

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

The Public Works Committee conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 16, 2017, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Acting Chairperson Jill Johns
 Councilmember Mark Kuzma

Absent: Chairperson Chris Riley

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chairperson Johns called the regular meeting of the Public Works Committee to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

There was none.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Acting Chairperson Johns, to approve the agenda, as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Acting Chairperson Johns and Councilmember Kuzma. Voting No: None. Absent: Chairperson Riley.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Acting Chairperson Johns, to approve the following minutes:

Regular Meeting Minutes dated March 21, 2017
Special Meeting Minutes dated April 18, 2017

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Acting Chairperson Johns and Councilmember Kuzma. Voting No: None. Absent: Chairperson Riley.

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

5.01: Review Pedestrian Safety Concerns at Variolite Street and 161st Avenue

PW Superintendent Riemer reviewed the Staff Report, and explained that the Public Works Committee, at their April 18, 2017, meeting, directed City Staff to gather traffic data and other information regarding pedestrian safety at the intersection of Variolite Street and 161st Avenue, that included traffic counts, speed data, level of service ratings, stopping sight distances for vehicles, pedestrian sight distances, and accident reports.

Variolite Street has a posted speed limit of 50 miles per hour (mph), with a restricted sight line view to the north of 161st Avenue because of a hill. Additional information gathered from the police speed trailer over a two-day period shows that 85% of traffic at this intersection have an average speed of 65 mph.

Visibility to the south is clear, but the sightline to the north is only 330 feet, which creates safety concerns for pedestrians. The trial camera showed only 8 pedestrians crossing the intersection over a 3-day period so the intersection does not meet Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)'s recommendations for a crosswalk, which is 20 pedestrians per hour. Engineering studies that found that crosswalks in uncontrolled intersections are not recommended unless speed can be reduced to 40 mph and a refuge median installed.

A Hawk system, or pedestrian stop light, is a possible solution. A Hawk system has a traffic stop light that is activated when the pedestrian pushes a button. This type of system has an estimated cost of \$75,000-120,000.

City Staff recommends no action be considered until 2021, when Variolite Street is scheduled for reconstruction. Possible roadway improvements can be considered at that time. It is also recommended that speed enforcement should be increased at this location.

Matt Westerhof, 16078 Uranimite Street NW, Ramsey, thanked the Public Works Committee and City Staff for doing this study. He stated his wife petitioned the neighborhood and got 56 signatures requesting that the City consider some type of speed control at this intersection. He added he is a member of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, and pedestrian access is an important aspect of the continued development of the City of Ramsey.

Mr. Westerhof stated he and his family like to walk through their neighborhood, meet their neighbors, and enjoy their community. He added there are new homes being constructed in this neighborhood, and Ramsey Central Park is nearby, and the lack of pedestrian safety at this intersection must be addressed.

Mr. Westerhof stated he reviewed the Minnesota Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices, and certain criteria in this document indicates that this intersection could qualify for a stop sign.

Mr. Westerhof stated while he appreciates the fact that the City is looking for a solution, he hopes that it will be addressed before 2021-22. He added a crosswalk might not be necessary, but he would support more speed enforcement in the neighborhood. He noted there are few east/west corridors in Ramsey, and 161st has become a busy route which is a concern for his neighborhood.

Acting Chairperson Johns stated the Police speed trailer could be parked at the intersection to make drivers aware of the speed limit. She added excessive speeds should be addressed by the Police Department.

PW Superintendent Riemer stated the electric speed signs are deliberately left blank, so they don't influence driver behavior during the data gathering period, but they still record traffic speeds. When the signs are turned on or a squad car is present people do slow down.

Councilmember Kuzma expressed concern that there are many issues in the City that require attention and funding. He stated he is unsure whether the high cost of a pedestrian crossing stop light at this intersection is a community-wide priority. He asked whether the community could have a special assessment for the neighborhood.

City Engineer Westby stated he is unsure whether signal systems are listed in the City's assessment policy. He added a petition would be necessary.

Acting Chairperson Johns stated she believes special assessments must be shown to provide value to the whole community.

Mr. Westerhof stated, as a Ramsey resident, he would not want the City to spend that much money on an intersection. He added he hopes a less expensive solution can be found. He asked whether a stop sign is a possibility, which would slow people down.

PW superintendent Riemer stated it is difficult to qualify an intersection for an all-way stop. He stated there must be proven issues or problems with traffic volume and safety criteria, or a history of crashes, for an intersection to qualify. He added there has only been 1 accident at this intersection, in 2012, due to slippery conditions.

Acting Chairperson Johns recommended that an amendment to the City's Capital Improvement Plan be considered, that the grade at the Variolite Street/161st Avenue NW intersection should be looked at for possible improvements to increase visibility and safety for pedestrians.

