

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: June 8, 2023, at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Lou Larson, Chad Henke, Lisa Rasmussen, Gary Gisselman, Doug Diny

Also Present: Eric Lindman, Allen Wesolowski, Jill Kurtzhals, Tara Alfonso, 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 Larson called the meeting to order.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve minutes of the May 11, 2023 meeting**
 - B. Action on watermain easement to City of Wausau from Marathon County in Marathon Park**
 - C. Action on a preliminary resolution to set a public hearing to vacate an area of right-of-way abutting 503 South 22nd Avenue, a portion of 2111 Stewart Avenue, and a portion of 2205 Stewart Avenue**
 - D. Action on a preliminary resolution to set a public hearing to vacate a portion of the alley north of Wegner Street abutting 503 South 22nd Avenue and a portion of 514 South 21st Avenue**
 - E. Action on a preliminary resolution to set a public hearing to vacate an area of right-of-way abutting 505 South 21st Avenue, a portion of 509 South 21st Avenue, a portion of 514 South 21st Avenue, and a portion of 2111 Stewart Avenue**
 - F. Action on Stormwater Maintenance Agreement with Aedifix at 101 Short Street, 1214 North 3rd Street and 1201 North 2nd Street**
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Diny moved to approve the consent agenda items. Henke seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

2023 Alley Paving Project: Discuss public hearing results and make recommendation

Larson asked if anyone in attendance wished to speak on this item.

Liz Brodek, 814 Adams Street, submitted public comment that was included in the packet. She is against the project for several reasons. Adams Street has one house with driveway access to the alley. Of the 6 properties abutting the alley, 4 of them are fenced off and have no access to use the alley. They would be assessed for something they are not able to use. She has lived in this house for almost 2 years and had never been back there until this item came up. The alley is very narrow. There are a lot of old fences and foliage that very closely abut the alley. She is concerned about something going wrong during the paving project with all of the large machinery. Her fence is over 20 years old and having to replace a historic fence would be problematic and not budgeted for. If this were a sidewalk project or a street project where it is something that everyone can use, she would not be against this. Only a handful of people on the block utilize it. Because it is not a true public good in her opinion, she stands against the project.

Gaylene Davis, 802 Adams Street, stated there are 19 houses on the block; 2 have no alley access. Of the 17 houses that abut the alley, only 4 need it for access. The others do not but are being asked to pay for the alley. It is a long alley, crooked and it would be difficult to pave. She feels this would be a waste of money and believes there is another alley that would benefit more.

Joan Smith has lived at 1110 North 9th Street for 40 years. She has watched many projects up and down the alley. She has had all kinds of conversations over the years about a parking pad, driveways, foundation for a garage, a shed, fences, etc. The conversations are always the same in the end; what will this do to the drainage and will this hurt my land when there is no place for the water to go. The answer always was there needs to be a manhole and storm sewer. This alley is lower than the lots and was never engineered correctly. Her house is right against the alley and water drains into her basement. She likes the gravel surface as it is semi-permeable and water evaporates; a smooth surface is completely different. That block is not set up to hold water. She is afraid of what will happen to her foundation, which she expects would be further compromised. Her south wall is the only wall that is currently dry. With smooth surface run off next to it, she does not know what to expect. She was told

water could be directed to the middle of the alley, but that does not deal with the fact that the alley is too low to begin with. There are not elevations to move water east and west for the length of the block. Her concerns are structural and feels it could mean the end of her home and secure foundation. She hopes there is another option besides pavement. She feels a smooth surface runoff is an incredibly big problem on that block. It is already a very wet block with no accommodation for drainage. Her concern is structural and financial as it risks her home. She suggested using a better grade of gravel on that block. With a cheap grade of gravel you get big stones that get kicked out and you get potholes. Using a good grade of gravel that is more compacted would provide the residents a nice surface without having to pave and create more problems.

