

**Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Vergas City Offices**  
**October 1, 2021**

1.) A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Friday, October 1, 2021 at 10:00 AM at the Vergas City Offices. Present was Bruce Albright and Paul Pinke, Vergas City Council, Mike DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent, and Julie Lammers, City Clerk. Albright called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

2.) Sidewalks and 105 Main Street were added to the agenda.

3.) 2022 Yard Waste Permits was discussed. Lammers had a handout showing the 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 (year to date (ytd)) income and expenses. Permits purchased each year was discussed: 2018 - 221; 2019 - 224; 2020 - 281; and 2021 ytd - 276. The negative balances for each year were reviewed: 2018 - \$6,689.23; 2019 - \$12,350.60; 2020 - \$6,530.45; and 2021 ytd - \$11,386.50. The current cost for nonresidents to get a yard waste permit is \$40.00 annually.

For each year listed, the expenses include \$10,000 for the Komatsu loader. The annual loader cost is \$30,000, with \$10,000 also going to Streets and \$10,000 going to sewer. The loader expense will go away in 2022, as it will be paid for, unless we upgrade and get a new loader through the state contract. Our loader currently has about 635 hours and 2,000 miles. The last loader was purchased from General Equipment in Fargo, at zero percent interest, and 5 years of payments at \$30,000. The idea five years ago was that we'd trade loaders about every 5 years, getting the maximum for our used equipment on trade-in. The Committee recommended that DuFrane get a quote for a new loader.

This week, DuFrane said there were two dumping violations. Our new City Attorney and their firm have enforcement authority, like the County Attorney, to prosecute violations. According to State Statute, the fine could be up to \$300 for a violation of the rules. Albright asked if the camera works at the recycling site. DuFrane said it does, but what good does it do to identify violators, when nobody enforces the rules. Otter Tail County operates a yard waste disposal site in Pelican Rapids, and there it costs \$40.00 per load to dump. Given the volume of material received each year and the number of permits we sell, our site is quite popular with the area citizens. There had been talk with the Committee, that if violations continue to occur, perhaps the site should be closed for non residents of Vergas. Doing that, of course we also lose the income side of our balance sheet.

Lammers said to break even, we'd need to get about \$75/each for permits. The Committee felt this was not unreasonable. There was discussion that right now, permits are only sold at the City Offices or the Liquor Store. The Committee felt this was fine. Lammers distributed a copy of the current rules that accompany each permit sold. The rules currently state anyone with a violation, loses their permit for that year. One of the biggest problems is people borrowing their permit to friends and relatives. The Committee felt that more information should be added to the permit attachment. The Committee will look at possible rule revisions at their next meeting,

DuFrane felt that the Committee should have the authority to shut the site down, if necessary. This summer with the drought and burning bans, we almost reach this point, as the site was full and couldn't take any more material. The Committee will ask the the Council for said authority. Smoke from burning the site was discussed. Several complaints have been filed in the past.

Otter Tail County operate the blue recycling bins on the site. In the past, they've hinted that they could possibly gravel their area. DuFrane thought this would be a good idea. There are currently some water holes, and broken glass in the area. DuFrane will contact the County Recycling Coordinator to check on gravel. The Lions collect aluminum cans at the site. Sometimes their trailer gets full, and the cans then blow all over. Someone should contact them so they empty their trailer when it is full.

4.) The need to relocate East Lake Street was discussed. The two main property owners in the area have expressed their concerns to the Council and Planning and Zoning Commission. Earlier this year, Tyler Schmid, Franklin Fence, got a permit to put up a fence with gates on the east and west ends. Said fence has now been installed. DuFrane said he'll have to plow the road with the payload, as he won't be able to push the snow against the fence, which would damage it. Similar to the process used for Glenn Street, a portion of the platted street has to be abandoned and returned to the respective landowner, and in exchange, we'll need to acquire new road right-of-way (R/W). Lammers thought that the City's engineering firm, KLJ, has already surveyed the area and determined the desired new road width/location. Schmid had his priority surveyed, which noted the discrepancies. Possible abandonment of East Lake Street, retaining an easement for emergency use during events (Loony Daze) was discussed with neighboring landowners, and there was noted opposition to said idea.

Lammers said we have several other road/alley location discrepancies throughout town, and might it be more cost effective to address all at the same time. The Committee felt Lammers and DuFrane should put together a list of the other areas, so this matter can be further discussed. The Committee felt since the issue with Schmid and East Lake Street has been ongoing for some time, we should deal with this particular issue as soon as possible. Lammers can start the process with Council approval, by talking with our attorney to get the process started, assuming KLJ is finished with their work.

5.) Earlier this year, the process to abandon and relocate a portion for Glenn Street was completed. Lammers will need to do some research as to where Glenn Street officially ends. Some have thought it was the City shop, others by Loren Menz's garage, and others thought it was the property line. With Josh Hanson's purchase of the Bunkowski property, and his plans for a residential subdivision, which could start as soon as next spring, he'll need access, which for now will be Glenn and West Lake Streets. This gives the City about 8-9 months to deal with issues involving the noted roads. The recent legal survey done for the property sale, moved the east property line about 50' further west, and Glenn Street will need to be lengthened to get to Hanson's property.

