approve adding two 15-minute stalls in the 300 block of North 3rd Street adjacent to the existing 15-minute stall located approximately mid-block. Seconded by Neal and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Item B:

Because of adding other stalls, this spot would be given up until October 31. Ryan moved to approve eliminating the 15-minute stall on the north end of the 300 block of North 3rd Street. Seconded by Larson and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Item C:

Alfonso kept this wording general. In her opinion this is just during the special events. Rasmussen feels this was only wanted for Wednesday nights as they want places for their customers to park the rest of the time. On Wednesdays they will be closing the entire street to traffic so it makes sense to close all of the stalls for tables. The travel lane would be used as access for people on foot or emergency vehicles. People will be more comfortable with tables off to the side without foot traffic near them.

Alfonso stated they will still have to limit alcohol service to the amended premise. CISM has the authority to make temporary parking regulations so this item will not go to Council. Alfonso will prepare a resolution of the CISM committee that the Chair would sign since this is a temporary regulation.

Wadinski questioned if non-restaurants would be able to use the spots in front of their business. Rasmussen said not during the event. This event is from 4:00 to 9:00 and the other businesses are often not open after 5:00. Neal asked if the northern exit of each block would remain open. Rasmussen confirmed and added all cross streets would remain open.

Ryan asked if areas would be roped off as a way to delineate between restaurants. Rasmussen indicated the premises license may take care of that. The license delineates the areas included and restaurants intend to mark their tables. Restaurants will take care of this to have their own identity. Their license has to show where their perimeter starts and stops.

Mayor Rosenberg contacted Blake of the Wausau River District, who has not heard back yet from the business owners in the 500 and 600 blocks. This was pushed back because of demonstration concerns.

Larson moved to close the parking stalls in the 300 and 400 block of 3rd Street during the Wednesday night dine out event and include the 500 and 600 blocks of 3rd Street only if the restaurants in those blocks wish to participate. Seconded by Neal.

Neal stated this has a potential for one business to want it while another may not. Rasmussen stated normally they work together very well and she is willing to roll the dice. If a problem does exist, it would be managed at committee.

There being a motion and a second, motion to close the parking stalls in the 300 and 400 block of 3rd Street during the Wednesday night dine out event and include the 500 and 600 blocks of 3rd Street only if the restaurants in those blocks wish to participate carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on proposed 2021 Street Construction Projects and Five Year Plan

Rasmussen noted the long list of street projects that was included in the packet to the tune of nearly \$90 million. There is only money available to complete a few streets each year.

Wesolowski explained he creates a list identifying streets for reconstruction over the next five years. For 2021, Eau Claire Boulevard is proposed as it was proposed for 2020 but during the budget process it was pushed to 2021. This is a long stretch of street with shorter sections of adjoining streets that would take up the entire street reconstruction budget. He further explained that streets are rated every two years on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being a new street and 1 being gravel. This is a scale used by the DOT. Any street rated below 4 is considered for reconstruction. There are a few streets rated lower than 4 that are not included on the list because they are being considered for asphalt overlay. On average, the streets in need of reconstruction total approximately \$90 million. This year Cedar Street is being reconstructed. It rose to the top due to 27 watermain breaks within 6 blocks. The road is rated a 3. Eau Claire Boulevard does have old utilities and watermain breaks with a road rating of 3-4.

Due to the close proximity of streets, Neal questioned if any residents would be locked out during construction on Eau Claire Boulevard. Wesolowski indicated Eau Claire Boulevard is south of Kent Street, which was rebuilt 3 years ago. The short sections of adjoining streets would tie the newer streets together. If the adjoining streets are not done at the same time, when we go to do them at a later date we would be digging up a brand new street to make connections. Rasmussen indicated neighborhoods are inconvenienced during projects, but the roads would be done at one time without having to come back and inconvenience them again a year or two later. When this project was deferred last year, some residents stated the road is in rough shape and they hoped it was not deferred. So there is support in the neighborhood to get this done.

