

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, A STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

Time & Place: Tuesday, July 29, 2014 at 5:30 pm., Council Chambers at City Hall, 407 Grant Street

Members Present: Nagle, Wagner, Nutting, Neal, Gisselman, Winters, Rasmussen, Kellbach, Oberbeck, Abitz, Mielke, Tipple – via phone

Others Present: Jacobson, Rayala, Giese, Hite, Lenz, Werth, Kujawa, Bruce Gerland of AECOM, Alan Wesolowski, Sean Gehin, media

Excused: None

Council President Wagner noted a quorum and called the meeting to order. He summarized that this is an educational meeting and there would not be action taken by the Committee of the Whole at this meeting, because it was not agendaized as such.

Roll call indicated 11 members present.

- 1) Discussion on selecting a design plan for proposed Thomas Street reconstruction: (2 plans of two lane/four/lane cross section with four lanes from the river to 3rd Avenue; two lanes from 3rd Avenue to 17th Avenue including turn lanes; and Kevin Korpela's proposal)**

Nagle opened discussion with a rebuttal to emails and a news article with quotes from Abitz.

Neal stated because he is new to this issue he had a few questions that he would like answered so he can get educated and make a decision. Neal asked if there was a list of residents that were told or promised that they would either have their property purchased by the city or that they wouldn't. Lenz replied that over the years there may have been talk among other staff and property owners, but there isn't such a list.

Bruce Gerland of AECOM, design project manager and has been involved with this project since 2007. He put together a memo dated July 22, 2014 summarizing 3-Lane Community Sensitivity Design Summary of Thomas Street. He spoke about MAP-21, which was signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012. As part of MAP-21, all roads that were functionally classified as principal arterials became part of the National Highway System (NHS). This action includes the stretch of Thomas Street between 17th Avenue and the Wisconsin River. All highways on the NHS, including segments added by MAP-21, must comply with applicable Federal Regulations, including design standards. Thomas Street is considered a standard arterial and must comply with federal guidelines.

Neal asked if MAP-21 standards makes the Korpela options moot. Gerland said that he hasn't studied each of the Korpela plans.

Rasmussen felt that it is important to recognize in the negatives that have been discussed, Mr. Gerland's memo that said the alternative is not doable in a 60 foot right-of-way, which is what we have now. We would have to acquire land no matter what. The Graef plan is 72 feet. The drawback to the three lane plan is that nothing gets any better: traffic, pedestrian safety, parking. We need to be mindful of snow storage; it's expensive to truck snow from the downtown area.

Oberbeck said that people have expressed that they don't like the 4 four bike lane on Grand Avenue. He said that our current boulevards are very difficult to maintain. We have the options to direct traffic and design our streets the way we want to; this is the start of urban planning. We have to look at the internal urban atmosphere that we create and this is an opportunity to whether it is three lanes or beyond. We need to look at the best options. Let's be creative.

Winters said to remember that anything acquired is taken off the tax rolls and that is a long term revenue drain. Winters asked the attending engineers if it is possible to go to our congressional delegation and get a waiver for the MAP requirement. Gerland responded that, yes, we can pursue exceptions to the standards; however it may not be easy..

Winters also asked what roll will the Economic Development Committee having planning the land acquisition, since this ED funds and an ED project. Werth replied the money for the Graef study was money well spent because Graef looked at the project from an economic standpoint, and opportunities of where we could put commercial development on that street and maintain the properties that are there. We are looking at this as Economic Development on this street. We don't want it to look like a patchwork (purchasing pieces) and has the connection so it can move all of the traffic but yet completely keep the neighborhood intact.

Abitz said that almost all of the businesses would be remaining on Thomas Street, approximately 11 plus businesses.

Neal brought up concerns of the contamination issue: Are there costs involved that we don't anticipate? Are we assuming too much? Can we widen the road at that segment of the project with no worries about contamination? Lenz said that we hadn't shown that large industrial property as being redevelopment as part of this economic development plan, but its contamination is a factor. The contamination should be dealt with as a city, but may not be a hindrance to the project.

Winters recommended adopting the Graef plan with absolute minimal right-of-way purchase. He felt CISM should take the lead on road design, and the Economic Development Committee should take the lead on property acquisition; including a process of hearings where people who do not want to be bought out could apply to the ED committee at a hearing.

Gisselman shared his concerns with digging up a contaminated area. The Graef plan calls for development between the river and First Avenue, so there would be some development and disturbing of the soil.

Wagner suggested that we send this back to CISM and let CISM make the decision and bring it back to council. We need to know where it should go, to develop the amount of land that we need and the type of plan that will be put in place.

Oberbeck addressed the persons who signed the petition and do not want to be bought out. The majority of those people from Third Avenue to the river do not want to be bought out of their homes; they want to stay in their homes. He feels that the five lane proposal is not justified in that area by the traffic counts. Oberbeck also questioned what the true holdup is of this project.

