

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Public Works Committee conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 15, 2015, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Chris Riley
 Councilmember Jill Johns
 Councilmember Melody Shryock

Also Present: Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
 City Engineer Bruce Westby

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Riley called the regular meeting of the Public Works Committee to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

There was none.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Johns, seconded by Councilmember Shryock, to approve the agenda, as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Riley, Councilmembers Johns and Shryock. Voting No: None.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve June 16, 2015, Meeting Minutes

Motion by Councilmember Shryock, seconded by Councilmember Johns, to approve the following minutes:

Regular Meeting Minutes dated June 15, 2015

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Riley, Councilmembers Shryock and Johns. Voting No: None.

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

5.01: Consider Request to Reconstruct Stormwater Treatment Improvements at Sunfish Lake

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report and noted the property owners are present at the meeting. He explained the original purpose of the swale was to keep the solid waste from entering the wetland. The intent of the easement was to allow the City to maintain the swale as needed over time. He noted the swale has not needed maintenance by the City since it was put in. He explained one of the more cost effective resolutions is to construct a settling basin with overflow that would allow the sediment to settle over time. He said he is not sure that this will be a permanent solution but it would reduce some of the water in the swale for the long term. The cost will be between \$15,000 and \$45,000. The price difference is dependent on the size of the basin, wetland mitigation credits, and on the turf restoration method. He pointed out this is a system that was constructed and is operating as intended. The property owners have requested the City complete the work of constructing a settling basin, and pay for the construction, since the swale cannot be maintained by the property owner and their property is compromised. He mentioned that the basin may need occasional cleaning over the next 50 years; however, it likely wouldn't need it more than a few times.

Chairperson Riley introduced property owners, Jay and Suzanne Bergevin, 14520 Sunfish Lake Drive.

Mr. Bergevin explained when they purchased the home, it was described as having a drainage ditch. It worked to drain water and functioned as a ditch for many years. He said their biggest concern is that there is a change. The drainage worked well for 9 or 10 years. In the last 5 years or so, they have seen it change from a drainage ditch to a pond that is 2 to 3 feet deep. He explained he cannot get to the other side of it to maintain the area around it. He cannot take care of the area that is under water, as wetland vegetation is now growing. He stated the water has not receded over the last 2 years. It has gotten high enough to reach the berm. He said he could not understand how the stormwater could have been vented through his property, and still reach the top of the berm. He noted it doesn't sound like much sediment has been caught at all. He concluded that he thought they have been patient, asking about this for 3 years, and watching it grow to where about 40% of their yard is now unusable.

Mrs. Bergevin stated the definition of drainage is that it is not supposed to settle. She noted this was called a drainage easement on the papers, originally, and not a swale as it is called now. The ponding water is muddy, allowing mosquitoes to breed, and now there are fish in the pond. She said it is not a healthy environment.

Mr. Bergevin stated this has reduced the quality of life for them. He said they are unable to enjoy backyard events with friends and neighbors. He explained the high water level of the lake in 1983 to 1988 was 858 or 859. He stated it is 864 now. This is impacting beyond the drainage easement. The design of the easement and drainage pond was implemented in the early 1990s. He said they are requesting the City to restore it to what it was.

Mrs. Bergevin stated the drainage ditch is clearly not working as it was intended. She said there was a large black pipe pouring water into the lake at one point, but there is no official record of

what that was. She stated she remembered seeing it and wished she would have taken pictures. She asked if that could have affected all of this.

Chairperson Riley stated he went to observe the situation on the premises. He said it is obvious that the lawn has turned into wetland vegetation. Just the nature of wetland vegetation with large stems makes it difficult to remove. He asked how long the drainage ditch holds water.

Mr. Bergevin responded it holds a few feet of water all summer now.

Councilmember Johns raised the issue of all the other water issues residents have brought up recently. Those issues are mostly with flooding into the homes. This flooding is related to the water table being higher. She said the City cannot control the water table.

