

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: February 14, 2013, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Rasmussen, Gisselman, Kellbach, Mielke, Abitz (arrived at 5:35 p.m.)

Also Present: Marquardt, Lenz, Wesolowski, Gehin, Oberbeck, 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 January 10, 2013 meeting

B. Accept dedication of right-of-way at 1610 Sheridan Road

C. Accept dedication of right-of-way on Junction Street from Townline Road to McDonald Street

D. Authorize initiation of sale of City-owned property at 922 North 1st Avenue

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

At this time, Abitz entered the meeting.

2013 Street Construction Projects: Discuss public hearing results and make recommendation

This item was taken out of the agenda order.

Wesolowski stated the Board of Public Works held public hearings and based upon the comments received, staff recommends moving forward with Kent Street, Werle Avenue, and Westwood Drive. Staff also recommends moving forward with Spring Street, but without the installation of new sidewalk. Wesolowski explained new sidewalk was proposed on Spring Street, but due to the comments received from the residents, staff does not recommend installing the sidewalk. Staff also recommends postponing action on 2nd Avenue and Clark Street as they continue to work out details with property owners and business owners.

Gisselman asked for a further explanation regarding Clark Street and 2nd Avenue. Wesolowski stated the public hearing was not well attended and only one comment was received. The majority of the comments were received when staff met with the Main Street Group. Stakeholders have different ideas for the area and some feel the project should be delayed to a future year. At this point, staff is unsure if a plan to appease everyone in the area can be developed this year. Staff is also working with Wisconsin Public Service to get an estimate to bury the utilities. If the project is to be constructed this year, CISM would need to make a recommendation in April at the latest as there is a month long bid process.

Mielke stated the residents do not want the project and he would suggest delaying it until 2014. He has not heard any positive comments and most believe it is a waste of money. Rasmussen stated last year she attended a meeting with the Near West Side Business Owners, who have a very creative vision for the area. They believe something needs to happen to spur future development. A new street and streetscaping would be a catalyst to other things. Abitz stated she spoke with two business owners who are both opposed to the project. Their main concern is lack of parking and too much green space. She questioned if the budgeted money for the project can be carried over if the project is not completed this year. Marquardt replied the project is located within a TIF district and the money would be borrowed. If the project is not done this year, the money would not be borrowed.

Abitz moved to approve the projects of Kent Street from Grand Avenue to Curling Way; Werle Avenue from Garfield Avenue to West Street; Spring Street from 6th Street to 13th Street, without the installation of new sidewalk; and Westwood Drive from Bridge Street to Pine Ridge Boulevard. Abitz further moved to delay 2nd Avenue from Stewart Avenue to Elm Street and Clark Street from 2nd Avenue to the cul-de-sac to allow staff to further work on the design. Kellbach seconded.

Oberbeck stated he has been involved in discussions on design concepts for the west side. He believes most stakeholders are looking for a more comprehensive look before moving forward. Most feel the project is moving forward too fast and the City should take a step back and look at it for a future project.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve the projects of Kent Street from Grand Avenue to Curling Way; Werle Avenue from Garfield Avenue to West Street; Spring Street from 6th Street to 13th Street, without the installation of new sidewalk; and Westwood Drive from Bridge Street to Pine Ridge Boulevard; and to delay 2nd Avenue from Stewart Avenue to Elm Street and Clark Street from 2nd Avenue to the cul-de-sac to allow staff to further work on the design passed unanimously 5-0.

Discuss and possible action on the Thomas Street project

Marquardt stated that Bruce Gerland of AECOM gave a background of the entire project at the last CISM meeting. Staff is looking for direction so AECOM can move forward with plans and the residents will know what is forthcoming. Rasmussen stated last month the committee looked at reconstructing Thomas Street as a five-lane facility or rebuilding within the existing right-of-way. Abitz stated she reviewed the past CISM minutes and noted that most comments received were in favor of a four-lane design. She is concerned if a decision is postponed any further as the residents need to know the direction and go on with their lives.