Larson does not envy the job of choosing streets as there are priorities all over. Rosecrans is slated for 2024. This road is beyond repair, is a bus route, and used by delivery vehicles for Corporate Cove. At any given time bicyclists and motorcycles could wipe out on potholes. He questioned if there was any band-aid that could be used or if the street could be moved up. He added that 20th Avenue is crumbled. When it rains or snow melts it is under water because there is no drainage. His house is on 21st Place and there is water that does not drain. He is concerned with slipping on ice and asked that these concerns are looked at.

Rasmussen asked about skin patching, such as what was done on Thomas Street to buy time and smooth it out enough to drive. Wesolowski noted that DPW is in the process of purchasing a bigger and better paver. Staff does not want to do a full overlay on a street that has old watermain. However, some streets are to the point where we cannot wait and will have to do a thin overlay. We may need more hot mix money in the DPW budget for temporary skin patching. Rasmussen has been asked for skin patching of 3rd Avenue from Randolph to Bos Creek. There has been so much patch work done that it looks like a quilt. There are similar streets all over town. We do our best to pick as many street as we can afford. However, when there is a budget shortfall, the first thing to cut is infrastructure projects as they are expensive. There have been declining transportation and road aid from the state for years. We have tried to increase the sealcoat budget to extend the life of roads. We are behind and we used to spend a lot more. We have not instituted a wheel tax and there is no other way to do more roads other than borrowing or TIF. Discussion followed on using tax increment funding. Wesolowski pointed out that we have done major projects in the last few years; 1st Avenue, Townline Road, Thomas Street. Some other streets may have suffered.

Neal asked if there are any plans for street lighting with next year's projects and what would become of any existing lights. Wesolowski explained Eau Claire Boulevard lighting is at the intersections. The budget for 2021 does include \$60,000 for replacing the lighting at the intersections. Decorative lighting costs approximately \$5,000 per pole. Staff would work to try to keep the decorative feel and match the existing character. The existing lights would not be reusable. Rasmussen added that during street reconstruction projects, Engineering has been asked to determine if the lighting is sufficient enough for safety. Sometimes with reconstruction projects mature trees have to be removed, which removes a huge tree canopy. When this happens, sometimes the existing lights become more effective. CISM has often been reluctant to add mid-block lighting. When there is a reason to add a light, if it can be placed on an existing WPS pole it is most cost effective with the same result.

During the budget process, Ryan is hoping we can look at lighting and what would be involved with going to all LED. Regarding the 2021 budget, she added that it would be nice to see some projects in other areas of the city.

Wadinski drove the streets for proposed for 2021. While they are in rough shape, he did not see any manholes that have 3" drops like streets in his neighborhood. Potholes can be missed. In his neighborhood people remove blacktop from their boulevards because it was plowed up during the winter. He is not saying any streets should be removed from the list because they all need it. Per Wesolowski, every street on the list is rated a 3 or 4. Next year when roads are rated again there will be more. Wadinski asked if the criteria included bus routes and the amount of traffic a road gets, to which Wesolowski replied no. He noted that this year Cedar Street and Kickbusch Street are being reconstructed. Cedar Street was chosen because of watermain breaks and Kickbusch Street because of the school.

Wadinski mentioned 1st Avenue where 70 plus street lights were installed last year at a cost of \$5,000 each. Wesolowski clarified that the \$5,000 is with installation. Wadinski believes some residents do not like the decorative lighting as it shines into their house. Rasmussen noted the lighting can be dimmed at night. Per Wesolowski, some people want the lighting in front of their house and the next person does not. Rasmussen added that neighborhood groups have advocated for increased lighting for safety and an elevated aesthetic in their neighborhood.

Wesolowski stated in the past residents have petitioned for reconstruction. There is a \$42 per foot assessment associated with projects. If residents want the project and are willing to pay it helps elevate the project. Eau Claire Boulevard may not have been petitioned for, but there is strong neighborhood support.

