

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

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

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

Also Present: Marquardt, Lenz, Oberbeck

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.

2013 Street Construction Projects: Discuss public hearing results for County Highway U from Westwood Drive to Business Highway 51 and make recommendation

Marquardt stated that the Board of Public Works held a public hearing for this project on February 18, 2013. Marquardt highlighted some of the questions received at the public hearing such as laterals and how they are assessed; lighting, which will be included in the project; and the median on the west side of the highway, which will be a grass non-mountable median. There will be one turn median cut east of Westwood Drive to provide access to property owners on the north. There were also a number of comments suggesting sidewalks are not needed on Highway U. Sidewalks are proposed on both sides of Highway U and property owners would be responsible for winter maintenance. A question was also received on how the rate was set since the City will be receiving funding. The City will receive just under \$1 million in STP Urban funds, but it is a 50/50 match, so the City will also contribute \$1 million and will be responsible for any additional amounts.

Rasmussen stated she received comments commending the design in making the area bicycle and pedestrian friendly. She received no negative feedback.

Abitz questioned if Mr. Henning received an answer to his question regarding 80 feet the DOT owns and how it was assessed. Henning replied the answer he received was one government entity does not assess another government entity.

Abitz moved to approve moving forward with County Highway U from Westwood Drive to Business Highway 51. Mielke seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

2013 Street Construction Projects: Discuss 2nd Avenue from Stewart Avenue to Elm Street and Clark Street from 2nd Avenue to the cul-de-sac and make recommendation

Marquardt stated staff recently met with business and property owners to show a revised design based off of comments received at their first meeting. At the meeting, Dave Oberbeck, in his capacity with the Main Street Group, had attendees break into small groups to come up with ideas on how they want the area to look. Marquardt discussed the changes made from the first design to the second. It was questioned if angle parking could be put in on 2nd Avenue. Staff looked into this option and determined if angle parking was put on 2nd Avenue, it would have to be changed to a one-way street. There would be more parallel parking on each block because of the alleys that exist. With angle parking, a number of parking stalls would be lost due to the alleys; however, parallel parking would provide two to three more spots. Parking would be removed from the first block to create a larger boulevard area between the curb and sidewalk to make a gateway/entrance area. To do this, a driveway was eliminated and it was questioned how that would affect their business for deliveries, garbage pickup and customers. Bump outs were proposed at all intersections in the first design to create a smaller distance for pedestrians to cross traffic. There were concerns if that design provided enough room for semis to make turns. Bump outs

were left in on 2nd Avenue to help create the parking lanes and to assist with pedestrians crossing. The bump outs were removed from the side streets to make more room for turning movements. From the first meeting there was a concept of creating more of a pedestrian entrance at 1st Avenue and Stewart Avenue. However, the crosswalk at 1st Avenue crossing Stewart Avenue does not come straight across to the intersection. Therefore, a plaza area is proposed to connect the two crosswalks. The first plan had a smaller cul-de-sac with no parking which created concerns about removing the parking. A concept was taken off of the Master Plan that provides parking next to the business on 1st Avenue. There are still concerns for delivery trucks using the alley and the elimination of some of the parking

Rasmussen stated she also attended the meeting. The business owners are enthusiastic to see a creative vision for the area emerge. This meeting was held in an effort to tap into that energy and it was a productive exchange of ideas. The second version is improved from the first; however, the stakeholders still want to see other changes. There is a fair amount of interest in the cul-de-sac and they would like to see a smaller plaza with more green and less hard surface. It was clarified that hardscape is not necessary blacktop as it can be retaining walls, planters, etc.

Oberbeck stated the business owners were asked to submit photos of pleasant environments that are pedestrian friendly and how they would like the area to appear in a three dimensional aspect. He noted that green does not necessarily mean grass, but rather trees, plantings and inviting areas. They discussed car and pedestrian movement into the area and tried to create a vision of the environment. Oberbeck highlighted some of the likes of attendees such as a gateway to the area. However, they would like something smaller and more subtle than an archway. They like the look of cobblestone and the road remaining two-way. They would like warm, low lighting included. They would like the plaza recreated as a circular plaza. They would like an area created to encourage people going into the business district. Expanding development to secondary streets was discussed, which can be done in phases but there should be a vision to market the area as a TID district. The development should encourage new businesses to the area and enthusiasm to come to the area. The area is surrounded by neighborhoods, which should be addressed and allow a walkable area. Functionality aspects were talked about, especially access for garbage pickup. The group would like this done as quickly as possible, but they also want it done right to create a neighborhood that brings value back into that side of town. The Main Street Design Committee will be looking at the information next week and hope to bring a recommendation to the West Side Group and then to City staff.

