

July 9, 2013

A Work Session meeting of the City Council was held on the above date. Mayor Simonson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The following were present: Mayor Randall Simonson, Council members Dan Lee, Jim Schneider, Sally Swanson, and Chris Ness. Staff present: City Administrator Kristina Handt, Maintenance Superintendent Tim Kieffer, City Engineer Ryan Goodman and Treasurer Colleen Firkus. Mike Hinz, Fire Chief was also in attendance.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Lee, seconded by Ness, moved to approve the agenda. The motion carried 5-0.

2014-2018 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Administrator Handt requested Council direction regarding regarding the CIP PW-001 to pave the remaining 5.5 miles of gravel roads. City Engineer Ryan Goodman presented his preliminary report on the feasibility of paving Pilar Road, Perkins Ave., Paris Ave. and Penfield Ave. Mayor Simonson opened the floor to public comments from the residents of those roads.

Greg Zauner, 15171 Pilar Road, asked what paving would cost each person. He also asked if the road could be improved without paving it. Zauner would prefer an upgraded gravel road over pavement and he doesn't believe it increases property values.

Curt Hadland, 15280 Pilar Road, asked how drainage would be addressed as blacktop would increase runoff and impact his wetlands. Hadland listed three issues to be resolved: 1) erosion on the sharp curve where he resides, 2) vehicles going off the road on the curve, and 3) increased speed that comes with a paved road. He questioned that paving would actually be an improvement as Pilar is one of the last gravel roads in the city and is a scenic byway.

Engineer Goodman said increased speeds could be addressed with stop signs at Paris and Perkins. Also, striping 11-foot lanes would slow speeds as people try to stay in the marked lanes. Goodman stated more erosion came with a gravel road as with pavement, curb and gutter the runoff could be directed, slowed and filtered before entering the wetlands. The curve would be difficult to improve, but they would do the best they could.

Maintenance Superintendent Kieffer agreed curb and gutter would help with erosion problems. Also, with blacktop the road can be chemically treated to reduce ice in the winter making it safer.

Joan Doolittle, 15451 Pilar, suggested plantings can help filter runoff. She complimented Kieffer on doing a good job, but she would prefer to keep the road gravel.

Richard Doolittle, 15451 Pilar, expressed appreciation for Kieffer's efforts. Doolittle suggested holding ponds to filter water and he would like to see everyone in Scandia with a holding pond. He believes it is more expensive to maintain pavement than gravel, but if the city had to pave it to make it look like 199th Street. He is against curb and gutter and likes the tree canopy.

Pat Hadland, 15280 Pilar Road, also prefers gravel to maintain a rural atmosphere. She opposes curbs as she has experienced turtles having difficulty crossing Olinda Trail due to high curbs.

Also, she walks the road every day with her dogs and blacktop would make it too hot for their paws and dangerous due to increased speed of traffic.

Engineer Goodman stated that curbs would only be in 50 foot sections intermittently in steep areas to direct storm water to water quality enhancements. For example, the distance from Perkins to Olinda Trail is .68 miles. There would be a total of 400 feet of curb on that stretch. This would allow the canopy to be retained as ditches wouldn't be needed to catch the water in those areas.

Peter Wykes, 16021 Pilar, suggested drain tiles and plantings rather than curbs to help with runoff. A culvert installed in 1996 helped with a runoff problem in front of his property, but now it is plugged with gravel and animal homes.

Dale Johansen, 15679 Pilar, asked how wide the road would actually be with a 24 foot paved surface, 2 foot shoulders and ditches, and what would happen to the trees.

Engineer Goodman said those widths and shoulders are the model for cost estimates, but actual road design would be modified to what fits.

Michele McNulty, 16021 Pilar, said portions of the road are well maintained, however, it seems the approach has been to widen the road when grading which rips up vegetation and fills in the ditches. Paving is not the only solution and better attention to maintenance would help. McNulty prefers the look of a gravel road. A paved road means heat and chemicals. Curbs are ugly and not in keeping with a scenic nature of the road. Finally, she asked how property would be assessed if the road bisects a property with a small piece on the other side of the road.

Administrator Handt said an assessment policy will be addressed by the Council later on the agenda. There has not been a change to the assessment policy in 10 years. There is not an answer now to assessment questions.

Scott Graven, 22811 Perkins, said the road used to be a lot worse, mostly sand, and for a gravel road it is a good road. He said the gravel added in the recent past has washed on to his property. He was told by the city that everything would be paved by 2009 when he decided to buy his property. Now he has been told there are no plans to pave it. He would like to see it paved, but whatever is the safest would be the way to go. He believes the environmental concerns would be addressed and he supports the Council's decision either way.