Acting Chairperson Johns thanked Mr. Westerhof for his attendance and for providing information for the Public Works Committee's review.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Acting Chairperson Johns, to recommend that City Staff request that the Police Department use the speed trailer at the Variolite Street/161st Avenue NW intersection periodically to help reduce traffic speeds, and to consider an amendment to the Capital Improvement Plan regarding lowering the grade at the Variolite Street/161st Avenue NW intersection to improve the sight line to the north.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Acting Chairperson Johns and Councilmember Kuzma. Voting No: None. Absent: Chairperson Riley.

5.02: Parking Concern Near Rhinestone Street and Ramsey Parkway

PW Superintendent Riemer reviewed the staff report, and explained that City Staff received an email from a resident expressing concerns about pedestrian safety at the Rhinestone Street/Ramsey Parkway intersection. He added on-street parking near the intersection limits visibility for pedestrians trying to cross the street to The Draw Park and Park View East Apartments.

After looking at the intersection and reviewing the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices, City Staff determined that there should be no on-street parking within 20 feet of the intersection in all directions. City staff recommends that the yellow curb markings be extended, as needed, to ensure uniform “No Parking” restrictions on all legs of the intersection.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Acting Chairperson Johns, to recommend that the yellow curb markings be extended, as needed, to ensure uniform “No Parking” restrictions on all legs of the intersection at Rhinestone Street/Ramsey Parkway.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Acting Chairperson Johns, Councilmember Kuzma. Voting No: None. Absent: Chairperson Riley.

5.03: Consider Recommending City Council Approval of Plans and Specifications for Improvement Project #17-03, 2017 Crackseal and Sealcoat Improvements

City Engineer Westby explained the purpose of this case is to consider recommendation of the proposed 2017 crackseal and sealcoat program to the City Council. He presented the proposed layouts, base program bid and 4 alternate bids.

City Engineer Westby stated cost estimates were refined so proposed bids would be more accurate. He added alternate bids have been proposed to spend as much of the budget as possible. He noted \$500,000 has been budgeted for 2017, and City Staff recommends that \$35,000 be reserved for ground penetrating radar measurements to evaluate existing pavement sections on all streets that are proposed to be reconstructed and milled and overlaid per the existing CIP.

City Engineer Westby stated Public Works is requesting approximately \$35,000 for spray patching machine rental. He added the balance of \$430,000 will be applied to 2017 Crackseal

and Sealcoat Improvements. He noted, depending upon how the bids come in, City Staff anticipates that at least one or two alternate bids will be included with the base program bid.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Acting Chairperson Johns, to recommend that the City Council approve plans and specifications for Project 17-03 - 2017 Crackseal and Sealcoat Program.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Acting Chairperson Johns, Councilmember Kuzma. Voting No: None. Chairperson Riley.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Acting Chairperson Johns, to recommend that the following related items be funded through the 2017 Streets Budget:

- Analyze pavement sections for CIP projects using ground penetrating radar - \$35,000
- Spray patching machine rental - \$35,000

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Acting Chairperson Johns, Councilmember Kuzma. Voting No: None. Chairperson Riley.

6. COMMITTEE / STAFF INPUT

6:01 Review Green Valley Road/County Road 63 Speed Zone Study Results

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report and explained that the purpose of this case is to provide an update on the Green Valley Road speed zone study results. In 2014, City Staff received a resident complaint regarding excessive traffic speeds on Green Valley Road. The resident requested that the speed limit be reduced from 55 mph to 40-45 mph. This request was reviewed and approved by the Public Works Committee

The City submitted a request to Anoka County Highway Department for a Speed Zone Study in the Fall of 2014. In April 2017, City Staff received the results of the speed study, dated March 3, 2016. Based on the results of the speed study, Anoka County will leave the posted speed limit at 55 mph. Anoka County has indicated that they communicated this information to the resident.

The resident also requested provision of a trail or pedestrian walkway, or wider shoulders, along the roadway. Anoka County has indicated they would consider this request, but it would be a City-driven request, with all costs covered by the City. A trail would not be appropriate at this location as there are no connecting trails at either end. If the shoulders were to be widened, retaining walls and guardrails would be necessary due to the steep slope. This would be extremely expensive and could further reduce driver safety.

Mr. Westby stated City Staff does not recommend trail improvements along the shoulder of Green Valley Road. He added this issue will be revisited by City Staff periodically.

Acting Chairperson Johns stated this area of the City is extremely isolated due the confluence of Highways 47 and 63. She added it would be nice to see some improvements for pedestrian access.

