

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: October 14, 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

Also Present: Mayor Katie Rosenberg, Eric Lindman, Allen Wesolowski, TJ Niksich, Cord Buckner, Dustin Kraege, Tom Kilian, 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.

Presentation and discussion of Director's Report

Lindman had a conversation with the City Attorney regarding this agenda item. Because the Director's Report has prompted discussion in the past, the City Attorney felt it would be better if we agenzized this versus just having an item. Rasmussen agrees as it gives an opportunity to talk about the report without running afoul of open meetings, as long as the discussion is confined to items listed.

Larson asked for an update on Thomas Street from Prospect to Grand. Lindman is not sure if the storm sewer has been televised yet but staff is working on it. Larson wondered why this has not been prioritized. Lindman will get an update and contact Larson.

Ongoing Environmental Work:

There are ongoing environmental locations; Riverside Park, 1300 Cleveland and the mall site. All are still in progress and final reports have not been received.

Construction Projects:

Additional parking on Washington Street is expected to be done the end of next week. Asphalt was placed on 3rd Avenue this week. The Concrete Pavement Repair Project has been completed. Excavation has started for the 12th Avenue Sidewalk Project with concrete scheduled for next week. McIntosh Street is ongoing with concrete being placed this week.

General Operations:

The first phase of leaf pickup is underway; we may be a little behind. Rasmussen has received positive feedback on how completely the stuff was picked up even though it had rained. Neal stated the crew went through his neighborhood last week. The leaves in his gutter were vacuumed. Others had leaves out or partially out but the truck drove by without picking up. He thought this was odd since a storm sewer is located at the corner. Rasmussen asked if this is the phase where leaves were to be on the boulevard and then on the street for the next phase. Lindman confirmed and indicated we do not like to use the vac trucks for leaves in the street as it can pick up other debris and damage equipment. Kraege added that when the truck is full it needs to be emptied and there were a couple of breakdowns but he will check with the supervisors regarding the issue in Neal's neighborhood. Lindman noted that in Phase 2, leaves on the street will be pushed together and bailed. Larson asked why leaf pickup is started early every year. The vac truck came through and 50% to 75% of leaves were still on the trees. Lindman explained in the past there was only one pickup that started around the 17th to 20th of October. A lot of people were calling and asking to have leaves picked up earlier. Staff tries to predict when leaves will fall and set a schedule so people are aware when we will be out.

Winter Kick Off went well. This year it was handled differently with a day of training for staff.

Weed notices have been steady at over 700 and most likely will be over 800 this year. Staff is working with the Attorney's Office to figure out a different method as it currently involves a lot of staff and administrative time.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve minutes of the September 9, 2021 meeting**
 - B. Action on WPS Easement on Airport Property at Radtke Point Park for electric service**
 - C. Action on WPS Easement on City property at 1803 Burek Avenue for installing a new pole and burying electrical conductors**
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Larson moved to approve the consent agenda items. Ryan seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on final resolution to levy special assessments for 2021 Street Construction Project of 3rd Avenue from Randolph Street to Bos Creek Drive

Wesolowski explained that 3rd Avenue was removed from the resolution approving assessments for 2021 Street Projects. This is to bring a resolution forward levying 3rd Avenue special assessments in 2022. Rasmussen asked if property owners would receive the same bill, just delayed until spring. Wesolowski confirmed. Rasmussen said a number of 3rd Avenue residents were happy about this as the project has been beyond a nightmare for them.

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

Presentation on snow plowing process

Rasmussen feels it is good to have this presentation every couple of years to understand how streets are prioritized and the order of plowing as every year we get calls. It is helpful when Alders are able to explain the method.

Kraege indicated there are a total of 7 vacancies at DPW; 5 on the street side and 2 on the fleet maintenance side. All affect plowing. An interview was held today for a street maintainer. An offer will be extended to a qualified candidate. A mechanic started Tuesday and is in the process of training. There will be some more upcoming vacancies as an operator is retiring December 3rd and the fleet manager will be retiring in February. One operator is currently on FMLA with no return date. This week an operator turned in his resignation to go to a neighboring municipality. We have 5 plow routes currently open with 2 having priority routes. There are 2 sidewalk routes with no one assigned to and also Route 26, which is a miscellaneous route that picks up odd streets and parking lots. This week's resignation will open another route.

