

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: April 12, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

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

Also Present: Mayor Mielke, Lindman, Bliven, Wesolowski, Buckner, Joe Gehin

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. Chairman Gisselman called the meeting to order.

Public Comment for matters not appearing on the agenda

No one came forward to offer public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approve minutes of the March 8, 2018 meeting

B. Action on Stormwater Maintenance Agreement for Aspirus Wausau Hospital at 333 Pine Ridge Boulevard

Kellbach moved to approve the consent agenda items. McElhaney seconded and the motion carried 4-0 with Abitz abstaining because Aspirus is her employer.

Discussion and possible action on the third revision to the State/Municipal Agreement for Townline Road from Grand Avenue to Easthill Drive

Wesolowski stated the State/Municipal Agreement for Townline Road has been revised to include costs of the railroad crossing surface and gates. Unfortunately federal funding is capped. The City will pay 100% of the cost of any upgrades to the railroad.

Rasmussen moved to approve the third revision to the State/Municipal Agreement for Townline Road from Grand Avenue to Easthill Drive. Abitz seconded.

Abitz questioned what the additional amount is. Wesolowski replied it is estimated at \$100,000. Rasmussen asked if this was for the railroad crossing arms originally planned and not costs associated with the parking arrangement. Wesolowski confirmed.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve the third revision to the State/Municipal Agreement for Townline Road from Grand Avenue to Easthill Drive carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on the third revision to the State/Municipal Agreement for South 1st Avenue from Thomas Street to Stewart Avenue

Wesolowski explained the original agreement did not include the railroad crossing. New gates and arms will be installed for a cost of \$181,000. Abitz asked if this is regarding the crossing near Sherman Street and Wesolowski confirmed.

Rasmussen moved to approve the third revision to the State/Municipal Agreement for South 1st Avenue from Thomas Street to Stewart Avenue. McElhaney seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action authorizing the sale of 25' of 305 South 20th Street

Lindman stated the adjacent property owner to this outlot has asked if the City could relinquish any property of the outlot. The owner is Ben Bliven. Lindman spoke with the City Attorney on the actual procedure to sell off

property, which is outlined in the staff report. Engineering looked at the lot to determine if the lot would be big enough for access and maintenance of the stormwater pond. It was determined that 25' could be given up and there would still be room for an access road for maintenance. Staff does not feel there are any issues putting this out for bids.

Abitz questioned if the road would be paved. Lindman said there may be an approach but access is only needed to the pond for maintenance. There would be no pavement.

Kellbach moved to authorize the sale of 25' of 305 South 20th Street. Rasmussen seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on amending the Townline Road Transportation Project Plat

Wesolowski reminded the committee that the original plat was approved by committee and Council. One sheet of the plat needs amending to show the removal of the driveway between the railroad tracks due to safety reasons. This would place an access restriction on that parcel to show a driveway is not allowed. Additionally, there was room between the tracks to slide the walk a little off the right-of-way line so an easement would not be needed from this property, saving real estate acquisition from this parcel.

Abitz said according to Mr. Witter, people are still driving over the tracks to park in this area. She questioned if anything else needed to be done to prevent this. Wesolowski explained the driveway is not proposed to be closed until the reconstruction project. Rasmussen asked if there would be no access from Townline once the road reopens post reconstruction. Wesolowski confirmed and said a full head curb will be installed.

Rasmussen moved to approve amending the Townline Road Transportation Project Plat. McElhaney seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action to amend Municipal Ordinance 10.20.080(a) – No Parking Areas Designated

Buckner stated this is a housekeeping issue. In January of 2015, Council approved no parking on both sides of Golden Meadow leading into North 16th Avenue; however, the area had not been posted. In reviewing the area, it was noticed that the furthest most address on Golden Meadow Street is actually 1510 not 1520 as the ordinance reads. This would amend the ordinance to reflect the correct address.

Rasmussen moved to approve amending Municipal Ordinance 10.20.080(a) – No Parking Areas Designated. Kellbach seconded.

