

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: September 9, 2021, at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Lisa Rasmussen, James Wadinski, Lou Larson, Debra Ryan, Tom Neal (arrived at 5:20 pm)

Also Present: Mayor Katie Rosenberg, Eric Lindman, Allen Wesolowski, TJ Niksich, Nathan Miller, Cord Buckner, Tom Kilian, Tammy Stratz, 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.

Director's Report on Public Works

Lindman noted that plans for Washington Street have changed a bit. Washington Street was to change to two-way traffic this year. It was a costly project, so rather than doing that we will provide parking on the south side in the interim. It will go to two-way traffic once development starts.

Larson asked which 3 parcels are being considered for the proposed new facility. Lindman stated 1300 Cleveland, a series of properties along Myron Street by DPW, and the DPW site. Larson would like to take 1300 Cleveland off the list. Years ago Larson talked with Lindman about this being a good spot but at that time Lindman said the facility was staying where it is. Since that time things have changed and Larson believes 1300 Cleveland needs to be removed as Council recently rezoned the property to residential.

At approximately 5:20 pm, Neal entered the meeting.

Larson feels we need to stay focused on what Council did and leave the property zoned residential. In the midst of environmental justice, we do not need to place any more environmental injustices in this area and should wait until the area is remediated to residential standards. He questioned what needed to be done to take this property off the list. He asked if we were going to stay focused on the goal of keeping it residential or be manipulated by the City or other businesses that want the site. Rasmussen explained this committee does not have the authority to put use restrictions on a parcel. Lindman added that an item will be on Council next week regarding the facility study, which includes 1300 Cleveland. He would think Council could vote then to remove the property from the feasibility study. Ryan thought this committee could make a recommendation to keep the property as residential and look at other alternatives. She feels we should look at dealerships that are vacant and already have lifts, a garage, and the space. Rasmussen noted that any facility needs to be able to have space for turning movements of full size fire engines, including the aerial. The plan from Barrientos is very different from a car dealer garage. This committee looks at capital projects in the context of infrastructure. We pick the street projects that get built into the budget. The fleet facility is a 2022 capital project that was ranked by the Capital Improvements Committee. That committee prioritizes the requests and provides recommendations to Finance to incorporate into the 2022 budget. This committee does not reselect or cherry pick the CIP committee recommendations. Ryan asked about the prior fire station and if the City would have been better off to keep it and use for auto and truck repair. Rasmussen said it didn't have the room, which is why they had to rebuild. If an engine was parked inside and the door shut, there wasn't room for an average size person to get between let alone work on it.

Neal reminded the committee that there was robust discussion about the Cleveland Ave property and the reasons behind the discussion. The discussion was related to remediation of pollution. It went to residential zoning not for the sole purpose of residential development but for the purpose of achieving residential level remediation regardless of what might end up going there. The main push was to clean up the land so that people that lived around it would not have to worry about dust or runoff.

Regarding the position vacancies, Ryan would like to see part time employees recruited for snow plowing as we need to have adequate people for plowing. 18 hour shifts have a higher risk for accidents. Rasmussen believes

the #1 problem will not be accidents but that the roads are not getting done when people expect. Alders will have to manage the expectations in their neighborhoods because we will see a dip in service compared to what we are used to. We would struggle to hire part time people if we cannot hire full time. Lindman said we are down 4 plow routes, possibly 5. We have 26 plow routes. On an average snow fall, routes would typically take 8 hours. With the vacancies, there is an additional 40 hours of plowing that has to be absorbed with other routes. The crews take care of the main routes initially then the residential areas. We do not like to have drivers on more than 16 hours at a time. We do not have backup drivers. This many vacancies may result in delays of getting into residential areas until the following day. The level of service may be diminished going through this winter. Rasmussen said with a significant snow event, we will have problems getting people where they need to go and will be met with comments from residents. We cannot just magically produce people to do the work. We will have to manage people's expectations and communicate on the front end that some may wait an entire day for their road to become passable. Seldom traveled streets will have a lot of complaints. Rasmussen questioned if the problem with recruitment was based on the wage scale. If we raise the introductory pay we'll create compression for employees who have been here a while. We need to know what the problem is and may need to look at pay. Mayor Rosenberg thinks it is a good idea to talk about this at HR. As a region we are talking about talent attraction and retention. A stat that surprised her was we have more job openings in the area than we have high school graduates. Rasmussen will reach out to the HR chair and ask her to get with the HR director for analysis of the exact source of the problem with recruitment and retention related to street maintainers. Per Lindman, we have been running into this with the skilled labor force for 2 years now. While we could do better on recruitment, retention seems to be more of a significant issue. We are losing people due to wages. It takes a long time to get to the market rate; 8 plus years. Even if an employee is fully proficient in their position after 4 years, it takes another 4 years to get to market rate. We just lost 2 people on the Utility side over the last month due to this. This is a huge problem because then we are investing a lot of time, money and effort into training other people's employees. A discussion will be held at HR next week. If funding is an issue, Rasmussen would be more apt to consider a fix for these problems rather than full implementation of Option 3.

Larson asked if there was a timeframe regarding the condition of East Thomas Street. Staff is working with DPW to get the storm sewer televised. There is no schedule at this time. We need to investigate if the storm sewer is causing an issue. Larson questioned if there was a way to level out the divots. Wesolowski wants to make sure nothing under the pavement is causing issues first. Once that is determined we can patch.

At approximately 5:40 pm, Neal left the meeting.