Blaine Davis has lived at 802 Adams Street for 30 years. His driveway runs along the alley and exits onto 8th Street. He has no use for the alley. Over the years he has seen traffic come down the alley at a good speed. He has wondered how they could see oncoming traffic; one side is blind by bushes and the other is open sidewalk. He is amazed there have not been close calls over the years. He is concerned about turnover; new people coming into the neighborhood may decide the pavement is faster and easier to travel down. When he has family gatherings he places children at play signs because of that fear.

Robert Baumann is an occupant at 817 Hamilton Street and appeared on behalf of his mother who owns the house. He thought this would be a good idea and collected signatures. He apologized to any neighbor that has stressed about this. He thought it would be a good idea because gravel washes off the alley onto his mother's and her neighbor's driveway. There are also potholes and he thought this would be a solution. From his perspective there is not a lot of popularity for this. He is unsure if there is a way to fix the problem that would be good for everyone and not expensive. He suggested looking for alternative solutions that would work for everyone or if all else fails, squash it. He again apologized if this brought stress.

Diny said this is not necessarily a popularity contest and should be based on facts. He walked the alley with Smith. The challenges are real. It is too narrow for a standard paving machine. It is very flat and there is no place for the water to go. It is crooked and there are telephone poles in the alley. From the engineering challenges he believes we would be better off letting it go as it has been. Potentially there may be consideration for different types of gravel. He agrees a hard surface would make more problems than it solves.

Rasmussen agrees with Diny. Based on the public hearing results and comments today, she also has concerns for Smith's basement. Rasmussen feels this request should be denied.

Rasmussen moved to approve the 2023 Alley Paving Project. Seconded by Gisselman.

Gisselman asked if there are other alleys on East Hill that are paved. He questioned why it has taken so long for the pavement of those alleys, especially on the hill. He asked if there was a way to pave the alley without large machinery or if it would be impossible. Wesolowski said anything is possible, but this alley would be difficult. It is narrower than most. We would have to extend storm sewer. There are poles, bushes and fences close to the alley. It would be one of the more difficult and challenging alleys that we have ever paved. He noted that staff does not go out and look for alleys to pave; we wait for petitions to be submitted. Gisselman mentioned the petition and number of signatures from both sides of the alley. Some do not have access to the alley but for the good of the neighborhood they are willing to pay for this. He is sensitive to the people that signed the petition because he feels that they need and want the alley paved. He is torn on this item and asked if there was any other feedback at the public hearing in support.

Diny asked if the cost of the project would be over the estimated \$25,000 if storm sewer is extended. Wesolowski confirmed and said the project would be over budget.

In reading the minutes of the public hearing and the comments in the packet, Rasmussen feels a couple of the people that signed the petition were not aware of the assessment. A couple of them may have wanted their signatures removed once that was revealed. There are some alleys that benefit from paving, especially if they are alleys that retain water and dirt splashes on houses. In this case, it does not sound like there is a ton of traffic. Even if there are areas that are holding water, the addition of gravel and grading normally takes care of that. She thinks we should not do this one. She understands the reason for the petition, but typically when we approve

these, almost everyone on the block signs the petition. This is one of the few alley paving projects where she has seen this much opposition.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve the 2023 Alley Paving Project failed 0-5.

Discussion and possible action on parking restrictions on South 8th Avenue between Stewart Avenue and Callon Street

Henke indicated a constituent approached him about parking in the wintertime. He advised her of the petition process, they collected signatures, and provided photos.

Alora Koval, 307 South 8th Ave, has concerns for winter parking. South 8th Avenue is very narrow; more narrow than surrounding streets. It is the first through street from Callon to Elm Street until 12th Ave. It gets steady traffic and is a steep hill. When there are cars on both sides of the street in the winter, it creates a very narrow passage for through traffic and for backing out of driveways. Plow trucks and garbage trucks have failed to get through at times. After the plow does get through there is plow wash that turns to ice chunks and steep mounds of snow that harden. Take a narrow street, add snowbanks, add cars, add plow wash, and it is almost impossible to get through. The vast majority of cars that do park on the street have driveway access. The alley between 8th and 9th is newly paved. Two driveways have access to the newly paved alley; they just do not use it. She does not suggest restricting parking on just one side of the street because it is a hill with a lot of traffic on a narrow street. She would like the committee to consider the totality of the circumstances with a winter parking ban.