6.) Regarding long range road planning and funding, Lammers distributed a sheet showing the total linear feet of the existing roads and alleys. Right now, it shows 25,284 feet or about 4.8 miles. DuFrane said there are still a couple of areas that need to be added. Lammers said we also have areas, such as east and west of the City building, where there are currently undesignated alleys. The City plows and maintains both areas, and by use, do we already have jurisdiction? Lammers showed the Committee a three-ringed notebook she is working on for each Committee member. Albright felt that maintaining and possible improvement of this many miles roadway, costs money, and the City needs to start budgeting for said costs. At a future SSYW Committee meeting, we'll continue discussions about setting aside any leftover funding for said purposes.

7.) Improvements to West Lake Street were discussed. This road is dedicated, and has 66' of R/W. The City's Capital Improvement Plan, dated August 2019, included improvements for West Lake Street, estimated to cost \$80,000. However, this estimate only including graveling the existing road. DuFrane said the current road is so narrow, that one car has to pull over to let another one past. Future improvements, besides graveling, would include widening, proper

ditch slopes, and possible flattening of some of the steep grades. Again, if the subdivision happens, the needed road improvements should be done in the next several years. KLJ would need to do the engineering for a project of this scope and magnitude. The Committee felt neither improvement for Glenn or West Lake Streets will be popular with the neighbors. According to the "Special Assessment and Trunk Area Policies and Procedures for Public Improvements and Maintenance Costs", dated October 3, 2011, reconstruction of an existing gravel roadway would be assessed 50% to the abutting benefitted properties. DuFrane questioned if the City might consider annexing in some additional property along West Lake Street, particularly back by Little Long Lake?

Things could also change if Hanson were to add either public sewer and or water to his development. The Committee asked questions if there were limitations to the number of people either utility can serve. For sanitary sewer, the subdivision would need a lift station. DuFrane said the water treatment plant should be able to put out about 100,000 gallons per day. This summer, the use varied between 40,000 - 65,000 gallons per day. The Committee felt this (expansion) was something that needed to be addressed in our long range comprehensive plan. Lammers said the City could sell bonds for street, water and sewer projects, right now, the interest rates are still quite low. DuFrane also felt the City should start thinking about where we'd drill new water wells if our existing wells ever quit.

8.) At the recent Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, the Commission recommended to the Council that they acquire and pay for 33' of R/W from each of the respective landowners on the north half of Townline Road. Hobart Township has already taken care of the process on the south half mile of roadway. DuFrane would like to see this process completed as soon as possible, so he could start tree and brush removal before snowfall. Lammers could work with the engineer for the required acreage amounts and a value for said property. She would also need to work with our attorney on drafting the required easements. In the past, the City Clerk and Engineer negotiated said easements with the landowners. The Committee questioned if including the Engineer was necessary? It might just be easier for Lammers to start the process. Albright noted that part of the required R/W is already graveled surface roadway, and this might have a different value than "new" R/W needed.

9.) Regarding 105 Main Street, Lammers felt we needed to contact the developers, as they currently have the City's property blocked/fenced along the west side of our building. They also had the alley blocked by Vergas Ford, but that has since been opened, after the developers were contacted. A variance hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, October 12th, before the Council meeting to address parking needs. According to Lammers calculations, they could need as many as 36 spaces. Section 151.41 of the City's Land Usage Ordinance, states "if warranted by the unique characteristics and/or documented parking demand for similar developments, the city may allow a reduction in the number of parking spaces actually constructed as long as the applicant provides proof of a future parking plan". Albright thought the fencing currently around the site will be dependent on whether or not they actually start construction of the building this year, or they wait until next spring. Lammers said the Liquor Store suppliers need access to the back of the City's building, of they've threatened to stop deliveries. The Committee felt that "long term parking" needs in Vergas should be addressed in the comprehensive planning process. Something needs to be done. Diagonal parking along 1ST AVE, between Main Street and E. Linden Street was still a possibility. To date, no one has brought said request to the County Engineer for his review.

10.) A sidewalk report, last completed in 2013 by DuFrane was distributed to the Committee. One of the worst areas is right in front of the Liquor Store/City Offices. An update to the report is something DuFrane should consider doing maybe in 2022, time permitting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by;

Bruce E. Albright, City Council Member

#### Council Recommendations

- Get proposals, as previously agreed upon, for a new loader.
- Increase yard waste permit fee for 2022 to \$75.00. Modify handout rules. Keep permit availability at City Hall/Liquor Store.
- Work with City Attorney to determine process for implementing fines to yard waste violators, implement said fines when necessary.
- Authorize SSYW Committee to close yard water disposal site if necessary (i.e. burning bans, etc.).
- Start legal process (engineering/attorney) for East Lake Street realignment.
- Authorize engineering and legal to begin process to determine work needed to extend Glenn Street to property line for future subdivision.
- Get a proposal for engineering design services for West Lake Street improvements.
- Start R/W acquisition process for N1/2 mile of Townline Road with affected landowners. Areas, acreages, and values from Engineer. Easement paperwork from Attorney.

#### Follow up Actions

- SSYW Committee to meet again in 2021 to work on budgets, and future SSYW Committee funding needs.
- Continue to work with developers at 105 Main Street regarding parking needs, need to address long range parking in comprehensive planning process.
- Assess new loader needs/costs.
- Assess needs/budget for Small Cities Assistance Program funding. Lobby legislators for future funding, explain our needs to Legislators.