Rasmussen said this was noticed because a resident along Golden Meadow had complained a number of years ago and they were not sure what came of it. It was noticed that the area was never posted. There have been complaints around the curve with pedestrian safety because there are no sidewalks and cars park on both sides of the street. A number of homes along the street have guests that park on both sides during the weekend, which makes it difficult for pedestrians.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve amending Municipal Ordinance 10.20.080(a) – No Parking Areas Designated carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on the installation of stop signs on Bopf Street at 8th Avenue (Tabled from the March 8, 2018 meeting.)

Wesolowski indicated that the Wausau Police Department placed their speed monitoring devices at this intersection and the reports were included with the staff report. Comments were previously made that since the stop signs have been put up, there has been a significant increase in traffic on 8th Avenue. The thought was that if the amount of traffic was equal on both streets, it may warrant a four-way stop. From the traffic counts, there is an average of approximately 1,200 vehicles a day on Bopf Street and approximately 200 on 8th Avenue, which is

not an equal amount of traffic. From an engineering standpoint, a four-way stop is not recommended. Stop signs should only remain on 8th Avenue.

Abitz asked if the traffic flow prior to Thomas Street reconstruction was looked at versus traffic flow now. She feels only looking at the traffic flow now is not looking at how it changed since Thomas Street was completed. Because of the stop sign, the speed is not up there anymore. By only looking at what is currently taking place and not what took place before would not reflect when traffic went 45 MPH plus. Now there is hardly any speeding. A lot of cars are speeding until they hit the stop sign. Abitz recommends keeping the intersection as a four-way stop.

Rasmussen said the recommendation has always been speed enforcement controls speed not stop signs. There was a case in her district where she did not listen to the recommendation. Her residents got a petition to put a stop sign at North 1st Avenue and Bos Creek Road to control speeding on 1st Ave. It has been up six years and has done no good. People run the stop sign or slide through it. The stop sign did not control the speed and did not have the desired effect. What the neighbors thought would happen did not. She feels targeted enforcement is needed and does not think a stop sign is the solution as it was not for her area.

Abitz said the reports show it is working. Because of the stop sign there is not speeding and drag races. With the church, especially on Saturdays, there is a lot of congestion. This has changed the driving pattern of drivers to church services and others throughout the day. The report is not showing the high speed that was there prior to the four-way stop. Neighbors have noticed the difference and want the stop signs to remain. People feel safer. Abitz still highly recommends keeping the four-way stop and most neighbors agree. There were more than enough signatures from the neighbors and visitors.

Rasmussen asked if there is a visual obstruction at the intersection for pedestrians standing at 8th and Bopf trying to get across. Abitz described locations of trees. Abitz feels that just because the stop sign in Rasmussen's district did not work does not mean it will not work elsewhere. Rasmussen said the exact same thing happened. The residents did not like the speed. Targeted enforcement was done. They did not like the volume of traffic. They got a petition and we succumbed to the petition and installed the sign. It did not get any better. Years later we did the same exact thing at 12th and Callon. She does not know if that area is any better but after it was approved everyone said we did not want it after all. Abitz said the stop sign has reduced the number of speeders because they know they have to stop at this intersection. Most have adjusted to the stop sign and that means there is not speeding. Come summer if there are issues with speeding she will bring this back. She is tired of drag racing taking place in the summer during all times of the day. Kids play in the neighborhood. If a ball goes out into the street and a kid goes after it, cars will not stop. She added that if someone gets hurt it will be on the committee's conscience.