With the number of vacancies, Rasmussen asked if some neighborhoods would wait a full day or more before seeing their road plowed. Kraege believes it would be rare for a neighborhood to go a whole day without being plowed, but it is a possibility. With a 2" to 3" snow fall, staff should be able to keep up. There will be delays if there is a large snow fall. Rasmussen noted the need for Alders to manage people's expectations and understand on the front end why this is happening. People are used to seeing roads plowed quickly. If people cannot get out to get to work there will be anxiety. Information up front will be key. Kraege stated they will try to post updates on Facebook and he has been going to neighborhood meetings.

Kraege noted the priority is streets as there are businesses that need to function, people have to get to work, PD and Fire need to get around the City. Staff will focus on getting the streets opened up and then move onto sidewalks. We will get everywhere but some things may take longer. Kraege provided a map showing routes and explained the priority routes. Priority routes are all the main thoroughfares and in every residential neighborhood there are certain priority roads. The goal is that anyone who lives in Wausau only has to drive a few blocks to find a main route that is plowed. Rasmussen asked if streets surrounding schools are priority and Kraege confirmed. Kraege noted one may see a secondary road plowed before a priority. This is because the plow truck has to get from one priority road to another.

Larson noted his forgotten neighborhood of 21st Place off of Sherman Street. They have gone 1½ to 2 days in the past before being plowed while 17th Avenue to the east is clear. Where he lives, two lanes of snow gets pushed onto his street. They need to get out onto a 4 lane road and yet they have to wait to get plowed out. He feels this should be a priority as it is hazardous to get in and out. 22nd Avenue to Corporate Cove and Rosecrans Street gets plowed but 5 side streets are left. Kraege will review this with his supervisors. Lindman noted that one challenge is there are 4 to 5 similar blocks in many other areas. We try to make sure everyone has no more than 2 blocks to

drive to get to a main road. Larson reiterated that this is a safety issue as one has to bust through snow to get onto a 4 lane road.

Kraege explained that this year during Winter Kick Off the morning was used for several classes. They went over things such as pre-trip inspections, winter driving, route priorities and operational classes on loader and salt trucks. Staff had a chance to drive equipment around cones to practice the feel of getting close to a curb without hitting it. Operators went through the equipment to get familiar with it and looked for any possible problems needing maintenance. In the afternoon the crew went over their routes. Anyone with a new route or new to the City worked with someone who has ran the route before. This gave a chance to go through the route and look for possible hazards, such as a high manhole. These items are put on a street repair list to get corrected so we do not wreck equipment when plowing. The biggest strategic plan this year has been trying to figure out how to cover the priority routes. They are working on splitting unassigned routes and adding streets to surrounding drivers to get areas covered more efficiently. Rasmussen feels it is important to note that this is highly dependent on no one being on vacation, no one sick or in quarantine. She admires the efforts, but will be realistic with people on what to expect. Kraege added it is also a learning experience. As we get new people it will take a bit to get them up to speed. With a light snow fall it should not be as big of an issue. He asked for patience with larger snow falls. Rasmussen added that to make sure more streets are passible, sometimes operators only clear the middle. This draws calls because roads are not plowed to the curb. The driver will come back to get to the edges. Kraege stated that will be the case with a drawn out snowfall.

Discussion of potential locations for new DPW facility or DPW Fleet Maintenance Shop

A couple Council meetings ago, it was decided to take 1300 Cleveland off the list. At that point, an initial presentation on other locations was requested. The County also developed a list of potential sites as they are trying to figure out what to do with their Highway Department. Lindman stated there are 9 sites that vary in size. Most are privately owned and some are outside the City limits. Barrientos used a matrix to score the locations.

Larson asked if the 16.7 acres on West Street included the entire block and Lindman confirmed. Larson suggested this site some time ago as he knows how certain people are about blight. This is probably the most blighted area in the City. He feels it would be good to move our department there and get rid of the blight. Ryan noted that Historic Preservation recently tried to get into one of the buildings in this area but wasn't allowed.