6:02 Review Preliminary Plans for Improvement Project #17-04, Sunwood Drive Striping Improvements

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report and explained that Sunwood Drive is currently striped with center two-way turn lanes. Over the years, more defined access points have been constructed. Several specific areas are recommended for striping improvements to increase traffic efficiency and reduce accidents.

City Engineer Westby stated westbound Sunwood Drive will be re-striped to create a dedicated left turn lane into Casey's that can accommodate two to three vehicles. Other dedicated left turn lanes will be added throughout the corridor, and all center two-way turn lanes will be eliminated. He noted a right turn lane onto Center Street is also proposed, which would remove a few parking stalls along the north side of Sunwood Drive in front of the Municipal Center.

Acting Chairperson Johns stated this is a good time to make the Center Street improvement as there is not currently a building there. Councilmember Kuzma agreed.

City Engineer Westby stated a left turn lane into Sunwood Village Apartments from westbound Sunwood is also proposed. He added right and left turn lanes will be installed for the new StoneBrook Day Care Center.

City Engineer Westby stated restriping at both ends of Sunwood Drive is being proposed as part of the sealcoat project under alternate bid A, including the roundabout.

Councilmember Kuzma asked whether a landscape plan is being considered for the roundabout.

City Engineer Westby stated he is unsure whether a landscape plan for the roundabout is included in the Capital Improvement Plan. He said this could be added to an upcoming Public Works Committee agenda for discussion if desired.

Acting Chairperson Johns stated the Public Works Committee had previously discussed the scope of landscape plans.

Councilmember Kuzma stated there was some question about whether the City should consider a landscape plan for the whole COR or just the roundabout area.

City Engineer Westby stated that grass has been established there by the Parks Department.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated there has been discussion about enlisting a neighborhood group or gardening club to help create community landscape gardens at the roundabout. He confirmed that the center of the roundabout is irrigated.

Acting Chairperson Johns stated she would like to see this issue added as a future topic for discussion.

City Engineer Westby stated the road striping preliminary plans will be reviewed at an upcoming City Council meeting, for approval and completion in August 2017. He agreed to provide updates to the Public Works Committee.

6:03 Staff Updates on Improvement Projects and Items of Interest

City Engineer Westby stated City Staff has provided a list of City improvement projects, as well as Anoka County and MnDOT projects, for the Public Works Committee to review. He added a notable project is the Mississippi River Trail Phase 3, which was paved last week.

Councilmember Kuzma asked when the Mississippi River Trail dedication will be held.

City Engineer Westby stated Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood is planning a ribbon-cutting event and that more information will follow.

City Engineer Westby stated the Metropolitan Council has approved the Master Park Plan amendment, which allocates 5.3 acres to the City for the Riverdale Drive extension. He added Anoka County is prepared to deed the property to the City, allowing final MnDOT approval of the plans so they can be bid.

Councilmember Kuzma asked whether the grant funds are still available. City Engineer Westby confirmed this.

City Engineer Westby stated the Alpine Drive and Sunwood Drive reconstruction project plans are currently out for bids, and that the MnDOT Highway 10 cable median barrier project is planned for 2018. He added City Staff are working on utility plans for Bunker Lake Boulevard, to be reviewed by the City Council at their May 23, 2017, meeting. He noted utility extensions will also be required along Puma Street for the Riverstone development project.

City Engineer Westby stated City Staff are working with the Minnesota Department of Health on updating the Wellhead Protection Plan.

City Engineer Westby stated the City Council will review quotes and consider awarding a contract for ground penetrating radar and soil borings in support of future street reconstruction and mill and overlay projects as discussed previously at the May 23rd regular Council meeting.

Acting Chairperson Johns asked for an update on the railroad crossing at Ferry Street in Anoka.

City Engineer Westby stated that project is currently in the preliminary design stage.

6:04 Review Future Topics Calendar

Acting Chairperson Johns requested an update on the roundabout, and whether that is a discussion for the Public Works Committee rather than the City Council as a whole.

City Engineer Westby stated that is not currently on the calendar, but it would make sense to address it at a City Council Work Session.

City Engineer Westby stated that discussion could also include consideration of seasonal City banners along Sunwood Drive, perhaps with sponsorship. He added City Staff could provide further review at the Public Works Committee's next meeting. Acting Chairperson Johns agreed, adding it was originally a project with broader scope that ties in City communications and signage, as well as beautification.

Councilmember Kuzma requested an update on the City documents scanning project. City Engineer Westby stated several quotes had been obtained by Staff from scanning suppliers. He added this is an ongoing task that Staff has been trying to address but has not made much progress on lately. He noted the Community Development Department is implementing an electronic plan review process for private development projects.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma seconded by Acting Chairperson Johns to adjourn the Public Works Committee meeting.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Grant Riemer
Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Mary Mullen
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.