Rasmussen stated on February 6, she and Marquardt received a memo from Alderpersons Oberbeck and Winters asking the committee to consider a third alternative of a three-lane facility, two travel lanes with turn lanes. Oberbeck stated he is concerned with segregation between the neighborhoods. Bridge Street is a four lane roadway with bike lanes that are rarely used. He would like to see the Thomas Street neighborhood maintained. He suggested the 3rd Avenue and Thomas Street corridor be combined to provide a passage way between 17th Avenue and the river front. The funding has been lost to do a five lane facility and he believes this is an opportunity to take a look at other options. There has been talk about the two lane bridge, but that is not anticipated to be done until 2026. We should create a better link between Lake Wausau, the Rib Mountain business district, and our business districts. This area is in a TIF district and we should be looking at it for a business district and what can be done to bring the neighborhood up. Bridge Street has not developed and deteriorating residential side yards face the street. He does not want Thomas Street to end up like that area and this is an opportunity to reconstruct the road and stay within the TIF funding.

Marquardt stated the width of a three-lane facility versus a five-lane would reduce the area 24 feet by eliminating one lane in each direction. Properties would still have to be acquired because of how close they sit to the right-of-way. A three-lane road would require 87 feet; therefore, 27 feet of additional right-of-way would need to be acquired. Construction costs would be reduced because there would be 24 feet less of asphalt needed. However, the Bridge Street reconstruction was originally done within the existing right-of-way. Then years later, property was acquired to widen the roadway.

Rasmussen stated during her years being on CISM she has had interaction with the DOT. If a two-lane road abuts the bridge when the life span of the bridge is up, the DOT will only be willing to rebuild a two-lane bridge. This would create an hour glass style of traffic flow. She does not want to have to

rebuild again years later, like what happened with Bridge Street. She is trying to be frugal and only wants to build it once. Mielke agreed with Rasmussen and stated he feels for the residents. More money was spent sixteen years later to reconstruct Bridge Street. Rasmussen stated the City will still apply for federal grant funding for other projects. Marquardt explained if the City stays with the four-lane section or if a different section is selected but acquired properties are still impacted, the City is ineligible for federal funding for Thomas Street. The City would be eligible for funding for other projects. The new cycle to apply for STP funding begins in June. The DOT has not yet stated the amount of funding available, but from past experience it is around \$1 million. Staff has not determined what streets would be submitted, but it could possibly include the Bridge Street realignment or 1st Avenue from Thomas Street to Stewart Avenue to include bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on the east side. He reminded the committee that the projects submitted would be in competition with projects submitted by other communities.

Gisselman stated in the past he has been in favor of proceeding with the four-lane plan. People have difficulty crossing the street. Similar streets like Bridge Street and Stewart Avenue are also difficult to cross. This would create another four-lane barrier. We should be creating a walkable city that has friendly bicycle and pedestrians areas to cross Thomas Street. He is now hesitant to approve a four-lane road and feels a four-lane section would create a speedway.

Marquardt explained pedestrian crossings on Thomas Street are designed with a median. Pedestrians would cross two lanes, stop on the median and then cross the other two lanes. As it exists today, there are only two lanes to cross, but pedestrians have to continuously watch traffic in each direction. Gisselman stated standing on the median on Bridge Street is not pleasant and does not believe medians are an answer. Marquardt replied Bridge Street and Stewart Avenue do not have the same plan as proposed for Thomas Street.

Oberbeck questioned where would the traffic be coming from that would utilize Thomas Street and what is the true intent of the traffic pattern. It seems like we want to get people in and out as soon as possible, but what we really want is to keep people in. One of the objectives is to create a walkable city. 17th Avenue, 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue are segregated neighborhoods and that is one of the causes of blight. He believes the City needs to make the environment for the businesses and a gateway to the north and west.

Rasmussen stated with the upcoming soccer field development, the Curling Club and others, Thomas Street does become an important flow. She does not want to delay a decision and would like to give the residents closure.

Cindy Gwidt-Scheibe, stated she has lived at 1033 South 5th Avenue for 17 years. When she purchased her house there was talk about Thomas Street being reconstructed but no one knew when. She believes that widening Thomas Street will segregate the area. Thomas Street is already difficult to cross and there are a lot of residents who walk to 3M Park and Riverside Park. She does not want to hustle kids and a stroller across the street and then wait for more traffic. The residents do want to get this finalized, but people's opinions have changed. She would like the City to show the options to the residents again and get feedback. This is a good opportunity to make it a great thing and would like the City to take a step back and look at it again.

