

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Meeting of: Wednesday, January 7, 2015
Leawood City Hall- Main Conference Room, 7:30 AM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carrie Rezac, CHAIR and Councilmember Ward 3
Jim Rawlings, Councilmember Ward 2
Adam Abrams
Ken Conrad
Abbas Haideri
Jon Grams
Marsha Monica
Christopher White

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Andrew Osman, Councilmember Ward 1
James Azeltine, Councilmember Ward 4
John Burge

GUESTS:

Councilmember Debra Filla-Ward 1

STAFF PRESENT: Joe Johnson, David Ley, Julie Stasi

Chair Rezac called the meeting to order at 7:36 AM. Committee Members, staff and guest introduced themselves.

FIRST ITEM OF BUSINESS: Review/Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Ken Conrad requested a strike-out edit to an editorial comment in the Draft Minutes of December 3, 2014; on page 16.

With the correction, Ken Conrad Motioned to approve the December 3, 2014, Minutes.

Jon Grams Seconded the Motioned to approve Minutes as corrected.

All attending members were in favor. Motion Passed.

THE SECOND ITEM OF BUSINESS: Continued assignment: Review and Discuss external communications on major and long-term projects; such as Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) and Sidewalk Improvements (assignment October 20, 2014)

Joe Johnson presented sample letters and the time lines that they would send out the letters. The packet also included the current Sidewalk Code and a draft Resolution establishing policy on requests for sidewalk construction. Joe advised the one that staff cannot do is (as we get into the construction) is to put out a schedule each week. Because we generally try to have meetings on Fridays with the contractor to get the next week's schedule and then about fifty percent of the time it works. But fifty percent of the time, something happens over the weekend and the contractor has issues; sometimes with a different project and the schedules get moved around. We would hate to do a weekly schedule; people anticipate it, and then have the contractor come in or not come in and then not accomplish anything we said they would that week.

Joe Johnson talked about the letters created by our Engineering Division.

David Ley -described a letter that goes out about a year prior to construction and it is more when we

are about 80% done with the plans. We will do a public meeting in an Open House format so people can come and go and get a look at the plans. A third letter is sent out (about 3 to 6 months) prior to construction. This would be ones with easements required and ones without easements required. When we open bids for construction and have a contractor named, then we send a last letter out informing the residents of all the contact people and who they can call during construction.

Jim Rawlings-Asked if we would want to consider mailing the letters certified?

Joe Johnson-Advised no, as some people would move anyway and that is very expensive.

Marsha Monica-It also is not earth shattering news and others thought if a resident was not home, then they would have to go to the Post Office to pick up the letter and that would cause an inconvenience for the resident as well.

Deb Filla-Asked maybe to keep the letters from looking like junk mail, if maybe the envelopes could maybe be stamped on the outside somehow to say "Construction on your block" or something.

Joe Johnson-Also 99% of the residents do get the letters. Many times if the letters are mailed out too far in advance, they throw them out anyway. We think that if the letters are advancing as we move forward in the project, that would be good. That way the last letter they receive is the one that is right before construction.

David Ley-We send them out two years in advance because that is when we start our survey of the area. We tell them this is who you will be seeing and why. Also if you want traffic calming or sidewalk feature, you have to start that process way before we are ready to construct.

Chris White-The multiple letter process is a good thing, because if a resident misses one letter, they will probably get one of them in the process.

Carrie Rezac-Also was thinking if there is an action item in one of the letters (say 2 years out) to BOLD print the items needed in that time frame.

Ken Conrad-Wanted a small description of the time line of the project on the letters; to answer the question that someone pointed out say if it was 2 years ahead of time and they tossed the info. (example: This is the first of three letters you will see for this project).

Chris White-Thought that was a good idea. And note the Year of the construction project, they may think it's a typo if it's not singled or bolded out.

Debra Filla-Asked if the letters are sent to the Homes Associations (HOA), thought that they should. There are several little committees within some of the larger associations. So thought that would be good to include the HOA.