Mrs. Bergevin noted her neighbors that are right on the lake are not having issues due to a rising water level. She asked if the issue was the water level, why hasn't it affected others.

City Engineer Westby stated he also saw standing water in the swale when he visited the property. He explained if the weather stays wet, then the swale will continue to have standing water. The levels of that lake are completely dependent on the weather, and it will rise and fall according to the weather. He stated a drainage easement does not necessarily mean there is moving water, and that drainage easements are designed to accommodate runoff from the hundred year storm event.

Mr. Bergevin said the definition of a drainage easement is from the State of Minnesota. The drainage easements are supposed to be for flowing water.

City Engineer Westby responded the City uses drainage easements for static water.

Chairperson Riley asked if permanent standing water is allowed in the drainage easement.

City Engineer Westby replied it is allowed, to the best of his knowledge.

Chairperson Riley clarified that the simple fact that there is an easement would allow permanent standing water in the easement.

City Engineer Westby confirmed.

Councilmember Johns questioned if this is a rainy year, or if there is a lot of snow, whether there will be issues with the house flooding since this drainage easement could be full.

City Engineer Westby explained there was less attention paid to drainage in the 1980s , but then in the 1990s more attention was focused on drainage designs to make sure the drainage design could accommodate runoff from larger storm and snow melt events. However, the drainage easement on this property appears to be performing as it was intended to since it was built so flooding is not anticipated to be an issue.

Chairperson Riley inquired if the purpose of the drainage swale is to make sure the stormwater doesn't drain directly into the wetland.

City Engineer Westby responded that is the purpose. The swale fills up then the water is allowed to flow out to the wetland.

Chairperson Riley stated this has worked the way it should for a long time. What changed seems to be the water level, and whatever the culprit was is affecting their yard. This potential repair as described seems to be a rather easy answer. The difference between this situation and the basements of residents flooding is that this is water that is designed to flow through the residents' yard.

Councilmember Shryock questioned how staff can be ensured that a holding pond would be large enough to be effective. There are other residents living at or below the water level and their basements are leaking. She asked what the possibility is of this house being affected to the point it will deteriorate.

Councilmember Shryock stated if the water level in the area is 860, the hole will fill to 860 and just sit there.

Councilmember Johns commented if the issue is the water table, then we cannot dig it deep enough. It gets back to cause and effect.

Councilmember Johns questioned the wetland credits.

City Engineer Westby explained there is are "wetland banks" where credits can be purchased and sold.

Chairperson Riley asked if the swale outlet pipe has been checked for blockage.

City Engineer Westby responded it has been checked and there is no blockage. He explained there are outlet controls that should help keep the water from flooding nearby homes.

Mrs. Bergevin questioned how drainage easement is defined. She said she sees it defined as not sitting water.

Councilmember Shryock stated when sites were developed in that area, they had to go on existing records of flood plains, water levels, etc. The drainage area was based on the records at the time. She said the fish that are in the swale are likely from the lake, since the lake is high. She pointed out there would naturally be more water being close to the wetland. She said in order to prevent the water from going around the berm, the berm would have to be all inclusive to this property. She commented it seems this is a high water period and it has been going on a while. The lake just hasn't let go of the extra water yet. She suggested the property owners could put some preventive measures into their home to prevent the water from coming up further. She said the City doesn't regulate the water level. Therefore, she said she is having difficulty trying to assign responsibility to the City.

City Engineer Westby explained in this case, the swale would need to be filled in so the bottom is higher than what the lake level could ever reach to prevent wetland type vegetation from growing. The City does not have a vegetative maintenance program where staff would go clear vegetation. He said the City will maintain vegetation as needed when it interferes with operations, such as removing downed trees from drainage ditches. The City does not do work for aesthetic reasons, such as cleaning algae from ponds.

