

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: November 12, 2015, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Rasmussen, Mielke, Gisselman, Kellbach

Also Present: Jacobson, Lenz, Gehin, Stratz

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.

Approve minutes of the October 8, 2015 meeting

Mielke moved to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2015 meeting. Gisselman seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on petition to vacate a portion of the alley abutting 215 East Thomas Street west to Emter Street

Rasmussen invited those in attendance who wished to speak regarding the proposed vacation to come to the podium and give their name and address for the record.

Renee Clark owns 223 East Thomas Street, which is directly next door to Elder Sanctuary. She has been in this house for 23 years. She recently did home improvements including 60 yards of concrete that allows them to continue to have alley access. They use the alley four times a day and sometimes more because backing onto Thomas Street is very hard. Additionally, they snowmobile in the winter and to back out a truck and trailer with snowbanks is a hazard. The area proposed to be vacated is at the end of her property down to Emter. By leaving the alley behind her garage open, anyone heading west from McCleary will back into her driveway rather than backing down the alley. It already happens when the sanctuary has large events. She feels it would be a hazard for her if the alley is not left open. She will not have alley access if vacated because she cannot turn to the east into the alley due to telephone poles. She provided pictures that she took of her property and the alley.

Russ Fuchs, 228 Edwards Street, stated he wants to be able to pull his trailer through the alley to remove brush. If this entrance is closed he will lose access because a trailer could not be backed all the way down the alley and he does not want to back into a neighbor's property to turn.

Jeff Guralski, 236 Edwards Street, stated his father uses the alley to access the garden as he cannot walk down the hill in the back yard. If the alley is closed, he would have to make a road to the garden. Guralski has other projects he will be working on and if the alley is closed he could not do what he would like. He said a police officer (he believes it was Officer Yang) agreed with him about the need for the alley when he used the alley to recover a bicycle and other items.

Lamont Thao, administrator of the property at 215 East Thomas Street, would like to close a portion of the alley due to safety concerns during events. A lot of people and children walk back and forth from the parking lot to the building. Closure of the alley would be beneficial for the safety for their operation. The other end of the alley would not be closed and the neighbors could use the alley to the east. The alley has been unattended and no one takes care of it. Brush encroaches into the alley and if you drive through

your vehicle will get scratched by branches. No one plows the alley in the winter. He stated again that he is not asking to close the entire alley.

Christine Guralski, 236 Edwards Street, is concerned with safety if the alley is closed. Police use the alley and noted that someone recently went to jail for stealing from yards. There would be a potential risk to the Police Department if they had to climb something to protect the neighborhood and the sanctuary establishment. She stated an officer has agreed that this is a good point. She also gardens and if she would need to take dirt to the garden she could not back down the alley. Additionally, if the Fire Department would need to get back there they could not back out. There are public safety concerns for both sides.

Paul Schwantes, owner of 204 Edwards Street, wants to make sure he would maintain ownership of half of the alley if vacated. He stated Thao has done a good job improving the property and he has had no problems with them. Thao has been cooperative with any concerns Schwantes has had. He added that the Police Department could have access to the alley from the parking lots.

There being no further comments, Rasmussen closed the public hearing.

Lenz noted that a resident listed on the petition for vacation may have spoken against it tonight. Fuchs stated that was him. He would have no problem with placing a private alley sign but he heard a pipe would be installed cutting off access. It would also be alright if a small area was blocked off during events but he needs access to Edwards Street. He did sign the petition because he was told the alley would not be shut down only that Thao did not want the public driving across the parking lot during funerals.

Rasmussen questioned if the plan was to convert the area to a private drive or restrict access during events. Thao would like to close that end of the alley so people do not use their parking lot for other activities. Semis have used the parking lot to turn around and pass through. He added that neighbors to the east would still have access on the other end. Clark stated she cannot turn left onto the alley from her property.

Mielke is trying to understand what is going on in the neighborhood that would require closing the alley and cutting off the neighbor's access. Thao stated the neighbors can still enter and exit from the east end of the alley. Mielke questioned if the alley is plowed in the winter. Clark stated they plow the alley and have done so for 23 years. Thao stated the vacation request is for the safety of people who attend their events. Rasmussen questioned the number of events held in a year. Thao responded twelve to fifteen. He noted that the alley is basically abandoned and overgrown. Vehicles get scratched by the overgrowth. Mielke stated that could be true of any alley in the City and asked if a sign could be installed to slow down. Clark indicated a 15 MPH sign is located in the alley, which Mielke believes is too fast for an alley. Christine Guralski stated it is other people disrespecting his property and not the neighbors.