Committee Members thought that was a good idea to include the Homes Associations.

Debra Filla-Another point in terms of the utilities. Most of the time the utility companies drag their work on and on and on. Maybe staff will bring it up in the open house with the residents. Maybe a chronology time line can be made or at least give them the info that often times utility companies take advantage of this time to upgrade their utilities in the right-of-way (include the utility names; Gas, Wastewater). Deb Filla advised that during her streets construction, she had no idea all of the utility companies would be out there and many times no one knew if the workers were the utility companies or the City's contractor.

The group reviewed the each of the letters for David Ley and staff.

General Comments:

Marsha Monica-Felt that the first letter was too long and too much to read. Keep it short or some will not read especially repeated information.

Jim Rawlings-Disagreed. The letter has who, what, when, where, why and it tells everything. Staff is trying to address all the issues in one letter with the residents. And it's in one page.

Joe Johnson-A lot of this was from comments we had at the last meeting. We wanted to be more specific about what we are doing. Pavement, curbs, replacing stormsewers, driveways, streetlights. We wanted to talk about the cul-de-sacs and the general procedure (which is the web page link) that you can go to (which is a 3 page informational sheet).

Jon Grams-One page is fine, once you go past one page, you have a problem. Do not make the font size any smaller.

Marsha Monica-For example is this sentence really important: "The streets will be reconstructed to City Standards including street width and cul-de-sac islands"?

Dave Ley-That was one of the issues we ran into.

Joe Johnson-That was Meadow Lane, that brought this together. Because it varied from 28 feet and our standard is 26 feet.

Marsha Monica-But the people are not going to care...

Joe Johnson-Well they did. And that is what prompted this assignment and why we are here.

Debra Filla-The survey process. To help compromise with this conversation, it's just a different style. I would start out the letter saying "the surveyors are coming", then go on. That is what you are trying to get across and tell the reader; the action of it all.

Joe Johnson-Yes we can also include at this time information about traffic calming and/or sidewalks.

Chris White-To support Marsha's point of keeping it short so people do not disregard it is good and also to Jim Rawlings to include information. Maybe re-arrange and bold some of the items would be appropriate in the letters. Bring key points to the top paragraphs, bold and say we are coming first, not hidden down later in the third paragraph.

Debra Filla-Also when you say you request access. Don't request it. If we have to enter, then don't request, but say you are coming- in a nice way. Some people asked her what are they survey sticks for, how long do they leave them in the yard, etc. etc. Also for invites, start out by saying: "You are invited"...Say it up front.

Marsha Monica-"We are going to be reconstructing your street" ...

Chris White-We appreciate your cooperation...

Joe Johnson-Mentioned that most residential streets do not qualify for traffic calming. If people look at the criteria; 85th Terrace was an anomaly because it was a heavy cut-through street. We have several residential streets we have been asked about that only scored 8 to 9 points. It has to be at a score of 30 before a street is even considered for traffic calming.

Marsha Monica-So in the letter do not say "request" sidewalk or traffic calming; word it more to say "for information on". Because the word "request" may make them think they can easily say they want it and we will place it.

Carrie Rezac-This letter may want to mention that any private utility work is a separate piece and make sure it is indicated the utility work is prior to the City work/construction.
(Edits suggested for the letters).

Carrie Rezac-Asked about the part where it says Temporary Construction Easements are being requested from you? From the resident? It was a bit unclear as to whom the easement was being requested from. Is there a form attached to the letter that they fill out? Make sure the letter says it is attached so they do not know they have to go on line or something like that (in case it is missing).

David Ley-Yes the Temporary Easements are included and there is also a construction map and a instruction sheet for the Notary with that as well.

Debra Filla-Where the Letter starts with "Re: Residential Street Construction" you could also add (Letter 1 of 3) or 4?

David Ley-Sometimes the number varies.

