

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

The Public Works Committee conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 17, 2016, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Chris Riley
 Councilmember Jill Johns
 Councilmember Mark Kuzma

Absent: Councilmember Melody Shryock

Also Present: Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
 Civil Engineer II Leonard Linton

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Riley called the regular meeting of the Public Works Committee to order at 5:39 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

There was none.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

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

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve April 19, 2016, Meeting Minutes

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

Regular Meeting Minutes dated April 19, 2016

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Riley and Councilmembers Johns. Voting No: None. Abstain: Councilmember Kuzma. Absent: Councilmember Shryock.

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

5.01: Provide City Council Recommendations for Gibbon Street and 173rd Avenue Drainage Improvements Feasibility Report

Chairperson Riley explained the homeowners that initially brought this item to the City are not able to attend the meeting tonight. Discussion will take place, though no motions will be made.

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if the feasibility study was conducted in-house.

City Engineer Westby confirmed it was.

City Engineer Westby noted this is a feasible project. The project would include a 3,000 foot storm sewer system with aprons on either end. The cost is estimated to be about \$325,000. The number of benefitting properties is fairly small. There have been four property owners that have come forward with wet basements. The staff recommendation is to consider whether special assessments can pay for most of it, or determine whether funds can be purchased. He said he looked online for grants or anything similar that would apply. While something may become available in the future, he said there is nothing he could find that would fit the situation. Currently, it is under consideration to assess the cost to the property owners. The City will receive little benefit for completing this project and it would not make sense for the City to absorb the cost. The residents have pointed out they have been paying for the storm water utility fee throughout the years, and have not received benefit from that. Staff did discuss this case with the City Attorney, and learned that the City is under no obligations that it is aware of, to fix this issue. This home was built before the City was incorporated, which tends to be the case with many of these situations.

Councilmember Kuzma questioned whether the homeowner could put in a sump pump and drain tile on their own to fix the issue.

City Engineer Westby responded there are several systems available, and the associated costs are from the mid-thousands of dollars to tens of thousands. He said the resident had called for estimates on different systems, but he has not heard back from the resident with what they learned.

Chairperson Riley asked if using a sump pump would really fix the issue.

Civil Engineer II Linton explained a drain system would capture the water, but there is no place to let it out. The water would find its way back in if it is simply pumped out.

Chairperson Riley inquired whether lowering the ground water would be possible and of benefit.

Civil Engineer II Linton Leonard responded it could be lowered to a point. The pond cannot be lowered more than the lowest level of the wetland. The basement is most likely below the level

of the wetland. The water level will always be higher than the level of the floor. The homeowners experienced it coming up from the floor; not from around the building.

City Engineer Westby stated the City hasn't gone out to the location to conduct soil borings to see where the soil is in proximity to the basement. Given the situation, staff will never be able to say with 100% certainty that lowering the ground water would correct the issue.

Chairperson Riley asked if a solution is found and implemented, if it would create any additional developable land.

City Engineer Westby answered there would be no additional developable land. This issue and possible solution is really only for these four or five properties.

Councilmember Johns asked if there are any properties on the east side of the pond with issues.

Civil Engineer II Linton indicated the City has not had contact with all of the properties, but has learned the ground water is at the level of the garage for a couple of properties on the north side.

Councilmember Johns raised the point that insurance may be able to take part in a cost share.

City Engineer Westby said he is not aware of any programs or insurance that could be of benefit. He said from personal experience, he knows there is no insurance that would cover any costs when the issue is due to ground water. It is not the same as getting flood insurance.

The discussion was postponed in order to include the residents at a future meeting.

5.02: Review Updated Estimated Costs for Sunfish Lake Sedimentation Basin Improvements

Chairperson Riley explained the homeowner was not able to attend the meeting tonight. Discussion will take place, though no motions will be made.

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report. Staff was directed to develop a cost estimate for the requested improvements. The cost estimate totals \$46,782.75 to construct the settling basin, modify the storm sewer and fill in the drainage swale. He noted this is in the DNR wetland and when that is impacted, the City must buy double the amount spent in wetland credits.

Chairperson Riley requested clarification on what the City would purchase in credits.

City Engineer Westby explained there are websites listing available wetland bank credits, which is how the City would purchase any necessary credits.

Chairperson Riley inquired if a wetland could be created.

City Engineer Westby replied that has been discussed briefly in the past.

Civil Engineer II Linton Leonard noted it is a long-term process to establish a wetland. It has to be monitored for five years. At the end of that time, if it still looks like a wetland, it can be determined as such, and it could be listed in the wetland credit bank.

Councilmember Kuzma asked how many properties the potential improvements would affect.

City Engineer Westby said it would benefit one.

Councilmember Kuzma clarified the homeowner bought this property with this drainage swale in place and was aware of its presence.