Councilmember Swanson stated the Council has been addressing erosion and water issues with the Watershed District in numerous areas this year and has been getting educated on ways to deal with these problems.

Matt Burke, 22810 Perkins, would prefer blacktop. He has three children and has seen school buses get stuck as well as a fire truck called to their house for a furnace fire. He can't keep a nice vehicle and the dust is a big problem in their house.

Kim Burke, 22810 Perkins, would like it paved. They have a nice Camaro they can't take out as the road would ruin it. They are on the corner so get dust from two roads. She has gotten stuck in the winter. The city plow truck and fire truck have also gotten stuck on the road. Safety is a big issue. The curves will keep the speed down. She doesn't think paving will affect the wild life.

Michael Calcagno, 23029 Perkins, has two special needs children. He is in favor of paving. He has Personal Care Attendants coming frequently and they find it a challenging road as they are not familiar with it. One PCA turned down a job with them due to the road. The road is a safety risk. He is confident environmental concerns can be addressed and still pave the road.

Chris Frymire, 22880 Perkins, is new to the area and was attracted to the gravel road and rural atmosphere. He commutes to the city and the city roads were worse than Pilar this past winter. Just because it is asphalt doesn't mean it is safe. He asked which was more costly to maintain, gravel or pavement.

Cal Karl, 22770 Penfield, asked if Penfield was a city street because nothing has been done to their road except to plow it. He was told by the township in the past that it wasn't a "real" city street. He said it is never graded and a fire truck could not access the three properties as the road is just sand and deep ruts. The road needs maintenance no matter what is decided. He is not for paving the road, just upgrading and maintaining the gravel. He also asked what will be the assessment procedure.

Chris Lange, 22730 Penfield, said zero maintenance has been done for more than 10 years. She said she called to get Penfield plowed to the end of the road as there is no demarcation as to where the road ends and her driveway begins. She gave permission to the plow driver to push the snow further. She asked about the estimate proposed and what is included. She wanted to know what the cost over-runs have been for all past paving projects.

Engineer Goodman stated he was not the city engineer on those projects, though he did work on some of the projects as a field inspector, but he believes there were enough contingencies built in to the projects that there were no cost over-runs. The original bids, engineering estimates, and change orders are all part of the public record.

Ms. Lange said there is no way to get a 24 foot width without a lot of clear cut of trees and affecting animal habitat. She would like to see some maintenance on Penfield. The residents have been doing their own maintenance as best they can. Lastly, if it must be paved, then be innovative about the project. She also said our roads were better than the roads in the city in the winter and paving doesn't necessarily make it safer.

Jim Bushinger, 23277 Paris, dust is his biggest concern. He was told by the township that it would be blacktopped. After the city grades, he goes out and fixes it. After dust control is applied, he applies his own dust control. He put up a fence, but nothing keeps out the dust. He would like to see it paved, but doesn't see the need for a 24 foot width. He also said the dead end keeps the speed down.

Jean Womack, 23200 Paris, said the speeding on Pilar is terrible and would be worse if paved. Paris used to be great until about 8 years about the city dug up the road and put down new gravel. Since then there are washboards, there is no crown and the ditches are full of gravel. She feels there needs to be better gravel. They don't want the road paved. She would like to see a map where the curbs are proposed. She also has an issue with the grading that has moved the road significantly on to her property, and asked since it has been maintained that way for 6 years if the city can just keep the road where it is. They have not complained about the shifting road as they were assured by the city that when the time came to pave the road, they would move it back to where it belongs. The sign post on the corner reflects how far off the road is from where it belongs. She also wanted to know if the land alterations needed were in the cost estimates as well as removing a cattle crossing. Goodman indicated they were in the estimate, but not the cattle crossing. Womack thinks moving the road to where it belongs is not part of cost estimate and would like an accurate figure. She is against it being paved. She also asked how other projects were assessed. Administrator Handt said the previous assessment policy divided the bituminous costs by the number of building sites; some paid 75% and some 25%, depending if it was a collector road or non-collector road.

Renee Simmons, 23345 Paris, said living with dust is part of living in the country. She said the grading is terrible and the road keeps getting wider. She would also like some dust control applied and a better quality of gravel. She asked if the city can just improve the current road without having additional costs now and in the future. She and her husband are against paving. She also mentioned a culvert torn up down the road that is dangerous.

Ms. Lange asked how the dead ends like Penfield and Perkins will be treated. Goodman stated either cul-de-sacs or hammerhead turnarounds are typically installed.