Joe Johnson-If the resident received the first one then they know. But if after the first letter goes out, the residence changes hands, the new resident gets the second letter and then wonders what is going on. That is why there is a lot of redundancy in the letters to explain the program as we do not know whether we are dealing with the same resident through the whole project or if we've picked up a new one.

Debra Filla-Maybe you could enclose a copy of the prior letter (in case they missed that one).

Ken Conrad-Are requests for permanent easements a little late, just 6 months before construction? Is that too late? (Seems like you would need to know that in design); want to make sure 6 months is not too late for a permanent easement.

Joe Johnson-No, it's a good time.

[On to letter four (4)]...After the construction bid.

Carrie Rezac-Depending on if the resident has an easement (there are three (3) "Letter 3's).

About in the middle of the page, it says "for information about the project during construction, please reference the City's Web page. Wondering if at this point we put that chronological step (not a date specific schedule) but a chronological schedule of what you are anticipating so that when they do look at it.

Joe Johnson-And that is on our web page it is very detailed, it talks about each phase of construction all the way to the very end. We provided that link in the very first letter and we can provide it in this letter. We will try to work with Mark Andrasik to see if we can shorten the link or something so it is easier to type in.

Debra Filla- He should be able to create a separate tag for it so it goes right to it. You can even name it your project. That is a very good idea.

Marsha Monica-Question about what we discussed at the last meeting. If I have a problem, do I call the City or do I go find the superintendent on site?

Joe Johnson-You have two names. The contractor and then you have us. Ninety-nine percent of the time, residents call us. But if the contractor is in front of your house and you physically can see them you can talk to them if you choose.

Marsha Monica-We are giving them a choice.

Joe Johnson-Yes, they can do A or B. For the most part, the contractors and the residents and inspectors work very well together.

Jim Rawlings-asked about the staff member (Michelle Sherry) named in the letters.

Joe Johnson-advised Michelle is a Design Engineer, so they want the comments coming back to her

while in the design stage. Concerned or upset individuals are still directed to the City Engineer or the Director of Public Works.

Debra Filla-Suggested besides adding the letters to the Homes Associations involved, to also include the Council Member if it is in their Ward.

Joe Johnson-agreed that was something we could do.

Chair Rezac-in general review; some wordsmithing, keep it to one page, include anything about utility activating is happening prior to the City's construction so they are aware of it. Add the HOA's and the Councilmembers. Synopsis of a time line and not date specific. Bold or re-arrange important information.

Joe Johnson-The synopsis is something we already have on line. And the first letter and the last letter we will refer to that link.

Carrie Rezac-When will the first letter for the 2016 Program go out?

David Ley-We have already sent out the first letter for 2016. It was sent out about 6 months ago. The second one will go out around July 2015 to announce the public meeting. This next program is Wenonga, from 91st and then all the streets west of Wenonga to Mission Road in that area, 92nd, 92nd Lane, 92nd Terrace.

Carrie Rezac-The next area of the assignment involved Sidewalk Requests.

Joe Johnson explained the packet information on sidewalks. Joe advised the current petition does not work well and does not remember anyone using it in the past 18 years since he has been with the City. Chapter 13 is the Code involving Sidewalks. The bulk of the Ordinance is mostly talking about how the owner should repair the sidewalk and if they do not, how the City may repair it and assess the property owner. Staff and the City Attorney got together and decided it was probably easier to come up with a Policy by Resolution instead of modifying the Ordinance. Similar to what we did for the Traffic Calming. We came up with a Resolution that talks about if residents on a street want to look at putting a sidewalk in, what that process is going to be and from the last meeting, the Governing Body always has the discretion in regards to financing. We want the policy to be up front in letting property owners know that it will be paid for through a benefit district, so property owners will be paying the bill.

The Governing Body can always change something if they desire, but we want to be up front so they know and it is clear.

Ken Conrad-Asked about 85th Terrace. Who paid for the sidewalks on 85th Terrace?

