

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: July 11, 2024, at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Chad Henke, Tom Neal, Sarah Watson (Lou Larson and Michael Martens were excused.)

Also Present: Eric Lindman, TJ Niksich, Tara Alfonso, 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.

Approval of minutes of the June 13, 2024 meeting

Neal moved to approve the minutes of the June 13th meeting. Seconded by Watson and the motion passed 3-0.

Discussion and possible action on Stormwater Maintenance Agreement with Robert W. Monk Gardens at 1800 North 1st Avenue

Niksich explained that this item was brought back from last month. This is a typical maintenance agreement for any stormwater improvements for developments. The project is under construction.

Paul Whitaker appeared as Secretary of the Board of Directors for Monk Botanical Gardens and chair of the capital project that is underway. He indicated the stormwater detention ponds were dictated by the size of the parking lot by DNR stormwater regulations. This is for routine maintenance of those detention ponds.

Neal moved to approve. Seconded by Watson.

Henke had read that the project was not moving forward, which is why this was delayed a month. He has driven by multiple times and construction is clearly underway.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve passed 3-0.

Discussion and possible action on Transportation Project Plat for Project ID 6999-00-16/76, West Wausau Avenue, Stevens Drive to North 10th Avenue

Niksich stated that a plat is required for the project. This identifies property boundaries and where temporary limited easements are needed. All easements for this project are temporary for the change of grade. A consultant has been hired for approximately \$50,000. Through the process, the consultant will identify what to pay the residents to acquire the temporary easements.

Neal is not familiar with the activities of consultants regarding temporary limited easements. He asked what the \$50,000 buys us that we cannot do ourselves, what specific activities we would be paying for, and how did we get to \$50,000.

Niksich explained that temporary limited easements are a requirement because of the DOT process. Real estate specialists go through and assess the property values and determine the cost to purchase/use the property for a certain amount of time. When purchasing property is involved, it usually extends the project by about a year.

Neal asked if there are typically negotiations with property owners or if it is a cut and dry process. Lindman said there can be negotiations. The consultant goes through and appraises the properties and looks at values. It comes down to a square foot cost. This is done through the eminent domain process, which is lengthy. The values are brought to Finance with the offers we want to make. The owner can counteroffer or have their own appraisal done. The City would have to pay for that appraisal. We are hopeful that since these are temporary limited easements, it will be straightforward. It is an arduous process to meet eminent domain procedures. We do not have the expertise in house to do this.

Henke asked if this is a state project. It is a state-funded project with an 80-20 cost share; however, the cost share cannot be used for real estate.

Neal moved to approve. Seconded by Watson and the motion passed 3-0.

Discussion and possible action on Development Agreement with STS Investments LLC, west of Birchwood Drive and west of Old Coach Road

This is a Development Agreement to extend utilities and services west of Old Coach Road and Birchwood Drive. The developer will be responsible for 100% of the cost for utilities; water, sewer, and storm sewer. The City will provide inspection services. Once the utilities are installed, they will become property of the City. This agreement includes a total of four lots.

Watson moved to approve. Seconded by Neal and the motion passed 3-0.

2023 MS4 Annual Report and Compliance Update

Since the City is a MS4 permit holder, every year we have to report stormwater activities. The activities include the review of plans for private developments to make sure they meet City code and bring forward a stormwater maintenance agreement to make sure they continue to meet stormwater regulations set forth by the DNR and the Wausau Municipal Code. Along with other requirements, we have to maintain our own ponds and storm sewer and report the activities to the DNR. The report is a compilation of all activities done through the year, which includes maintaining our ponds, how much material is removed from ponds, how much material is removed from our storm sewers, and what type of education activities we did. We are part of the Northcentral Stormwater Coalition that expands knowledge and education of our stormwater system. Part of the education includes commercials broadcasted on TV. We attend conferences around the area with booths to discuss different stormwater activities each municipality does. The report also includes the type of fiscal expenditures we have.

Last year Niksich brought forward a grant for a stormwater quality update and a stormwater utility feasibility study. The grant was received from the DNR and the project is underway with Strand Associates. As part of the stormwater quality report update, we are going to do a comprehensive study of all of the City's best management practices (BMP), which includes our street sweeping, leaf pick up, our ponds, and private ponds. The report indicates how much pollutants we are removing and brings it into a model. The two large pieces that come from that and are regulated by the DNR are total suspended solids (TSS) removed and total phosphorus, which is one of the newer regulations that came in 2019. The TSS requirement from the DNR is to remove 20% of all TSS from stormwater that is discharged in the City. From our past report, we are removing 30.6%. We are required to remove 68.6% of all phosphorus discharged in our stormwater, but we are only removing 28.1%. There is a large gap we need to remove. Because of that gap, there will be some large expenditures in order to meet the requirements. One way of doing that is through a stormwater utility. As part of the grant, we are also reviewing the feasibility of starting a stormwater utility to help meet the goals. Strand will be coming in January or February of 2025 to provide the information they have found. A stormwater utility could help the City identify funds and how to spend the funds more efficiently towards meeting stormwater requirements. The benefit of a stormwater utility is who we are getting the revenue from. Residents who own a ½ acre lot are not really the pollution generators; it is the large industrial users and businesses that have large impervious surfaces such as parking lots. With a stormwater utility we can generate revenue similar to the water/sewer utility. An owner is taxed on the amount of pollution they create rather than everyone taxed at the same rate.

This year we are converting a pond from a dry pond to a wet pond, which will help reduce our total phosphorous discharge. This pond conversion will cost us \$250,000. That is just one pond that will not bring us another percentage point towards getting to the 68.6%. We would need 40 to 50 more of those projects to get us anywhere near that. We have a long way to go and a stormwater utility is one avenue to help us get there. More information will be provided as the project moves along.

Neal mention Section 3 of the report, which is minimum control measures. We have a total of 49 outfalls with 0 evaluated as part of our routine screening program. He questioned why there are no routine inspections of the 49 outfalls. He also asked what an inspection looks like, if it is part of a rain event, and if it would be a source of revenue if problems were found. Niksich explained that the MS4 permit requires these inspections once every permit term; the permit term is typically 5 years. Once every 5 years we will complete dry weather inspections. We do the inspections during a dry time because a lot of our older infrastructure has infiltration. When we see a stormwater pipe discharge water during a dry period, we know there is probably an illicit discharge. If we identify water coming out, we have to take samples. If the water tests clean, there is no further action. If a pollutant is found, we go to the next manhole to track down where the pollutant is coming from. The previous year we inspected all the outfalls and found a couple that were running during dry weather. We identified two that had pollutants. One had high chlorine which was because this was done during hydrant flushing and we were picking up some of the hydrant water. The other pollutant was an air conditioner cooler that was using City water as part of the air conditioning. The illicit discharge was eliminated. Both cases were high chlorine.

Neal asked if any finances are tied in with the report that will be included in the upcoming budget process. Niksich stated that a lot of the finances are operational, but some will be seen in the budget cycle under capital improvement projects.

Ever since Henke started there has been talk of a stormwater utility. It will be nice to see some results.

Adjourn

Watson moved to adjourn the meeting. Neal seconded and the motion carried 3-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:40 p.m.