Mayor Simonson closed the public comment period. Council discussion followed. *Lee* stated that the city has a lot of talent to deal with road with the city's engineer and the watershed district, whether pavement or gravel. He feels speeding is a law enforcement issue and should not be a factor in a decision to pave. The issues with Penfield can be addressed by city staff. *Lee* also defended the grading that seems catastrophic but is actually an attempt to recapture the shoulders and build up the crown after being neglected for a long time. *Ness* thinks the consensus is to not pave Pilar, but some side street residents want it paved. He feels there should be a separate meeting for each road. *Ness* asked if curbs could be done without pavement, but Goodman indicated curbs need the support of asphalt. *Ness* also said the roads don't need to be 24 feet wide; *Norell* is only 18 feet wide. *Schneider* also thought most of those present do not want blacktop. He feels there are other ways to deal with runoff and blacktopping is more expensive to maintain in the long run. *Schneider* is for spending money to improve what is there. *Swanson* is more concerned with funding the project. It appears most don't want blacktop, but everyone wants better maintenance and erosion problems fixed. *Swanson* indicated there is not a consensus on the council as to which is more to maintain – pavement or gravel. Her question is whether or not the current council should implement the plan to pave all city roads. *Swanson* would like to investigate further the costs maintaining each type of road and how a project would be paid. *Schneider* believes paving would increase speed on a road. He also feels there are significant property issues to be addressed. *Mayor Simonson* said the gravel road issue has been kicked down the road a long time and the idea of all roads being paved has been resurrected. He

agrees that trees overhanging a road are beautiful but can also be a safety issue; a buffer between the road and trees is necessary. Current staff has been trying to catch up from years of neglect. Culverts are being cleared out and mapped. Blacktopping is not necessarily the answer. The city has qualified staff to address these issues and come up with ideas and options for the Council to consider. Safety should be foremost. He suggests the Council take each road individually, site visit each one with staff and discuss alternatives. Dates for site visits will be set next week.

GOOSE LAKE BUFFER

Jed Chestnut, Washington County Conservation District and Jim Shaver, Car-mar Watershed District were present to discuss the possibility of installing natural vegetation buffers in two areas of city owned property on Goose Lake. While there is no cost to the city for installation, the city would be required to maintain the area for a ten year period, including replacement of vegetation if damaged. **Lee, seconded by Swanson, moved to direct staff to move forward with the process to install buffers in aerator access area only. The motion passed 5-0.**

LOG HOUSE LANDING

After some discussion, Council decided to split the project into two projects with \$20,000 for the ramp in 2014 and \$100,000 for the landing in 2015 with a 50% cost share with the Watershed.

197th STREET

Schneider, seconded by Lee, agreed on Option 2 of the Wenck report where the new pipe and overflow channel are located in the public right-of-way. The motion passed 5-0.

QUINNELL AVENUE

Council recommended adding improvements to Quinnell to the CIP for 2015.

OTHER ROADWAYS

Kiefer recommended putting aside \$200,000 each year and do a \$1,000,000 project every five years to get a more cost effective project. A combination of savings and assessments could be used. Goodman suggested the Council look at franchise fees, a monthly charge on utility bills, instead of assessments to pay for road reconstruction projects.

Ozark Ave. extension was moved from 2015 to Pending.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

- HVAC Replacement scheduled for 2015 was moved to 2016.
- No change was made to Radio Replacement scheduled for 2018 at \$75,000.
- Fire Chief Hinz requested all Civil Defense Sirens be removed from the CIP except for one in 2018.
- Tanker 5177 is scheduled to be replaced in 2015 with the price adjusted to \$200,000.
- Grass Rig 5175 is scheduled to be replaced in 2017 with the price adjusted to \$85,000. It carries 250 gallons of water whereas the UTV carries 60 gallons.
- A backup generator was moved from Pending to Active in 2014 with a reduced cost of \$30,000 for a smaller generator to power the well and some lights. Kieffer suggested a portable generator that Public Works could use for emergency power to sewage pumps.
- A new project for SCBA Compressor Replacement was added in 2016 for \$17,000.
- A request to move a Second Fire Station project from Pending to Active in 2017 was approved.

- A request to move a Fire Training Structure project from Pending to Active was denied.
- A request to move a Fire Chief Car project from pending to active in 2018 was approved.

DRAFT ASSESSMENT POLICY

Discussion on this item was moved to the next meeting.

UPDATE MAINTENANCE SUPERINTENDENT JOB TITLE

Council directed staff to put the amended job title of Public Works Director on the Consent Agenda.

EMPLOYEE PAY PLAN

Ness, seconded by Lee, moved to place the Compensation Policy prepared by staff as directed by Council on the next meeting agenda for adoption. Motion passed 5-0.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE WORK SESSIONS

The August 13, 2013 Work Session agenda will include a draft 2014 Operating Budget and a draft Assessment Policy.

ADJOURNMENT

Lee, seconded by Swanson, moved to adjourn. The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Firkus
Treasurer