

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

---

Date of Meeting: January 10, 2013, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Rasmussen, Abitz, Gisselman, Kellbach, Mielke

Also Present: Marquardt, Wesolowski, Gehin, Winters

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 5:30 p.m. Chairperson Rasmussen called the meeting to order.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approve minutes of the December 12, 2012 meeting**

**B. Approve preliminary resolution for the County Road U project**

**C. Approve Stormwater Maintenance Agreement for Kwik Trip at 2950 Stewart Avenue**

---

Kellbach moved to approve the consent agenda items and Abitz seconded. Abitz questioned when the County Road U project is anticipated to begin. Rasmussen stated a proposed timeline was handed out to members prior to the meeting. The handout was provided to members for information in case they receive inquiries from residents.

There being a motion and a second, the motion to approve the consent agenda items carried unanimously 5-0.

### **Discuss and approve Spring Street design**

---

Gehin stated Spring Street from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street is proposed for reconstruction this summer. Staff is proposing the installation of sidewalk with the reconstruction. Gehin provided site information such as the area is hilly and wooded, and the tree line extends to the back of curb. Not only is the grade of the roadway steep, but the slopes on the side of the roadway are also steep. Property owners have constructed a number of landscape features in the right-of-way, such as block retaining walls and other various landscaping features. Staff is proposing to construct two 14' lanes with curb and gutter on each side. The project ends at the main entrance to Horace Mann Middle School. Due to the existing conditions from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 9<sup>th</sup> Street staff is not proposing installing sidewalk. New sidewalk is proposed from 9<sup>th</sup> Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street, with the exception of the south side between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets, to provide a safe area for children to walk to school. Currently no side streets that feed into Spring Street have sidewalk. The landscape features that are encroaching in the right-of-way will have to be removed by the landowner before the project begins. Additionally, there are mature trees in the right-of-way that would have to be cut down for the sidewalk. These may contribute to reasons why residents would not want sidewalk. Sidewalk is not proposed on the south side of Spring Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets because the steep slope would require the construction of a 200' retaining wall.

Rasmussen questioned if the \$75,000 cost estimate included the stretch from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Street on just one side of the street. Gehin replied the construction cost in the project was for sidewalk on both sides from 9<sup>th</sup> Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street. However, after further review, staff decided against installing sidewalk on the south side between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets. Therefore, the cost estimate will be slightly less. Rasmussen stated she likes the idea of sidewalk being installed on one side versus both because it still provides a safe path to the school yet minimizes the cost and impact. She questioned the amount of foot traffic on Spring Street between 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets. Gehin stated he does not believe there is a lot of foot traffic. Rasmussen stated when sidewalk was proposed on Brown Street there was opposition because the foot traffic was not there.

Abitz stated she viewed the site and it is a big incline. She believes there is not a lot of foot traffic between 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets. She did speak with a resident of the area who believes it would be nice to have a walking path to the school and a lot of people walk between 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets. The residents do want sidewalk, but do not want to shovel it. Rasmussen stated the residents in the area are historically adverse to new sidewalk. However, we are trying to make the community as walkable as possible and make neighborhoods safe for

pedestrians. Not installing sidewalk would be contrary to that. Gisselman feels sidewalk is necessary in the area, especially because of the school. Winters indicated he has not been contacted by residents and the notion that the street would be reconstructed was posted on the District 6 website a while ago. He does believe installation of sidewalk near the school is preferable. Marquardt stated a public hearing will be held on the project and the comments will be forwarded to the committee to make a recommendation to Council.

Abitz moved to approve the Spring Street design as proposed for the public hearing. Mielke seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

### **Discuss and possible action on the Thomas Street project**

---

Bruce Gerland, AECOM, outlined the project purpose and need, including the increase roadway capacity, improving safety, addition of multimodal facilities and accommodations, and the deterioration of the existing pavement. He described the existing typical section and the proposed typical section. Gerland then spoke of the two-lane alternative, including intersection improvements, benefits, and impacts. He spoke of the remaining costs including a \$136,000 savings in engineering costs to finish the four-lane concept without an Environmental Impact Statement. The construction and real estate costs for a four-lane facility are estimated at \$15 million versus a two-lane facility at \$5 million. Gerland then talked about the consequences of not adequately addressing the current safety issues. He stated as traffic volumes increase, crash frequency and societal costs will also increase. If the current crash rate continues, the estimated cost to society (based on FHWA's societal crash costs) is \$32 million over the 20-year life span of the road.

