

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

The Public Works Committee conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, July 16, 2024, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Debra Musgrove
 Councilmember Chelsee Howell (arrived at 5:33 p.m.)
 Councilmember Michael Olson

Also Present: City Engineer/Public Works Director Bruce Westby
 Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Mark Riverblood
 Civil Engineer IV Leonard Linton

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. CITIZEN INPUT

Anthony Villeneuve, 6230 177th Lane NW, commented that he lives within the Rodeo Hills Estates development which is currently undergoing a road reconstruction project. He commented that there was a neighborhood meeting prior to the project where residents were able to voice concerns but did not feel that those voices were heard or that the concerns were addressed. He stated that he and his neighbors expressed concerns with the drainage as they have ditches rather than curb and gutter. He stated that the ditches have filled with sediment and are no longer draining properly, which is causing issues this year because of all the rain.

Councilmember Howell arrived.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby understood the concerns of the resident. He stated that the City is currently focused on repairing the pavement. He stated that in those meetings they do ask if there are drainage concerns or issues in the area that they should be aware of when designing the project. He commented that the road projects do not include wholesale regrading of ditches but do include spot drainage improvements if necessary to address safety concerns or concerns with flooding homes. Outside of that the City is focused on repairing pavement at this time.

Mr. Villeneuve stated that the City is cutting driveways and regrading that area, which would seem to be a good time to work on driveway culverts.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated driveway culverts are only replaced if necessary and asked if his culvert is plugged and needs to be cleaned.

Mr. Villeneuve commented that he works in public works himself and cleans his culvert, but again commented on the amount of sediment that has accumulated in ditches, which he estimates at 6 to 8-inches.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that it may be too late to address this with the road project, but staff could meet him onsite to further discuss his concerns.

Mr. Villeneuve commented that it would be nice if residents could work with the contractor to have additional driveway work completed but the contractor has stated that they do not want to do that work with residents.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Chairperson Musgrove requested to move Item 6.01 to follow Item 4.01.

Motion by Councilmember Howell, seconded by Councilmember Olson, to approve the agenda, as amended.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Musgrove, Councilmembers Howell and Olson. Voting No: None.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve June 18, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Motion by Councilmember Olson, seconded by Councilmember Howell, to approve the following minutes:

Regular Meeting Minutes dated June 18, 2024

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Musgrove, Councilmembers Olson and Howell. Voting No: None.

6. COMMITTEE / STAFF INPUT

6.01: Receive Updates on Wetland 114P

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby provided an update on wetland 114P and the information included in the packet including property plats and lot surveys, showing drainage easements and wetland delineations on many properties. He stated that staff is working to saw-cut the weir to lower it eight inches to the approved DNR elevation as quickly as possible and will present additional updates at the August Committee meeting, including potential plans to permanently reconstruct or reinstall the outlet control structure based on the additional input of DNR.

Deanna Hopkins, 14249 Junkite Street NW, stated that she is the first resident that the water from the creek flows to. She commented that no one has come to look at her property because she has not expressed concern directly to the City. She stated that her property is the lowest elevation around the pond and requested that staff come to review the elevation of her property compared to the pond. She asked if the ponds that the water would outflow to would be capable of handling the additional waterflow from this pond.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that staff has mentioned that they have spoken with Ms. Hopkins when they were out in that area. He asked the purpose of the stakes on the property.

Ms. Hopkins commented that she was using the stakes to measure the depth of the water.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that they do not anticipate any issues downstream. He commented that he would be happy to visit with Ms. Hopkins on her property to further discuss her concerns.

Ms. Hopkins suggested delaying action to lower the weir and letting the water level out for one year before making any changes.

Theresa Moulzolf, 14260 Junkite Street, commented that she started working with the DNR in 1996 because a developer lowered the culvert lower than it should be. She was concerned that if the weir is lowered because of complaints of some residents, that could have a negative impact on the pond. She stated that the weir should have been installed many years ago to restore the water level. She expressed concern with the quality of the pond and increased vegetation if the water level is lowered.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed information received today from the DNR on the outlet elevation history going back to 1991. He stated that the objective of the DNR is to restore the elevation to the pre-development level.

Ms. Moulzolf asked why the City would continue to make changes, as this is one of the wettest years that has been experienced. She stated that part of the increased water in people's yards is because of the high rain levels.