Mr. Bergevin noted there has been a fairly dry period recently, and there is not quite as much water in the drainage ditch as there was in the last 24 months.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer mentioned another resident has issues with standing water in the drainage easement on their property. This water has been in the yard for about two years. Since it was dryer this year, it has finally drained.

Councilmember Johns noted the drainage easement is working as it should. She empathized with the property owners, but stated she was unsure how to share the cost when it is not part of the City's responsibility.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer explained whatever is done to one side of the swale will affect the other side of it.

Chairperson Riley inquired if it is staff's recommendation to look at the feasibility of putting in settling pond before conducting work.

City Engineer Westby responded some calculations would need to be done to estimate costs, but in his opinion the benefit is solely for the property owners; it does not benefit the City. He said staff could go further with this and bring back estimated costs and the definition of a drainage easement if the Committee prefers.

Mr. Bergevin commented it does not necessarily benefit them. It just gives them their property back.

Councilmember Johns asked if the property owner is interested in sharing the cost.

Mr. Bergevin replied he is not interested in sharing the cost. He noted there have been wetter years, such as 2005 and 2006, and there were no problems. He said his point was that something was working and it is no longer. He said the intention of the City was to have water flowing through that area, filtered and then drained into the wetland. The water table levels from 2006 and 2007 to now have changed only minimally.

Councilmember Shryock stated she wanted to be cautious going down this route. She warned against setting a precedent. Some residents have had flooding of their homes, and some people on the river are seeing their property eroding. These are issues the homeowners must deal with because that's the nature of the property. In this case, if everything is still operable, and the water is staying within the 20-foot easement, then there is something causing this to happen that

would be a more natural occurrence. She stated the builder and the City should know what the probability of this happening is when they develop the property.

Mr. Bergevin pointed out if the stormwater is going directly into the wetland without being filtered, and if the lake levels continue to be as high as they are, this is detrimental for the City, and for them.

Councilmember Shryock noted the DNR signed off on the drainage easement when it was built, so this is within their parameters. She said the wetlands overflow all the time. She questioned if the City has the capability to change these parameters, or if the DNR should change them. She stated the rules are not designed to retrofit. The rules were the way they were at the time of building and the drainage easement is still technically performing according to the rules. She said there are too many questions at this point to commit to changing or constructing anything.

City Engineer Westby agreed and added he did not know what storm event the swale was designed to handle but that drainage systems are designed to accommodate specific events such as the 100-year event, not the largest events possible. He equated it to shopping at the holidays when the shopping center parking lot is full because it was not designed to handle that amount of parking for only a short time.

Chairperson Riley stated the City takes this seriously and it is concerned. Though this has a somewhat easy answer, there are still issues. He noted it is a discussion that needed to happen. He suggested moving the item forward for more discussion and details. He asked what would make the projected cost go from \$15,000 to \$40,000.

City Engineer Westby replied the size of the settling pond would make a difference. The required wetland credits would also play a role in determining the cost, as would other costs due to grading, turf restoration, and storm sewer adjustments.

Consensus was reached to direct staff to calculate the size of pond needed, and the cost of wetland mitigation and bring this item back to this Committee for discussion.

Councilmember Johns asked if this could be brought back this year.

City Engineer Westby responded it will likely not be this year.

5.02: Consider Recommending City Council Approval of Master Partnership Contract with Minnesota Department of Transportation for TH47 Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report. He noted the City Attorney had no major issues with the Master Partnership Contract. There are some grammatical issues and small issues but the changes would not affect the meaning at all.

Councilmember Shryock asked whether this type of agreement is used in other cities.

City Engineer Westby responded other cities have used it. This is the first time it is used with Ramsey. He said staff is meeting Mn/DOT on Thursday to clarify the costs. Public Works has already indicated there will be enough manpower to complete this project this fall. He said he was looking for this Committee's recommendation to bring this item to the Council.

Councilmember Johns said she noticed the contract went out three years. She asked what that covered.