Rasmussen questioned the estimated remaining life span of the Stevens Bridge. Gerland believes the bridge is anticipated to last until the year 2026. Rasmussen indicated if the City's opts to build in the existing right-of-way to save \$10 million, it may not be in the position to reconstruct the road again to a four-lane facility when the bridge expires. The City needs to consider a 30-year vision and think about future development along Grand Avenue, 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and Thomas Street once it is improved. The traffic on Thomas Street is now basically pass-through traffic between 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Grand Avenue, but that may not always be the case. Abitz asked how many driveways there are where vehicles would have to back onto the four-lane road. Marquardt stated driveways onto Thomas Street would be eliminated from any parcel that the City would purchase. Abitz stated between 11<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues all the driveways are off of Thomas Street with the exception of one. Eliminating the driveways would help with safety issues. Rasmussen stated the four-lane plan, except where crossover traffic is allowed, is designed with right-in right-out turns for the side streets, which eliminates some of the safety concern.

Rasmussen stated the committee has only had a few minutes to digest this information. There is no need for a fast decision. This item can be brought back to the committee next month to allow time to review all the information.

Abitz indicated a major business on Thomas Street will be relocating to 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. That property will be coming available in the near future.

Rasmussen stated the traffic counts to year 2037 were provided and in 2012, 25 years earlier, there is already congestion and accidents issues. With local development and the TIF district recently redefined, development may take place well ahead of the 25 year time frame. It is reasonable to assume we will have destinations along Thomas Street before 2037. Gisselman indicated Thomas Street is a major truck route for Kolbe and Kolbe and asked if staff has been in contact with them to see if they have plans for future expansion. He stated if the truck traffic is anticipated to increase, it would be difficult to make a decision to remain with a two-lane facility. Abitz stated as far as she knows they do not see any changes in the future, but it depends on the economy. A four-lane facility would help with the truck traffic. A future agenda item for Parking and Traffic is to review the need for a turn arrow on the traffic signal at Thomas Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. She continues to receive complaints about traffic backing up due to the truck traffic and employee traffic from Kolbe & Kolbe. As far as she knows Kolbe & Kolbe is looking forward to having a four-lane facility.

Mielke stated he would feel more comfortable with taking time to make a decision. It would also show respect to the residents rather than making a quick decision.

Gisselman questioned if there is a safety issue with pedestrian traffic from GD Jones Elementary School. Abitz replied she has not heard of any accidents and there is a crossing guard at 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Most students are either picked up by their parents or they ride the bus. She has also not heard any complaints from the school principal during their neighborhood meetings. Rasmussen stated that GD Jones is one of the schools that participated in the International Walk to School Day. When the parents were polled, safety was not as much of a concern as distance was for why students do not walk to school.

Marquardt stated in his opinion a two-lane facility will not improve the safety. Looking at past experience, Bridge Street was two-lanes and reconstructed to four-lanes in 1988 within the existing corridor with narrow lanes and no boulevard. Sixteen years later, Bridge Street was reconstructed and land was purchased to widen the roadway and install medians for pedestrian crossings and turn lanes. The City tried to save money on Bridge Street and learned it was not a good outcome. He believes the four-lane concept is the best option.

Abitz explained the residents want to have a two-lane road, but she foresees a change in traffic flow. A four-lane road would alleviate traffic in other areas and help with the flow of traffic. Residents do not want to lose their homes, but need to know what direction the project is headed. Rasmussen stated she would always like to save \$10 million, but as with Bridge Street spending \$10 million to save \$10 million would not prove to be a wise decision.

The committee agreed by consensus to bring this item back in February for further discussion and possible action.

#### **Future agenda items for consideration**

---

Abitz asked that an update on the Bridge Street realignment be placed on a future agenda. Marquardt stated a handout was provided for informational purposes on the Highway U/K project. Wesolowski indicated the bid was awarded and the project is anticipated to begin in April per the consultant schedule. However, the actual schedule will be based upon the contractor. A link to the DOT website will be put on the City website, which will provide an updated schedule of the project.

#### **Adjourn.**

---

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