Chairperson Musgrove asked how this year compares to other years for rain levels.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that this year is about four or five inches more precipitation than an average year.

Chairperson Musgrove commented that the weir was cut by eight inches because it was too high.

Eric McBroom, 5771 145th Court, commented that the water level has reduced in his yard since the weir was opened, although still much wetter than the previous summer. He thanked staff for the update and for correcting the error that was made.

Alison Bollman, 5731 145th Court, appreciated the changes that were made to the structure noting that her yard has almost completely cleared the standing water. She commented on the sunken yard that remains and noted that she is having estimates completed for the repair that would be necessary.

Carissa Hoyt, 5741 145th Court NW, agreed that the standing water has receded. She commented that some properties where the water has receded have wildlife that have come into the yard because of the flooded conditions. She expressed concern with a lack of communication during the project, and prior to that. She believed the City could have done a better job explaining what would be done and the reason for the project, along with updates during the project. She stated that there are other residents that have been impacted that have not been able to, or may not have wanted to, attend the meeting.

Chairperson Musgrove asked if Ms. Hoyt has been receiving responses to her emails.

Ms. Hoyt commented that she did reach out to staff one year ago to find out more information about the project. She commented that most recently she has received responses from the Council, when she has emailed, but stated that there has been a slower response from staff. She stated that perhaps more research could have been done prior to the project.

Ms. Hopkins asked if the other residents have lived on water before.

Mr. McBroom commented that there were multiple feet of standing water. He commented that it was the combination of the project and the increased rainfall that caused the issue and damaged the properties. He did not disagree that there is a happy medium somewhere, but it was not right to have that type of sway. He commented that the presentation stated that an error was made, and the level was raised eight inches too high, and it seems that they are correcting the issue. He stated that he still has puddles, which he expects in the rainy season, but the standing water has receded.

Ms. Hopkins acknowledged that people will not be happy in the high or low levels, but they will have to find something they can agree with.

Councilmember Olson agreed that it makes sense to wait some time to let things settle so they know where they will land before they make additional adjustments. He agreed that staff should continue to work with the DNR to find the happy medium, but did not believe that any further adjustments should be made at this time, and they should let it settle.

Councilmember Howell agreed that it would seem reasonable to let things settle. She agreed that staff should work with the DNR to determine what would be possible if further adjustment is needed.

Chairperson Musgrove acknowledged that there has been a bounce in the water level over the years and appreciated that staff did the work to continue checking and realize that an error was made, and then making that adjustment. She stated that there has been positive movement since the adjustment was made, which has been helpful for the residents. She suggested that staff continue

to monitor the water levels weekly to provide an update at the August meeting. She recognized that the weir was cut down 8-inches and asked if that impacted the integrity of the structure.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that it is his understanding that the structure of the weir was not negatively impacted by the cutting. He did not believe additional work would be needed if they want to let things settle in for a while.

Alison Bollman asked if mitigation efforts would be considered in the plans, if the weir does require updating in the future, to prevent this situation from occurring again in high water years, such as adding a pump station. She asked if a grate or guard could be added to prevent someone from falling into the hole that was cut.

Civil Engineer IV Linton provided details on the weir, noting that the part that was cut was underneath the grate and the grate was not impacted.

Chairperson Musgrove commented that if the weir needs replacement in the future, there should be consideration for potential mitigation efforts included for high water occurrences.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated that staff had a discussion with the DNR as to what would be acceptable and the DNR has stated that they would not want adjustable flaps or gates, which is why this rigid weir structure was selected. He confirmed that staff will provide another update at the August meeting.

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

5.01: Trail Maintenance Policy – Status Update

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood reviewed the staff report and explained that staff is requesting feedback on the content and scope of the desired Trail Maintenance Policy.

Chairperson Musgrove commented that this policy was drafted in 2004 and was looking for more content in a current policy.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that the 20-year-old plan was not approved and was just a working draft, therefore although referenced, that does not correlate into the proposed policy.

Chairperson Musgrove commented that she would like to see something similar to the Sewer Maintenance Policy, with subheadings and additional detail provided under each subheading. She asked if raingardens are the responsibility of residents and stated that perhaps the only mention is clarifying that is the responsibility of residents. She referenced other items mentioned in the 2004 version that she would not want to see carry forward.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood agreed that the policy should only address trail maintenance and should be specific to that topic.