Rasmussen asked if the Westwood Drive location is currently undeveloped land along the 4 lane and if it was owned by the City. Lindman explained it is privately owned land wedged between Westwood Drive and Highway 51. The site on International Drive in the Business Campus is City-owned. Rasmussen noted Business Campus land is in short supply and has high tax potential for development.

Ryan asked if the Stewart Ave site is the former Menards property. Lindman stated that site was looked at but is quite small. The Stewart Ave site is by 80th Avenue near the Business Campus. Larson noted that would also take away possible taxable land by the Business Campus. The County Road N site is located by Primrose, which is primarily residential. The County Road Z site is west of Olson's top soil site.

Rasmussen mentioned the County Material site on Winton Street. She thought there was interest on the site for riverfront housing. This site poses the same concerns as the Business Campus sites; she does not want to sacrifice growth for our own use.

Larson asked why the Myron Street site is still being considered when the report indicated it is too small. We would have to tear down 4 properties; 3 residential and 1 commercial. With the passing of the Environmental Justice resolution, he questioned why we are even considering tearing down people's houses when there are other options. He feels this space should be left for future expansion of the Wastewater plant. He also questioned why we would want to continue having industrial trucks in a neighborhood when there are alternative sites. Larson would lean towards the West Street location not only because we could use some of the existing buildings, but it is also centrally located and already a truck route. Rasmussen would be interested to know if there is a possibility for acquisition if the owner did not want to work with Historic Preservation.

Larson inquired about site G and why it was blocked out on the list. Lindman indicated that site was 1300 Cleveland. With these additional sites to look at, Larson asked if the feasibility study on the Myron Street site was going to be completed. He does not want to waste \$15,000 on the study when there are other locations to consider. Lindman explained the feasibility study is to look at all of the sites and narrow it down. Discussion followed on the next steps of this process.

Ryan spoke of the West Street properties and the existing buildings. Other properties could potentially cost \$20 to \$30 million because we would have to build a new campus. She would like to see what options there are with the Myron Street site. Acquiring a few properties to extend the present facility may cost \$3 million versus \$20 million on a new site. She added that West Street is older concrete with major cracking. If this location is considered we may have to plan on redoing the street. She noted the amount of residential traffic to Kwik Trip. Rasmussen added we would need to know the County's timeline for their new facility. They would have to be willing to sell it to us, complete their project and move off site.

Regarding 1300 Cleveland, Kilian asked if it was precisely 1300 Cleveland or if it included any combination of other properties. Lindman explained that Barrientos was looking at the larger piece with the Kolbe property; a total of 16 or 18 acres. Based on the direction of Council, this has been taken off of the list for consideration. Kilian noted the scoring criteria and matrix, which includes fitting with neighboring properties and the City master plan. He does not see a matrix on how it would impact surrounding neighborhoods. Environmental factors are relevant and he feels it would be appropriate to add such a scoring factor. There is federal level guidance on how to select alternative sites by incorporating environmental justice principles so that areas that have been already disproportionately impacted do not take on an additional burden. He asked that the committee consider adding this to the scoring factors. Rasmussen added that a positive in all of this is any new facility would be built to current environmental standards including discharge and spill containments.

Mayor Katie stated it does not sound that the County is any closer to identifying their site. However, there may be an opportunity to work together as we do some of the same things and have some of the same needs, such as salt storage and a vehicle wash facility. Though it may pose challenges, it may be worth investigating while this study is going on. Lindman has inquired with the County on their timeline, but has not received one. He also asked about potentially walking through their facility to see what is feasible for us to use. He does feel this is well worth looking into, especially if we can share facilities.

Wadinski asked if the study will include information on extra costs each year for each piece of equipment to drive the extra mileage, the time for the operator to drive to sites in the Business Campus, and possible loss of tax base. Lindman said the amount of money we have for the study will not include these options; it will include capital costs and estimates. Rasmussen said Economic Development can look at the feasibility of stepping into sites that may be marketable for other things.

Adjourn

Neal moved to adjourn the meeting. Ryan seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:15 p.m.