Wesolowski said there are trees but does not feel it is anymore visually impaired than any other cross street. This is a flat area and there are street trees on just about every boulevard in the City. Rasmussen asked if this is a problem all day long and not just during Kolbe and Kolbe shift change. She questioned if targeted enforcement has been tried or if this is a situation where when there is a police presence it is not a problem but the rest of the time it is. Every street has that; Campus Drive, Golf Club Road and Woodland Ridge for example. Abitz said because of the stop sign there has been a reduction in speed as traffic has acclimated to the stop sign. In the past, traffic would come down 3rd Avenue and try to beat traffic on Thomas Street. Now traffic cannot do that because of the stop sign at 8th. Rasmussen wonders if this is the effect of Thomas Street being improved. For the longest time there was an increase in traffic on Bopf because people were avoiding Thomas Street. Now that Thomas Street is better, she questioned if we are seeing the natural migration of people back to Thomas. Maybe there are less speeders because they are back where they belong; Thomas Street. Abitz said it is the same speeders. There are at least five of the same cars that come around from 3rd Avenue and speed. Now they have to stop at 8th Avenue and they are not drag racing.

Abitz moved to approve leaving the stop signs at the intersection as is.

McElhane asked if there would be a problem if the committee goes against staff recommendation. She does not want to go against precedence as it will start in other districts. Rasmussen said we are here today because it already has. Parking and Traffic put up some that probably should not have been. Now we are to a point where people still believe stop signs solve speeding. This neighborhood believes that and the petition is evidence of that. The trouble is that we have approved them before when we probably should not have. It is not that we are creating precedence now but creating more of what was done before. She does not believe this should be a political discussion but it becomes one when discussed in committee. Going forward she would like as many of these decisions as possible made at the staff level. Once they are brought up to a vote it becomes political. If there is a set of published standards, a decision can be made by staff based on guidelines. Whatever you do you are wrong because you cannot please the neighborhood if you go with the standard. If we keep going against standard there is no point to having one.

Gisselman said any street in the City with some distance will have speeders. Abitz said Bopf Street keeps having these issues. There are stop signs all the way down Rosecrans Street and it is a less traveled road. Now there are more cars on Bopf Street. There are over 36 people that are concerned and want the stop sign to control traffic flow.

Rasmussen said part of the trouble with stop signs is that one point in the late 90's we had a traffic lieutenant who had it in his head that there should be no such thing as an unmarked intersection in Wausau. He set upon trying to solve that and an awful lot of stop signs went up. She can criticize that decision because he is her dad. We got an awful lot of stop signs on low traffic streets. Then we go to sector meetings and people say we should change stop signs to yield because no one stops. Granted that is sarcasm but that culture does not go away because you put up a sign. That is what she worries we are doing here; putting up more signs that do not solve the core problem of speeding. If it is the same five cars she thinks sooner or later if they got snared in a net of enforcement and received a couple of traffic tickets they would learn what needs to be learned without putting up another stop sign. If you asked eleven alderman if they get speeding complaints in their district, every single one would have more than one. Abitz said this is the only one she has had in twelve years. She does not get complaints in the hollow, Myron Street, Chellis Street, or Sherman Street. She only receives complaints about people speeding down Bopf Street. She could not get signs by Holy Name when there is double parking and one could not get their boat through. She feels that asking for one stop sign is not a big request out of her twelve years. She said there will be a lot more people coming back the next time this comes up and there are issues.

Abitz's motion failed due to a lack of a second.

Abitz moved to approve staff's recommendation and remove the stop signs on Bopf Street at 8th Avenue. Rasmussen seconded. Motion passed 4-1 with Abitz the opposing vote.

Discussion and possible action on a petition to the Office of the Commissioner of Railroads to widen and improve the Thomas Street railroad crossing

Lindman explained that as part of the Thomas Street design, the railroad crossing for 3M will remain. With design and widening of the road, improvements need to be made at the crossing. In order to do so, the City needs to petition the Office of the Commissioner of Railroads.

Rasmussen moved to approve the submission of the petition to the Office of the Commissioner of Railroads. Kellbach seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Future agenda items

Gisselman stated CISM will be reorganized with the new Common Council. He thanked the members for their service on the committee.

Adjourn

Kellbach moved to adjourn the meeting. McElhaney seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:05 p.m.