Rasmussen noted the request is to restrict parking on both sides. The photos show it is really narrow when there is a full snow load. There has been the same problem in her district. In some cases it can be remedied with no parking on one side or the other, but it looks like the street parking is robust. Even with parking on one side there is not much space to get through. The request is for a seasonal band from November 1 to April 1. She would support this as she has dealt with the same in her district. Parking restrictions do help and have been found to be an effective remedy.

Larson agrees but the pictures show a lot of cars on the street. He is concerned this may cause a problem with vehicles parking elsewhere. Koval suggested parking could take place in the unused County lot at the bottom of the hill. The vehicles all have driveways they just want quicker access. Henke indicated Callon Street was just redone. Parking on the north side of Callon is easy and pretty open. He would guess a lot of the parking would move to Callon.

Rasmussen noted the winter photo and that the driveway is not plowed at the house with 2 cars out front. If parking on the street is enabling them to not clean their driveway in a timely manner, it is no excuse. It is causing problems for other users of the street, including services that need to get through. Larson noted it looks like the cars have been parked there a while and mentioned the similar situation recently discussed on Sherman Street.

Rasmussen moved to approve parking restrictions on both sides of South 8th Avenue between Stewart Avenue and Callon Street from November 1 to April 1. Seconded by Henke.

Wesolowski received a call from Dennis Debalske of 416 South 8th Avenue. He signed the petition and supports this. He would like to have parking restricted on the east side year-round. Henke will talk to him about submitting a petition for that.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve parking restrictions on both sides of South 8th Avenue between Stewart Avenue and Callon Street from November 1 to April 1 passed 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on easements with Wausau Opportunity Zone, Inc. for planters at 300 Forest Street (North 2nd Street and Jackson Street right-of-way)

Wesolowski explained this is the old mall site. They are asking to put some planters in the right-of-way. We looked at the street design with Becher Hoppe; this would not impact the street design.

Larson asked if this would be on the streets to be constructed or on streets that currently exist. Wesolowski indicated these are on the new streets. 2nd Street will get temporary asphalt this year. The Jackson Street planter will be on the side of the building in excess right-of-way and will not impact the roadway. There will also be some WPS transformers in the area. The planters will help to soften the transformers.

Rasmussen stated this item and the next are related to the aesthetics and some of the work they are doing on the front of HOM Furniture. Wesolowski added this will complement the façade of the Imaginarium and HOM.

Rasmussen moved to approve. Diny seconded.

Diny asked who would be responsible for maintenance and costs. Per Wesolowski the planters would be installed by WOZ and maintained by them.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve passed 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on easements with Wausau Opportunity Zone, Inc. for pedestrian access between North 2nd Street and North 3rd Street

Wesolowski stated there will be a walkway in front of the Imaginarium when developed. An easement would be granted so that pedestrians could walk between 2nd and 3rd Streets.

Larson asked who would be paying for this. Wesolowski said there is no cost involved. WOZ would be giving an easement to the City for pedestrian access. Gisselman asked if the City would be responsible for maintaining the pedestrian walkway. Wesolowski indicated the area would be built and maintained by WOZ. Pedestrians would have the right to use the area. Henke asked if this would be public property. Wesolowski said it is private property owned by WOZ; WOZ would be granting public the right to use it.

Henke moved to approve. Diny seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on authorization to deed Outlot 1 of CSM #19539 to Luke Stenberg

This is in Larson's district. They are proposing to put apartment buildings on the land and there is an easement glitch. This is a housekeeping item. He hopes in the future Stratz will approach the neighborhood because the people he has talked to are not in favor of an apartment complex. Rasmussen said this also serves to clean up the lot lines and would allow for an affordable housing project to take flight.

Rasmussen moved to approve. Henke seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Adjourn

Diny moved to adjourn the meeting. Henke seconded and the motion carried 5-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:50 p.m.