Gisselman asked the number of properties that have access on the alley. Clark indicated her only access is to the west. Guralski stated her next door neighbor also has alley access but he had to work and could not attend this meeting. Rasmussen asked if garbage is picked up in the alley or on Thomas Street. Clark responded it is on Thomas Street.

Rasmussen stated temporary closures have been done for special events and perhaps this alley could be temporarily closed when there is an event. Clark indicated the events go for days and are 24/7. Rasmussen explained that when temporary closures are approved for special events, the closures are done by DPW. However, the events for the sanctuary would not be considered a Class 1 event. She added that to close the alley for twelve events a year would be an extreme inconvenience for the rest of the year.

Kellbach moved to approve vacating the alley abutting 215 East Thomas Street west to Emter Street. Mielke seconded. Motion failed due to a vote of 0-4.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on petition to vacate a portion of the alley bounded by Prospect Avenue, Genrich Street, Dunbar Street and Single Avenue

Rasmussen invited those in attendance who wished to speak regarding the proposed vacation to come to the podium and give their name and address for the record. After asking three times, no one appeared and the public hearing was closed.

Rasmussen stated this matter surrounds the District 2 Tot Lot that has been under discussion for a period of time.

Mielke moved to approve vacating a portion of the alley bounded by Prospect Avenue, Genrich Street, Dunbar Street and Single Avenue. Kellbach seconded.

Gisselman questioned if the neighbors have been talked to as this seems like the same situation as the previous public hearing. Tammy Stratz stated both properties abutting the proposed vacation have garages; however, the access is to Dunbar Street. Owners of 801 and 805 Dunbar are alright with the vacation as they did not even realize an alley was there. Staff did not realize there was an alley there either until plans were created for the tot lot. Gisselman questioned if the remaining property owners received notice of the proposed vacation and staff confirmed. Stratz indicated she did not speak with the remaining property owners as the alley is grassed over, does not appear to be used and their garages are facing Dunbar Street.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve vacating a portion of the alley bounded by Prospect Avenue, Genrich Street, Dunbar Street and Single Avenue carried unanimously 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on petition to vacate a portion of 80th Avenue

Rasmussen invited those in attendance who wished to speak regarding the proposed vacation to come to the podium and give their name and address for the record.

Deb Johnson, 902 South 80th Avenue, stated she is in favor of the vacation and would eventually like the area to be annexed to the Town of Stettin so the area could be molded into their property lines.

There were no further comments offered and the public hearing was closed.

Kellbach moved to approve the vacation of a portion of 80th Avenue. Mielke seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Discussion and possible action on the 2015 Wausau MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Lenz introduced Andy Lynch from the Wausau Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Lynch has been working with the MPO on updating the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The MPO had a plan in 2009 and the City adopted it in 2010. The plan presented tonight is an update of the previous plan. The MPO is composed of leaders from surrounding municipalities and has recommended adoption of the updated plan. Additionally, the City of Wausau Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee recommends adoption. The

plan did go out for public comment before the MPO took action on it so the public has had a chance to also weigh in on the plan.

Lynch explained that the plan is built upon the five E's of Bike Ped planning, which are evaluation, engineering, encouragement, education and enforcement. He started with engineering and explained that the demand for walking and biking is estimated by taking several factors, such as population. The more populated areas will have a higher demand. Accidents were also examined and nothing unique was found with the Wausau area compared to Wisconsin or the rest of the United States. Roads are evaluated based upon traffic volume, road width, speed, and presence of bicycle infrastructure to determine a traffic stress rating. This was used to create an area-wide traffic stress model that indicates 40% of the roads are high stress and 10% low stress. Looking specifically at Wausau, the bridges and connections to the southeast and Rib Mountain are high stress. Generally, conditions are favorable for walking and biking, but there are a few key route improvements that should be made.

Lynch continued on by explaining the plan does not have a timeline but rather a near term versus a full build out. Most of the projects would be classified as a near term. The build outs would be more challenging projects, such as Grand Avenue. Near term projects include Stewart Avenue, which is scheduled for next year; Thomas Street, which is under consideration; and 1st Avenue, which is scheduled for 2018. If all of the near term recommendations were applied, the traffic stress level would be lowered from 39% to 17%. The traffic stress model can be used from year to year to gauge progress and evaluate when to do a project.

Lynch provided an example of the plan's recommendation. Sherman Street could have full bike lanes, a travel lane in each direction and a center turn lane. He also showed an example of road in Minneapolis that is similar to 1st Avenue in width and traffic volumes.