Abitz stated she lives one block south of Thomas Street and back in 1968 there was talk of making it a four-lane road, but it was not feasible. Now is the time with the Holtz Krause development and the Curling Club. The older residents have passed on and more properties are becoming rentals. However, most people still want a four-lane road and would like to see it move forward. She does not see it as transferring people from Schofield and Rib Mountain. There is traffic from 24th Avenue and Sherman

Street that uses Thomas Street to get to the other side of town. When she tries to get onto Thomas Street she has to wait and sometimes due to the wait she makes a U-turn to drive to the traffic signals. Additionally, she does not see children walking or riding bikes to school as parents drop them off. She understands Gwidt-Scheibe's concerns about crossing the street but the City needs to grow. She feels it would put a damper on development if a four-lane facility is not built as she gets complaints daily about being stuck in traffic. She also does not want to get stuck like Bridge Street and have to spend more money in the future. We should build it right the first time to get traffic flowing to the businesses.

Robert Bauman, 1040½ South 5th Avenue, stated Thomas Street is near where he lives. He does like where he lives, but it is dangerous with the traffic. He believes it is time for change and it should be done right the first time.

Rasmussen stated a three-lane section would still require land acquisition. If the land required is substantially less than the entire parcel, the City would acquire only the needed property. This could leave houses with shortened driveways and impact yards. Marquardt stated that is possible with that alternative and it would affect 15-20 properties. Following real estate laws, when purchasing properties for public improvements, the City can purchase only the property that is needed and is not required to purchase the entire parcel. This happened on Sherman Street where the garage is closer to the new right-of-way and the property owner is not able to park in the driveway.

Rasmussen referred to the house on the corner of 17th Avenue and Bridge Street. The house was not acquired during construction and now there is a huge boulder in the front yard to prevent a vehicle from colliding into the house. The house is for sale again and in retrospect it should have been bought during the project. If a three-lane is constructed and only the property need is purchased we will have angry residents with short driveways.

Mielke moved to approve moving forward with the previously approved four-lane design of the Thomas Street corridor. Abitz seconded and the motion carried 4-1.

Approve terms of agreement for access to the Holtz Krause Athletic Complex and propose for the 2014 budget

Marquardt stated in October the committee talked about the proposal brought forth by the Holtz Krause Steering Committee to extend Kent Street to the east of Curling Way and extend Curling Way north to Junction Street for the proposed development on the Holtz Krause site. An agreement has been brought forward where the City would be responsible for building Kent Street and Curling Way and the Holtz Krause Steering Committee would give the City money for the costs they would have incurred to build driveways. On the south side the driveway was estimated to be just under \$80,000, and just under \$42,000 for the driveway on the north side. Staff is questioning if the committee is still in agreement now knowing the estimated costs. If approved, the item would be forwarded to Council and submitted for the 2014 budget.

Gisselman moved to approve the terms of agreement for access to the Holtz Krause Athletic Complex and to propose for the 2014 budget. Abitz seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Approve use of Community Sensitive Solutions (CSS) funding for the Grand Avenue corridor

Wesolowski stated the DOT is working with Strand Associates to finalize plans on Grand Avenue. There is approximately \$110,000 in CSS funding available. Staff recommends using the funding to upgrade the existing street lighting from HPS to LED. The existing lighting is old and does not function correctly.

The new lighting would also include outlets for Christmas decorations. Staff is looking for approval to work with the DOT to get final costs. Abitz asked if there was an estimate on how much savings it would be to use LED lighting. Wesolowski replied although he does not have a yearly cost savings; LED can save up to 60% on energy costs and 50% on maintenance costs.

Kellbach moved to approve use of CSS funding for street lighting upgrades on the Grand Avenue corridor. Mielke seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Updated on the Bridge Street realignment

Gehin explained the City retained CWE, Inc., in 2010 to prepare 70% preliminary plans for the realignment of Bridge Street. The typical section is four lanes with a median, bicycle lane, curb and gutter, and sidewalk. The design was approved by CISM in 2010. CWE is working on stormwater requirements to detain and treat stormwater. They are also working on an environmental report to make sure the proposed realignment will not affect any environmental conditions. CWE anticipates providing 70% preliminary plans in March and final 70% plans in May.

Abitz stated she is looking forward to the change, but asked if the incline coming down Bridge Street to Pine Ridge Boulevard would be changed as it is currently slippery in the winter. Gehin replied the horizontal alignment of Bridge Street will be flattened at Pine Ridge Boulevard. The realignment is proposed through the existing stormwater basin north of Bridge Street. Flattening the roadway in this area should improve the vertical alignment slightly.

Future agenda items for consideration

There were no future agenda items suggested for consideration.

Adjourn

Mielke moved to adjourn the meeting. Abitz seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:30 p.m.