Rasmussen touched base on items she noted from the meeting, such as a welcome sign to the west side neighborhood as a unique and defined area of Wausau. The use of banner poles and lighting similar to downtown would be a common element to the downtown area. They would like a light that is not bright, but a softer LED that still enhances the feeling of safety in the neighborhood. They would like bicycle and scooter parking available. They would like the street to remain a two-way street. They would like cobblestone included or stamped asphalt if there are not issues with road salt, water, and snow plowing. Engaging the group will cause them to invest in their own properties. A redevelopment of the area will lure others to the area.

Oberbeck stated a professional landscaper would help to market the area and create a vision of the textures. Rasmussen stated the public enthusiasm for the 400 Block grew when the three dimensional drawings were created as it is hard to visualize with a flat map.

Gisselman questioned if there is a common understanding with how to proceed with the cul-de-sac design. Oberbeck stated they are going back to the larger scale cul-de-sac design, but incorporating textures. This could become a multi-purpose space that could be closed off for an event and would also create a visual entrance into the area. Gisselman asked if parking would be allowed for the businesses

from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Oberbeck replied businesses would rather have the parking, but we can create the environment without having a lot of green space.

Rasmussen explained the cul-de-sac could be more rounded to meet the road, which creates a semicircle to give a different feel. She believes from a design standpoint, we are on the right path and consensus will now come down to design elements and aesthetics. The road will function with the current design but there needs to be a consensus on the identifying features.

Mielke believes this will be great when completed and thanked staff for being open minded and listening to the neighborhood. He has heard owners would like it done in one phase and not over several years. He believes it should be done right and at this point if need be it should be deferred to 2014.

Gisselman questioned property investment by Clark Street and 1st Avenue property owners. There will be a good amount of money put into this project and he is curious what kind of reaction we will get back from the property owners by putting their own investment into their properties. Oberbeck stated it will take improving the infrastructure to encourage development. It is time to start getting rid of hardscape. He has also heard that zoning is getting in the way of development because of parking regulations. We need to make the investment to encourage other investments, not just on 2nd Avenue but also on Clark Street, Callon Street, Alexander Street, and Elm Street. This should be looked at as a comprehensive overall plan and how to develop the area as a TID district. Rasmussen stated as streets become ready to rebuild (Alexander, Callon, Clark) similar design elements should be incorporated.

Consider sale of City-owned property at 922 North 1st Avenue

Marquardt stated the property at 922 North 1st Avenue was purchased when 1st Avenue was reconstructed. The house was torn down, but the garage remained. In 2009, the City looked at selling the property, but Community Development was interested in building a house on the lot. Those plans never materialized. There have been some problems with the existing garage and the City is in the process of demoing it. No departments are currently interested in the property and staff would like to proceed with the sale. The City Assessor has determined the value to be between \$3,500 and \$5,000.

Abitz questioned the size of the lot. Lenz replied it is approximately 60' on the west side but the corner is cut off on the east side. Marquardt stated when staff looked into selling the property in 2009; Roger Sydow had indicated it was a buildable lot. It is unknown if any neighboring property owners are interested. It is zoned residential and it is anticipated it would remain residential.

Kellbach moved to approve moving forward with the sale of 922 North 1st Avenue with a minimum bid price of \$3,500. Mielke seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Request for encroachment of right-of-way for a retaining wall at 716 North 13th Street

Marquardt stated this property is located on the south side of Franklin Street across from the Woodson Art Museum. The property was recently sold and the buyers have asked the sellers to pay for a new retaining wall as part of the acquisition costs. They would like to rebuild the wall where it exists; however, the existing retaining wall is located within the right-of-way. Staff could not locate an easement granting the encroachment. Staff does not see an issue with granting the standard easement with a hold harmless agreement to rebuild the wall in the current location. The wall on the Woodson Art Museum property creates more of a vision issue. Rasmussen stated if the wall was not replaced in the same location it would have a significant impact on the yard. Marquardt confirmed stating the wall would have to be moved seven to nine feet back to be located on private property.

Mielke moved to approve the encroachment of right-of-way for a retaining wall at 716 North 13th Street. Gisselman seconded.

Abitz questioned if there are any future plans to install sidewalk in the area. Marquardt explained when Franklin Street was reconstructed, sidewalk was not installed on the south side from 11th Street to the east because of the existing retaining walls. He does not foresee the retaining wall for the Woodson Art Museum moved in the future.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve the encroachment of right-of-way for a retaining wall at 716 North 13th Street passed unanimously 5-0.

Future agenda items for consideration

Rasmussen stated 2nd Avenue from Stewart Avenue to Elm Street and Clark Street from 2nd Avenue to the cul-de-sac will be on a future agenda. Marquardt stated if there is a need to hold a meeting in May it will have to be rescheduled due to conflicts with staff's schedules.

Adjourn

Mielke moved to adjourn the meeting. Kellbach seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:20 p.m.