Rasmussen shared her agreement with Winters' idea to allow stakeholders come forth and share their concerns and wishes of the Thomas Street project and their homes. Rasmussen recommended this item to the next CISM meeting on August 14, 2014.

Oberbeck and Neal both expressed they want to make sure that CISM looks at all parts of the Thomas Street project: acquisition of properties, bike and pedestrian safety, etc.

2) Discussion and possible amendment to Chapter 2.16 Standing Rules of the Common Council
Jacobson started the discussion about changes to the Standing Rules of the Common Council and that any changes would first go through the Committee of the Whole and then through council for adoption.

- a. Rule 17 – Manner of Deliberation; E. Termination of Debate
- b. Rule 9 – Voting; F. Absentee Voting

The recommended language added the text "No such motion shall be entertained until each member wishing to address an issue under consideration is recognized to speak once." Jacobson explained this means the Mayor would call on anyone who wishes to speak at least once, before entertaining a vote to call the question. Wagner said that as an item to discuss at a council retreat, perhaps council members just need to be educated on these rules. Winters said that perhaps the Committee of the Whole or the Coordinating Committee should create a subcommittee to review these rules. Rasmussen feels that this proposed language does offer clarification and everyone gets at least one shot to voice their concerns. Jacobson reiterated that this language is only for termination of debate. That no such motion to terminate debate shall be entered until every member has had a chance to speak. Also, the ordinance takes precedence over Robert's Rules of Order. She said that Robert's Rules doesn't work very well for governmental bodies. Nagle said until the other night, we have never had a problem with an alderperson not allowed to speak. Maybe we are trying to find a solution to where we really don't have a problem.

Motion by Winters, second by Mielke to request the chairperson form a Rules Subcommittee of five members and refer these two items and the other rules items on this agenda to this Rules Subcommittee. Motion passed 11-0.

3) Discussion and possible action on consideration of moving from a mayoral to city administrator form of government.

Winters applauded the mayor for his press conference and should take this opportunity to support this proposal with all deliberate speed. Winters felt the city should fund the city's study proposed by the Mayor. He commented that this is an important core governmental activity and we shouldn't expect a private organization to fund the work government should do. Also, he doesn't want a private entity that may have a hidden agenda funding our governmental study. The council should decide to fund this activity that the mayor has proposed. The council should take up the question if the council itself is going to make the change in governmental affairs or if the council is going to put this to a referendum. Once the date is set for a referendum, then the rest of the process gets defined by that date. He also recommended that if there is a task force with no

governmental officials on it for this it should be with credible pillars of our community to be on the task force. While this work is being done, we need an interim solution. Winters proposed a budget amendment for hiring an interim Director of Public Works and an interim organizational consultant, who has run a city the size of Wausau, who can be hired or fired at will by a majority vote of the Council. Winters said that with this we can get behind the mayor's proposal to get this thing done.

Mayor Tipple responded that this mirrors his plan. He said the private funding would not come from someone who has a horse in this race. This committee would be a balanced committee with leaders from our area. He agrees with this plan and said that we need to work together with this and to lay out some dates, so we know the timeline we are working with.

Neal agreed about the interim organizational consultant, but not about the interim Director of Public Works. He said that staff in the public works department is looking for leadership within their departments as soon as possible.

Wagner said that other retired public works directors from other areas around the state have offered their assistance part-time. Gisselman said that the Human Resources committee should take this issue and bring the package back to the City Council.

Motion by Oberbeck, second by Rasmussen to send the document that was prepared by Winters to the Human Resources Committee for review and possible action on August 11, 2014. Motion passed 11-0.

4) Discussion of potential agenda items for council retreat.

Wagner suggested training for council members of their roles and responsibilities and the rules that committee meetings are to be run by. Oberbeck feels that the proper thing to do is to look at the priorities of the city and set policies on how we move forward within this fiscal environment and keep our infrastructure in the best shape it can be in. Do we have a path or a vision to make Wausau what it should be within five or ten years? He said we need to figure out how committees are going to work together and combine ideas rather than operate as separate entities. His goal is how to move Wausau forward. Rasmussen said based on her history from planning two council retreats she felt that goal setting is a key thing. We need to define what our goals are for the 2014-2016 council. This council needs to work as a team and she feels that council is showing symptoms of regression back to 2007 and 2008. The council is showing signs of polarization and we need to focus on our behavior as a functional team; take a look at our internal and external communications; and how we communicate with one another, the media and the public. Neal added that when someone speaks to the public are they speaking for the council, for a committee; are there other people who are being pulled into that discussion inadvertently. Part of the council retreat would be well spent to start thinking about the best way to address city business and city hopes and dreams in the best manner. Wagner concluded that he is looking forward to the council pulling together again with communication and trust.

5) Statements from Alderpersons *(This item was removed from the agenda.)*

Motion by Neal, second by Nutting to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting concluded at 7:50 p.m.