City Engineer Westby responded the contract applies to work on any trunk highway. Three years is their preferred contract length, though it could likely be modified.

Councilmember Shryock confirmed the City will pay for all the improvements, but is saving money in the preparation and planning stages.

City Engineer Westby answered in the affirmative.

Chairperson Riley asked if there will be anything done to the crossing on the south side.

City Engineer Westby replied not at this time. He said there have been missing trail segments which the City has been piecing together as things develop. Mn/DOT wants to work with the City to come up with solutions for that in the future.

Motion by Councilmember Johns, seconded by Councilmember Shryock, to recommend that the City Council approve the Mn/DOT Master Partnership Contract as proposed.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Riley, Councilmembers Johns and Shryock. Voting No: None.

6. COMMITTEE / STAFF INPUT

City Engineer Westby gave an update of the Trail Maintenance Policy. He said staff is in the process of developing the policy. Two Engineering interns and other staff drove all the trails this summer and GPS'd the trail segments including horizontal and vertical controls. All the pedestrian curb ramps were also documented and noted whether they are or are not ADA compliant. Staff is working on processing all this information as time allows. The goal is to have a draft by mid winter.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer noted the trail rating system will have 3 levels. Level 1 requires no work. Level 2 requires filling in cracks. Level 3 is a complete overlay. He said they will start with the best trails and keep them preserved. The trails in the worst shape will be considered last, as they will need more work. This will allow the City to most cost-effectively maintain the trails. He added that all the trucks now have a GPS, and that will aid in ensuring all trails and sidewalks are plowed, and to answer questions from the public during snow plow events.

Councilmember Shryock inquired whether there is a master trail map and if the GPS can help create that.

City Engineer Westby confirmed there is a master trail map, and the GPS will help staff to update it.

City Engineer Westby gave an update on the following items:

Properties flooded in the spring: These cases will be brought to Council, possibly in November. He noted staff has a heavy workload with the assessment hearings coming up. However, the feasibility reports and costs for a possible solution are still being considered. The property owners have been updated with the progress of these cases.

Garnet Street: The project is waiting for the curb contractor to place the curb. The road is passable, even after rain. The hardest part of this project has been completed. This is anticipated to be complete in October.

Jarvis Street: The curb was finished earlier in the day. There have not been any calls on this project, other than irrigation system damages. Staff will work with residents to repair irrigation systems at the end of this project.

Ridgepoint: Old construction materials such as wood, tires and concrete have been found at the site. The project has been shut down, and the contractor is estimating costs to haul and dispose of these materials. The contractor hired a testing firm to test the materials. There is no known hazardous waste; it is only construction material. Staff plans to meet with Village Bank in the morning to learn more about the project status.

Armstrong Interchange: This should be substantially complete at the end of October or possibly the beginning of November.

Chairperson Riley asked about the cataloging of trails that are ADA. He said he understood unless something is changed or reconstructed, the trails can stay as they are.

City Engineer Westby responded this is unclear with Mn/DOT. He said he has conflicting documentation from Mn/DOT on this. He stated this will have to be clarified before the Trail Maintenance Policy is completed.

Chairperson Riley noted he has had many residents ask for the installation of flashing yellow arrows.

City Engineer Westby explained Anoka County owns most of the signal lights in Ramsey. They are developing a priority plan to determine which intersections need flashing yellow arrows. He said Anoka County is installing all new systems to be ready for installation of FYAs, but older systems will need to be retrofitted. He said it is a funding issue for them. He acknowledged there have been a lot of calls and requests for them.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer distributed copies of the policies and procedures manual for staff working on call. The book helps staff know how to work the equipment at different locations in the City, and gives information such as which switches to turn off at a certain park, and how to work lift stations, etc.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Shryock, seconded by Councilmember Johns to adjourn the Public Works Committee meeting.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Grant Riemer
Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Chris Moksnes
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.