Joe Johnson-the City ended up paying for the sidewalks. That is why the Governing Body has the ability to decide. 85th Terrace is unique. The residents did however pay for the traffic calming (or will actually once we are complete with the project).

Ken Conrad-Are there numbers so that if that comes up again we can tell the residents how much it will cost or be assessed for something like that?

Joe Johnson-On the traffic calming we have the numbers-but each case is different and it all depends on the options chosen. On 85th Terrace we had estimated \$75,000 and the final cost was around \$80,000.

Marsha Monica-Asked what happens if a petition is done, what if some wanted it and some did not.

David Ley-It would have to go block to block.

Joe Johnson-By Ordinance if a property owner wants to build sidewalks across their property they can build it. You may be the only one on the street. The property owner is not prohibited against doing it.

This however is a policy that is for if you want the City to come in and pay for it, this is the process you go through.

Debra Filla-A current situation is the Brightwater Homes Association coming in and asking for sidewalks to be placed on their street when we widen or construct the curbs. So the City can tweak their project when they are redoing the streets if they need to.

Joe Johnson-Yes we had a request from Brightwater that asked we put some sidewalks on State Line Road, but not one of the people requesting was a property owner along State Line. So I'm not sure about the folks along State Line. I emailed the HOA back to let them know we were looking at it, but they need to get with the people on State Line Road because if we get to the point where this is feasible, and the City can do this, if the people on State Line Road do not want it, then we will not push forward with it. Because they are the ones who will have to clean off the walk from snow and keep it clean and maintain it. Unless they are on board with it, I cannot see the City forcing that on those people.

Debra Filla-On the other hand I think with our new walk and bike self-propelled Leawood, as we become more conscious of being a walkable neighborhood, that is one reason 85th Terrace got the priority for the sidewalk. And it was because of the convenience and freeway to Trader Joe's. Those folks on 85th Terrace had more traffic than ever before so there was no way to put sidewalks in their yard, they would have had to have it right next to their front door without taking out the trees. But taking it out of the road was the thing to do, but then we were doing the street at the same time, so what is the cost/economy of doing it at that time. So the realities and timing come into play as well.

Joe Johnson-We have worked with the people on 85th Terrace for a long time. Fortunately the residents on the north side were all in favor of having the road narrower and putting in the sidewalks. It made it much easier for the City rather than have half the block say they didn't want it and have a fight on our hands.

Ken Conrad-Asked about the Ordinance and Article 1A. 13-1A01 talks about there being ten citizens owning real estate requesting construction of a sidewalk...that is not very clear.

Joe Johnson-If the Resolution is adopted, then that paragraph goes away. So the Ordinance would change and that would be removed.

Ken Conrad-Because the Resolution talks about 75% of the lot owners adjacent. Okay good. The other question is "if the proposed sidewalk will only extend a portion of the street" we talked a minute ago about we would never do a partial walk.

Joe Johnson-Well we talked about it block to block.

Ken Conrad-It is not clear and it does not say that (block to block). It needs to be worded more clearly.

Joe Johnson-A good example is when you look at Meadow Lane. Meadow Lane has 2 or 3 streets that intersect it. So you could do a Petition between Ensley and 83rd. I think it is intended for that. It is not intended for everybody on Meadow between 83rd and 86th Street. I can talk with Patty to see how to make that more clear (with a block to block area).

Carrie Rezac-In order to avoid a loop hole; where a resident would say that it doesn't say that.

Joe Johnson-Wanted to make the policy clear because the Ordinance is not and it sounds like someone anywhere can request a walk for someone else's property.

word modifications and approval of the City Attorney) for establishing policy on requests for sidewalk construction.

Ken Conrad seconded the motion. All present members were in favor.

Motion Passed.

Chair Rezac adjourned the meeting at 8:30 AM.

Minutes transcribed by: Julie Stasi, Leawood Public Works Department