Chairperson Musgrove stated that she liked the table used by Monticello for recording keeping as that would be something residents could easily follow. She asked for Committee input on the expectation for snow removal and storm clean up. She commented that in her experience the sidewalks fill with snow after plowing occurs and that snow becomes hardpacked in the days following before the City clears the sidewalks. She stated that perhaps if the sidewalks were cleared faster, it would avoid the hard packing of the snow and make it easier on City equipment to remove.

Councilmember Howell referenced similar policy updates that have been made and suggested matching the vernacular of those policies using the Stormwater Pond Policy as an example. She also liked the table mentioned by Chairperson Musgrove.

Councilmember Olson agreed that consistency is important and also liked the idea of the maintenance record/table.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that they will have a map similar to the street reconstruction map.

Councilmember Olson thanked staff for looking for good value and matching fund opportunities for the trails.

Chairperson Musgrove commented that she would like to see this item return to the August meeting to review more detail, with anticipation to have the full policy completed by October.

5.02: Review Draft Stormwater Pond Maintenance Policy Framework

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed the staff report and stated that staff recommends preparing a draft policy incorporating Committee input received after reviewing and discussing the draft framework tonight, then presenting the draft policy for approval during the August Public Works Committee meeting.

Councilmember Olson commented that he agrees with the river inland approach. He asked if there are records of maintenance beyond the reactive actions that have been taken.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that there are some records over the last five to ten years.

Chairperson Musgrove also liked the idea of working from the rivers in. She stated that some of this would be statements of what the other agencies do and would not need to include much detail.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that they would want to include infrastructure owned/managed by other agencies or businesses for tracking purposes in the future. He stated that the City also has stormwater maintenance agreements with other entities, acknowledging that level of detail would be difficult to include, but it would at least be helpful to note that those agreements exist.

Chairperson Musgrove recommended that some of that information be included in an appendix page.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that the intent is to have a policy in place, so they can start working from that and include programmed maintenance items in the budgeting process. He commented that they can always add detail to the policy in the future, but he would not want to delay the process. He stated that he will bring back a full draft for the Committee to provide feedback on at the next meeting in order to continue moving forward, noting that it would not include the same level of detail as the previous policy discussed tonight.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that this policy will be helpful to assist residents in understanding the purpose of a stormwater pond, in that it has a function and is not meant for aesthetic purposes.

6. COMMITTEE / STAFF INPUT (Continued)

6.02: Receive Updates on Improvement Projects, Studies, and Items of Interest

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby provided an update on current and proposed City, County, and MnDOT improvement projects and studies, and on other items of interest to the Committee.

Chairperson Musgrove referenced the potential bridge crossing to Dayton and asked if there had been any progress. It was noted that there has not been any movement since the MnDOT study was completed and that the cities on the other side of the river do not seem to be very interested. She suggested that perhaps City Administrator Hagen could provide the Committee/Council with an update on whether the other cities would be interested in meeting to discuss that item again.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby confirmed that he could add that item to the list again to ensure there is additional follow up.

6.03: Review Future Topics Calendar

Chairperson Musgrove commented that a resident contacted her related to generator pumps. She asked if it would be helpful to have additional information on that topic. She stated that she would not want another set of homes have a similar incident as to what occurred on Rivlyn Avenue.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that lift station #1 is the oldest, and without power that does not have much capacity and fills up quickly. He stated that there is now a permanent generator at lift station #1. He stated that in the event of a loss of power, there is a portable generator that staff would bring from one lift station to another to assist in emptying. He stated that staff does support adding additional permanent generators at the lift stations, noting that they have begun to be included in the budget and will be a part of the continued budget discussions.

Chairperson Musgrove agreed that there should be additional discussion and perhaps it would be helpful to have another portable generator/trailer in the interim while they work to implement

additional permanent generators to assist in the instance of a power outage. She agreed that this topic should be added to the calendar and could be added to the September agenda.

Councilmember Howell asked if they could have a future discussion related to the City making its own hot mix using used roof shingles.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated that he is unfamiliar with that concept and asked Councilmember Howell to forward him the information that she has on that topic.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Howell, seconded by Councilmember Olson, to adjourn the Public Works Committee meeting.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Westby
City Engineer/Public Works Director

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.