Kilian asked if the City or GEI has received the results from the second round of testing. Lindman has not heard from them as of yet. Kilian's recollection is that no matter what goes on 1300 Cleveland, we provided an informal assurance to the community that it would be cleaned up to nonindustrial standards.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve minutes of the August 12, 2021 meeting**
- B. Action authorizing downtown snow/ice removal**
- C. Action on Easement with Green Acres at Greenwood Hills LLC at 3115 Townline Road**

Larson moved to approve the consent agenda items. Ryan seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Discussion and possible action on creating two hour parking stalls on McIndoe Street between North 5th Street and North 4th Street

Wesolowski was contacted by Mary Forer of the Historical Society. If this roadway was still State Highway 52, adding parking would not be ideal. Wesolowski would like to mark the stalls so people get used to cars possibly parking there. He would also like to add some diagonal markings and cross hatching up to the stalls to move traffic over.

Wadinski questioned the number of stalls proposed, if this would be safe with traffic coming around the corner, and if parking should be all the way to 3rd Street. Wesolowski said there is no room for more than three parking

stalls up to 4th Street because of a driveway and the intersection. There was not a request to add stalls between 3rd Street and 4th Street. The stalls are far enough west that the pavement markings Wesolowski described should control the flow coming off the corner.

Larson moved to approve adding three parking stalls as proposed. Ryan seconded.

Miller indicated this would have to be added to the ordinance. An ordinance resolution will be included in a future Council packet.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve carried unanimously 4-0.

Discussion and possible action on approving street to be considered for CDBG funding

Wesolowski indicated there is a possibility to receive CDBG funding. A public hearing is scheduled for the end of September so we would need to apply for the funds. The packet included a map showing low and moderate income areas. The proposed section of Torney Avenue falls within the qualifying area. Torney was on the list last year but was not chosen. This section begins with Townline and ends with McDonald Street, so it would be more than doing just 1 block of a 6 block street, which is very inefficient. Torney is a narrow street, which makes the money go further because there is not as much asphalt. One item looked at for funding is the number of residents impacted. This stretch has narrow lots so quite a few homes would benefit. The majority of the properties have existing lead lines. The road is rated a 3, which is the lowest rating.

Rasmussen asked if block grants substantially reduce assessments for the residents. Wesolowski stated property owners are not assessed when block grants funds are used. CDBG funds do not cover sewer and water so the utility would have to cover those costs.

Wadinski asked if Torney would still have a narrow sidewalk. Wesolowski indicated the right-of-way is narrow so there is not a lot of room to do much more. The roadway would probably be reconstructed the way it currently exists.

Larson recommended McIntosh last year as it was in poor shape and a truck route. He feels Torney could have easily been chosen last year as it also is in dire need of repair.

Larson moved to approve moving forward with Torney Avenue. Wadinski seconded.

Ryan mentioned how boulevard trees eventually grow to a point where the roots affect sidewalks. She questioned if the Park Department would look at decreasing the number of trees planted to reduce future maintenance costs. Larson noted that this street does not have boulevards.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve carried unanimously 4-0.

Discussion and possible action on establishing assessment rates for 2022 construction projects

Rasmussen explained assessment rates are set every year. The recommendation is to keep the same rate as last year. Based upon feedback, Wesolowski feels raising the rates would be a tough sell to residents. Bid prices did go up a bit in 2021. We do not know where bid prices will be in 2022. The thought was to keep the assessment rate the same. Given the pandemic, Rasmussen feels it makes sense to have another year with the same rate.

Wadinski moved to approve the assessment rates for 2022 construction projects as proposed. Larson seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Discussion and possible action on Easement with Wausau Opportunity Zone Inc. at 301 Washington Street

Rasmussen explained this easement is to add angle parking. Wadinski asked if this is a temporary easement. Wesolowski confirmed it is a temporary easement for parking. The permanent right-of-way will be dedicated to the City when the road is reconstructed.

Larson moved to approve. Wadinski seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Construction update for 2021 projects

Niksich said 3rd Avenue continues to be a problem. We are looking at completion in early October, possibly stretching to the second week of October. Curb is completed on the north section and at the Randolph Street intersection. They are currently working on sewer and water services from Randolph Street to Clayton, which will continue through next week. Progress is being made, but it is slow. Rasmussen asked if the section from Clayton to Bos Creek has road base so people can get in and out of their driveways. Niksich replied yes and that area just has some fine tuning to complete. Rasmussen indicated the school district and parents are upset that the project continues. She found out that part of the reason for the 5 week delay was that Jake's took on a State project and let 3rd Avenue sit. Before we get to the 2022 construction season, Rasmussen would like to look at what we charge for liquidated damages. If contractors fail DOT projects, they pay something like \$10,000 a day, which makes our \$1,000 a day look like small potatoes. She would also like to look at the fines we are able to levy when plumbers dig up the street and leave the hole sit for a period of time. 3rd Avenue sat for 5 weeks where nothing happened. This is unacceptable and she would like full penalties charged.

5th Avenue was paved this week. Rosecrans was paved last week. We have struggles with any major reconstruction project but we work through them and both of these projects turned out well. On McIntosh Street the contractor is working on sanitary services and manhole replacement. This project has a mid-October completion date.

The WisDOT Bridge project continues with the painting of the Grand Ave Bridge. Wesolowski noted the Concrete Pavement Repair Project will start next week. This includes work on 1st Avenue from Bridge Street to Union Ave, parts of Union Avenue, and 1st Street by the Eye Clinic. They are scheduled to start Wednesday with the project to take about a month. 1st Avenue will be down to one lane of traffic.

Discussion and possible action on Easement with WPS at 1801 Burek Avenue

This easement is to get utilities into the new Water Plant site. Ryan moved to approve. Seconded by Larson and the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Adjourn

Larson moved to adjourn the meeting. Wadinski seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:00 p.m.