Discussion took place regarding TIF Districts and using funding for infrastructure projects. Groat explained that typically when a district is initially created it is not generating a lot of tax. These are the times we have to operate leanly and we would not want to encounter huge deficits as there is a risk of not being able to retire the district with a zero balance. TID 5 is retiring in 2020. The expenditure periods for TID 6, which funded Cedar Street, Thomas Street and part of 1st Avenue, ends June 10. We cannot spend any more money in this district. TID 7 expires January 10, 2021. Any projects would have to be under contract by January 10 for the project to be eligible to be charged to the TID. These are two TID districts that we will no longer have as a means to fund infrastructure projects. That does not mean they still do not add value to us. Usually once the expenditure period ends, you have five years to recover any accumulated deficits and then you retire the district. TID 6 expenditure period ends in 2020 and will retire in 2025. TID 7 can retire earlier. Its expenditure period ends January 2021 but will retire in 2022 because it did not have as many accumulated deficits. We can use the increment that is no longer being allocated to the district to fund other expenses. TID 5 has \$300,000 in property taxes generated. When TID 7 retires in 2022, it will bring another \$440,000 of taxes each year; when TID 6 expires in 2025, it will bring \$940,000. Council has the option to reduce the tax rate or use to fund ongoing street maintenance. This is not an immediate relief as we have to wait for the districts to retire. Groat does not see other TID's as being in a situation to take on a lot of other projects. We could look at some funding options to beef up street projects so the committee could see what implications would be going forward. Groat explained that other cities rely on other resources to help fund their street projects, such as a wheel tax or a lineal foot charge to tax payers. La Crosse will be implementing this street assessment; Milwaukee does and Weston did but it reversed it. During these projects, the storm water utility in the roadway is replaced, which is a burden of the street replacement that is funded with debt retirement on the general levy. Any community that has a storm water utility is funding that

share of the project through the utility. The city has very few tools to fund street improvements, which is why we turned to TIDs. In addition to street construction projects, asphalt overlay and concrete improvements have been completed with TID districts. We are using this tool as much as we can. She noted the street lights on the southeast side are concrete and while they are old, they look almost brand new. She would like to see a cost benefit analysis to using concrete street lights versus metal poles. They last a long time and painting is not required. Lindman noted that Pergolski is looking into where concrete poles can be made.

Rasmussen indicated a number of public information meetings were held when a stormwater utility was proposed. Any new charge is always met with negativity. Stormwater management is balancing itself on the backs of private homeowners and not necessarily businesses, schools and churches that have massive parking facilities and pay nothing into that fund. She feels homeowners would see a lot of relief if this utility was created. However, we would have to repeal the ordinance that requires a referendum for any new charges. Neal recalls the stormwater utility that went to referendum. A solid argument was used for the utility but it was voted down. He believes we need to look at this again as it will help out the majority of home owners. It would have a positive impact with the mill rate over time.

Neal feels Eau Claire Boulevard lighting has a historic look and adds a distinct character to the neighborhood. He questioned the options for retrofitting the existing poles. Wesolowski will check with Pergolski on this.

Ryan would like to focus on the number of streets that have issues. She feels it would be helpful to look at other options, such as overlay projects, to try to get more streets looking better. She added that retrofitting Eau Claire Boulevard lighting to LED is a better option as it provides more light, has 20 to 50 years expectancy, and lower utility costs. She noted that with the number of streets on the 5-year plan, it looks like a 100-year plan. Neal knows that aging infrastructure is addressed during street projects. Where applicable, he would like to see more overlay projects. The project just completed on Franklin Street is a big transformation. Wesolowski stated \$250,000 was budgeted for asphalt overlay this year and \$600,000 was added to complete streets by the hospital in TID 7. In this instance, the TID contributed three times as much as the general budget. The \$250,000 was used to complete Franklin Street and the outside lanes on Merrill Avenue. Typically, streets that were reconstructed around 15 years ago are candidates for an overlay. Staff does not want to mill and overlay a street with bad utilities.

Wadinski asked if surveys are done of underground utilities and if that factors into which streets are done. Wesolowski explained that every pipe in the city is dated in the GIS system, as well as watermain break history, and the Sewer Department televises their lines. The Sewer Department has a CIP lining project each year, which helps reduce infiltration to the plant and preserves old mains.

Wesolowski reviewed the proposed 2021 budget numbers and other projects that include concrete pavement repair, pavement marking, flashing beacons on Washington Street, boulevard trees, asphalt overlay, alley paving, sidewalk replacement, and DOT projects. He noted the upcoming DOT project of Stewart Avenue from 48th Ave to 72nd Ave, for which we will receive about \$3 million in federal funding. DOT projects are typically 3 to 5 year projects. Next year the budget includes \$250,000 to hire a design consultant. He added that the overall budget request is approximately \$3 million compared to last year at \$1.8 million. Historically, \$1.8 million is low. TID funding has helped fill the gap.