City Engineer Westby stated it was there when the home was purchased, and nothing has changed since the property has been purchased.

Chairperson Riley noted when the homeowner bought the property, it was during the dryer years. The water would flow through it and drain. It functioned differently. Now it is vegetated and has standing water. This is due to the natural water level of the lake.

Civil Engineer II Linton stated it is low now. The lake's water level does go up and down.

Councilmember Kuzma asked about a wet basement.

Chairperson Riley asked about the timing of the roadway and the plat.

Civil Engineer II Linton explained the plans showed the swale and it was part of the roadway before anything was built. The roadway came first, and then the plat.

Chairperson Riley questioned whether the problem would be fixed if the sedimentation basin was put in.

City Engineer Westby replied it would.

Councilmember Kuzma stated it seems to be a cosmetic situation. The City will not benefit from these improvements.

City Engineer Westby noted the benefit to the City would be that the pond could be maintained easier.

Chairperson Riley sought clarification that in the packet, the documentation shows the drainage swale was stable for the first years, and then it just started filling up.

City Engineer Westby noted there are easements there as well. Staff did have discussions at one point of what defines an easement and whether standing water would be allowed in an easement. It was determined that there are a lot of easements with water in them.

Chairperson Riley inquired why the drainage would be designed to run across private property.

Engineer II Linton pointed out the wetland is very close, and the builder didn't want to have to mitigate it at the time.

City Engineer Westby explained the first order of business when working with the DNR is to not impact a wetland. They may have suggested building the drainage swale in this manner in order to leave the wetlands alone.

Chairperson Riley brought up the possibility of a storm sceptor.

City Engineer Westby responded staff did consider this at one point, however, it wouldn't operate as needed. He noted that staff did discuss the situation with the DNR and found another approval process will be necessary. The DNR did say the permits could be pulled and the work could be done, however, it is not completely assured that the problem would be corrected.

The discussion was postponed in order to include the resident at a future meeting.

5.03: Provide City Council Recommendation for 2016 Crackseal and Sealcoat Improvements, Improvement Project #16-00 Division A

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report, noting the costs listed in the packet are very accurate. Staff is asking for recommendation to the Council based on these costs.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer noted his department has spent \$46,000 in patching. If the City did use the fog sealing in the two proposed areas, and there was extra money, it would be used in patching.

Councilmember Kuzma clarified the City's policy is that to not assess for sealcoating.

City Engineer Westby confirmed.

Chairperson Riley noted the City underspent last year by about \$100,000. He pointed out the roads are not being maintained to the fullest. He questioned if the spray patching would be paid for within the sealcoating.

Councilmember Johns stated the extra funds were distributed to various funds. There are four funds that generally extra money such as this go into.

Discussion took place on how to allocate the \$96,000 overage.

Chairperson Riley asked how the roads to be improved are chosen.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer answered it depends on when the roads were built. Because Ramsey was not built all at once as a planned community, there are some roads that need repair and maintenance sooner than others. Once the roads are all at a workable place, more strategic maintenance schedules can be followed.

Chairperson Riley asked whether the bidding should be for 80% to 120% of what is budgeted.

City Engineer Westby replied that is an option. At this point, he said it may be a better route to request bids. If bids came in a little over, then a smaller area could be removed from the project. It is not expected that bids will hit exactly \$500,000, so there are ways to work around that. He noted the City cannot change the contract by more than 25%.

Chairperson Riley stated Ramsey's budgets are consistently lower than the Consortium. He asked if it would be helpful to work with the group.

City Engineer Westby replied one of the issues with the Consortium is that it doesn't allow the City to control the schedule of work. The contractor lets the City know when they will be doing work, and in what areas. There is some flexibility in that staff could ask the contractors to not do a certain street at a certain time, but the majority of the scheduling is taken away from the City.

Discussion took place on the process of sending out for bids and how it would work with the Consortium.

Motion by Councilmember Johns, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to recommend that the City Council approve plans as prepared by staff for Improvement Project #16-00, Division A.

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

6. COMMITTEE / STAFF INPUT

City Engineer Westby reviewed the list of project as included in the packet.

Chairperson Riley questioned the request of a hole in the pond as listed under Items of Interest.

City Engineer Westby explained the homeowner had suggested scooping out the bottom of the pond on his property in an effort to bring some relief from high water in the spring. Staff will look at the situation when it is dry. He said he is not sure what benefit this would provide, as the pond has not been overflowing that they are aware of.

Councilmember Johns asked if clearing out the nearby wetland area would be of help.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer replied there is a lot of vegetation in the wetland. Clearing it out could speed up the drainage to a point, but likely would not give much relief.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grant Riemer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Grant Riemer
Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Chris Moksnes
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.