The cost for the entire plan was broken down in two ways, a standalone cost versus a coordinated cost. The standalone cost for the entire plan, metropolitan area wide, is estimated at \$12.1 million. The coordinated cost is estimated at \$9.8 million. This is for the total network mileage of 107.2 miles. The standalone cost for just Wausau is estimated at \$3.9 million and the coordinated cost estimated at \$2.9 million for 37 miles.

Just as important as the engineering aspect are the other four E's of bike ped planning. Encouragement gets people using the bike lanes. They would like to expand Bike to Work Week efforts, expand efforts for Safe Routes to School, hold open streets events, and explore options for a bike rental program. Education efforts are also being expanded as far as PSA and outreach. Enforcement not only deals with negative enforcement, but positive as well. Training seminars are provided to law enforcement officers so they better understand bike and pedestrian issues. Evaluation is important to see if what is being done is working. They are in the process of creating a regional counting program using automated counters, will inventory area bike parking, and have a goal of recalculating the bike stress level every year.

Lenz stated the plan is not a firm commitment to the dollars of the plan but rather a guide to use in planning. Rasmussen stated this is something that has been talked about for a number of years as far as street and road design going forward. She added that part of the reason the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee was formed was to look at street designs to see if they are bike and ped friendly enough.

Mielke moved to accept the 2015 Wausau MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Gisselman seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Discussion and possible action on Relocation Order regarding the Thomas Street Project

Gehin stated approving a relocation order will allow the City to realign Thomas Street as proposed in the approved plat. It will also allow MSA to begin property appraisals.

Mielke moved to approve the Relocation Order regarding the Thomas Street Project. Kellbach seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Discussion and possible action on Request for Proposals for Engineering Design Services for South 1st Avenue from Thomas Street to Stewart Avenue. (Proposals were opened by the Board of Public Works on October 27, 2015.)

Gehin explained that 1st Avenue from Thomas Street to Stewart Avenue is scheduled to be reconstructed in 2018. To assist with the design, a RFP was sent to several consulting firms. Eleven proposals were received. The proposals were reviewed and independently screened by Lindman, Wesolowski and Gehin with Ayres Associates ranking the best. Therefore, staff recommends moving forward with Ayres. Staff will negotiate with Ayres on a contract.

Mielke moved to accept the proposal from Ayres for Engineering Design Services for South 1st Avenue from Thomas Street to Stewart Avenue. Kellbach seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Discussion and possible action on easement from Wisconsin Public Service for facilities located along 1st Street

Gehin indicated in order to provide power along 1st Street, WPS is requesting an easement. The exact location of the easement is approximate. The easement would provide power for street lighting, path lighting and the waterfall.

Kellbach moved to approve the easement from Wisconsin Public Service for facilities located along 1st Street. Gisselman seconded.

Lenz stated the exact location of the easement may change because of the trail west of North River Drive. Staff believes it would be more efficient for potential development if the easement hugged the right-of-way. Gehin said the easement language provides flexibility depending upon the final location of the path. If it drastically changes, the easement can be amended.

Kellbach modified her motion to approve the easement from Wisconsin Public Service for facilities located along 1st Street subject to delineation of the exact route by staff. Gisselman seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Discussion and possible action on obtaining a drainage easement for 1215 Maple Hill Road

Gehin indicated that this item had been to CISM roughly two years ago. At that time the residents could not come to an agreement on what exactly was needed. Alderman Winters had recently received calls so staff revisited the drainage issue. Last week DPW extended storm sewer from River Hills Circle east to mid-block on Maple Hill Road and placed a storm inlet behind City sidewalk on Gary Klingbeil's property. Klingbeil has agreed to an easement in writing. This has been an issue for some time as water in the late fall and early spring runs down the hillside across sidewalk and into the roadway creating an icing issue and safety hazard. DPW had the availability to complete the work before the closure of the

asphalt plant and staff is asking for approval of an easement after the fact. Rasmussen stated the goal was to find a resolution although they would like to review the issue before work is completed.

Mielke moved to approve the drainage easement for 1215 Maple Hill Road. Kellbach seconded.

Gehin added that by placing the storm inlet, the neighbors can collectively work together to extend a private drain tile pipe to the south to improve the drainage issues behind the homes. Rasmussen noted that the directive was to continue to work with the neighbors to find a solution. Gisselman questioned if the cost of \$14,000 was exact as DPW did the work. Gehin completed the cost estimate by using the DOT's average unit pricing and the actual cost to complete the work would be dependent upon if labor is included. If just the material is calculated, the cost would be well under that estimate.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve the drainage easement for 1215 Maple Hill Road carried unanimously 4-0.

Future agenda items for consideration

There were no future agenda items offered for consideration.

Adjourn

Kellbach moved to adjourn the meeting. Mielke seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:25 p.m.