Discussion turned back to milling and overlaying. Rasmussen is interested on learning the cost of a milling machine versus the cost of hiring it out. If the committee desires, staff can infuse their ask for more in the asphalt overlay budget. When we determine where we will be at with the tax rate, we can always back off if we know we cannot afford it. Lindman indicated the budget last year was \$1.9 million and we are asking for \$3 million this year, which is a sizable increase. We did ask for more last year, but Eau Claire Boulevard was deferred. Lindman spoke of maintenance done inhouse. DPW has the equipment to do crack sealing, but this process takes a crew of 11 to 13. We are inefficient at this due to not having the large equipment a contractor does. We have backed away from this process and started contracting it out. DPW puts a lot of money into patching. We can patch a block and be back 10 days later because the asphalt popped out. Last year we used more in our hot mix budget. DPW is looking into purchasing a paver and possibly a milling machine. We are looking at how to

switch our operations to hopefully do better with the money allocated in our budget.

Wadinski would like to wait a month to get more input. Ryan stated there are so many streets around town that may be more warranted. Rasmussen stated in upcoming years Bertha and Ethel are proposed, which are also in District 1. Maybe these streets could be swapped with streets in another district to provide a balance. Wadinski would like to see streets proposed that have a higher traffic volume.

Neal questioned if waiting a month would provide a substantially different list. Rasmussen stated it could be and if Groat has ideas for alternative financing tools she would like to hear about it. We could also look at our new debt versus debt retirement to see if there is any room in our borrowing or if there is an area that has increment to help with projects. Ryan would like to see what streets could have an overlay or skin patching. Rasmussen suggested including the map next month that shows road ratings and include a layer that shows which streets would be candidates for skin patching. Wesolowski noted that all streets on the list would be candidates for skin patching; it would be a matter of which streets are the worst. He added that Eau Claire Boulevard was proposed again because of it being cut last year. Staff did not want to bring a different street forward because of the direction from the previous CISM committee. Lindman asked the committee to take a couple of weeks and then email Engineering with what streets in their district are the worst. Since Eau Claire Boulevard was previously proposed, the survey field work is done. Once streets are proposed, staff starts design work and will then move on the list for 2022 projects. Because of the cost efficiencies and life span of skin patching, Rasmussen asked what the impact would be to use \$1 million for skin patching one year and then plan a reconstruction project the following year. Wesolowski explained that DPW does have a hot mix budget each year. Staff is looking to increase that while keeping a reconstruction project.

Wesolowski reminded the committee that assessments are involved with reconstruction. For example, a 100 foot lot at \$42 per foot would have an assessment of \$4200, plus \$500 for sewer lateral replacement and additional costs for drive approach replacement. An average assessment for a lot is \$3,000 to \$4,000 for a reconstruction project. Once projects are approved, there is a lot of work on staff's end. Staff has about 400 hours into survey work on the Eau Claire Boulevard project. If another street is picked, we will have to divert staff and complete survey work. Public hearings are held for streets approved through the budget. We like to send out notices to property owners to give them a heads up of possible special assessments so when the public hearing notice comes in January it is not a total surprise. We cannot wait too long, not only because of the budget season, but also because of survey work and notifications.

Larson questioned the charge for asphalt overlay. Wesolowski replied there is no charge to property owners for an overlay project. Ryan mention sewer relining and questioned if there is a cost savings on a road that had a sewer relined. Wesolowski indicated that would be a cost savings for the sewer utility.

Larson asked if there is room for modifications to the list if this is not approved tonight. Wesolowski stated staff is trying to nail down 2021 and the other list can shift. He indicated there has been a concentrated effort on the southeast side. He has been with the City for 20 years. For the first 15 years there was not a street on the southeast side reconstructed so there was an effort to do a southeast street every year. 4th Avenue from Bridge Street to Knox Street was on the list when he started here and is still on the list.

This item will be brought back in July.

Adjourn

Ryan moved to adjourn the meeting. Neal seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:15 p.m.