

Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes
Vergas City Office
April 26, 2022

1.) A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Wednesday, April 26, 2022 at 1:00 PM at the Vergas City Office. Present was Bruce Albright and Paul Pinke, Vergas City Council; Mike DuFrane, Utility Superintendent; and Julie Lammers, City Clerk. Albright called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

2.) Agenda Additions or Deletions. Albright requested we add Bennett Road (RD) and the Gravel Pit to the agenda. Lammers requested to add Engineering Proposal. DuFrane felt we should discuss Keilley Shores Phase 3 and Scharf Avenue (AVE). Approved.

15.) Keilley Shores/Scharf AVE. As Planning and Zoning (P&Z) prepare for the final plat hearing, DuFrane felt there were several issues that needed to be discussed. We're having problems with Scharf AVE deteriorating along Keilley Shores Phases I and II. Part of the problem could be that no-one inspected the roadway in this area when it was built. Albright said the Bunkowski's are working with Moore Engineering on their proposed subdivision. They should have specifications for design and construction of a road. Our Engineer, KLJ, could also inspect the roadway when it is being built to insure compliance. Albright said it all starts with a good compacted base. Compaction tests need to be run during construction. In order to get good compaction, you need the proper soil types at the desired moisture percentage. If things aren't right, you won't meet compaction standards. 152.09, Plat Design Standards (2) states "the minimum road design standards of the city, including road width and grade standards shall be observed by the subdivider, as set forth in Appendix III". At the 04/25/22 P&Z meeting, the Bunkowski's stated that they planned to leave the cul-de-sac at the end of Phase II and to install another cul-de-sac at the end of Phase III. The Committee felt it would be more appealing to remove the Phase II cul-de-sac, and the associated right-of-way (R/W) would revert to the adjacent landowners. During the preliminary plat hearing, there were concerns expressed by other landowners on Scharf AVE, that they felt at the end of Phase III, the road should run west and connect with Townline RD. Bunkowski's feel that the road cannot parallel the property line, because the topography doesn't work, and there is a wetland on the line. Looking at a graphic information systems (gis) map, near the wetland area, the road could follow the field line to the north, clearing the wetland area, and then turn west to Townline RD. Even if at this time, there was R/W dedicated to said road, so that it could be built in the future when needed, might make sense. This could be one of the conditions placed on the final plat approval. A complaint has been filed on the Phase III development regarding leveling and shoreline work that was completed. We'll need to check the files to see if a Construction Permit was issued for said work? Questions arose and discussion took place as to what jurisdiction the City had to enter private property to inspect areas like this? Concerns have also been expressed that houses in Phases I and II may have exceeded the 30% of the lot total of all impervious surfaces for a R-1 Low Density Residential District (151.21, E), unless different because it is in a shoreline area? The SSYW Committee will recommend to P&Z and the Council for the Phase II cul-de-sac removal. There was also discussion about the Phase II sanitary sewer lift station, that it never was "professionally" installed, and is being infiltrated by ground water.

3.) Speed Limits. Lammers has done some research on this topic. On City owned streets in residential areas, the City may reduce the speed limits from the standard 30 miles per hour (MPH). The County does not have jurisdiction of speed limits, and needs to work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) after they conduct an engineering and traffic

investigation. Last summer the City requested the County to look at the speed limits on County Road (C.R.) Nos. 60/4 from the railroad tracks to the eastern city limits. MnDOT responded that “people will drive as fast as conditions allow, and that it would do no good to lower the speed limit in this area”. Albright said there has probably been over 6 documented accidents this winter along said roadway stretch, including the serious semi-tractor crash yesterday. Because the Vergas Trail parallels this stretch of roadway, people feel that it is only a matter of time before pedestrians are hurt. Also because C.R. No. 4 does not meet C.R. No. 60 at a 90 degree angle, Albright felt that less than 10% of the traffic coming from Frazee actually stop at the stop sign. Albright said that a number of years ago, either MnDOT or the County looked at realigning C.R. No. 4 to meet C.R. No. 60 at a 90-degree angle. Lammers will check with the County on this issue. Ryan Weibye called Lammers on Monday, very upset about the speed limits in his area. Several times last summer, his nieces and nephews were almost hit by traffic, trying to cross the road from his house to the beach area. Albright felt that maybe the City should look at the creation of an “urban district” in accordance with Minnesota Statutes (MS) 169.011, Subd. 90, where houses or businesses are at intervals of less than 100 feet for a quarter of a mile or more. By the Park, Lammers said the County has replaced the 55 MPH sign with an end 40 MPH sign. If there are no other means, Albright felt perhaps next Legislative session, we need to work with our local Legislators to get the laws changed, so cities can have some say on speed limits within their jurisdictions.

4.) Yard Waste Township Meetings. The last meeting with Dora Township is scheduled for May 7th. Pinke hoped by the then, from the information he’s requested and obtained, to analyze how many permits the City issued last year to users from Dora, Hobart, and Candor Townships. DuFrane said the recycling site needs some packable Class V gravel. Part of the gravel is needed where the County has their collection bins, and the other part is needed where the City has the yard waste disposal. Albright felt calculations should be done to determine quantities, and then the County could be contacted if they would cost-share in the graveling. Other roads (West Lake ST, Townline RD, Bennett RD, and some City streets) will also require graveling this summer, and perhaps after a delivered and spread quantity is calculated, we go do a Request for Proposals (RFP) for said product? Depending on which pit the material comes from, we’ve had trouble in the past with gravel trucks on Scharf AVE. A “No Trucks” sign has been placed by the St. John’s Church. Discussion took place where a sign coming into town could be placed? Albright felt it should be placed in the southwest (SW) corner of Section 30, Hobart Township on Townline RD, near the curve on C.R. No. 36. In the past, DuFrane said the Township did not want a “No Trucks” sign on their segment of road. Albright said if they come down Townline RD, by the time they got to Scharf AVE, there is no place to turnaround. Albright will talk with Terry Hockett, Chair, Hobart Township, about installing a sign as noted. The City’s newsletter is now being distributed to all Vergas residents, including those who do not get a utility bill, this includes areas along Townline RD, Bennett RD, and W Lake ST.

5.) East Lake Street Relocation. Lammers contacted Tom Winters, Attorney, Ramstad, Skoyles & Winters, P.A., who is the City Attorney. They’ve indicated that they need a legal description of the new road location from the City’s engineer. Lammers has forwarded the request to Scott Kolbinger, KLJ.

6.) Townline RD. The City Attorney and Lammers met with 4 of the landowners (Terry Engel, Keith and Shelley Bunkowski, and Larry Golkowski) last week regarding their proposed road easements. Jerry Johnson has agreed to sign. Collectively, the landowners basically felt that the value set for agricultural land (\$2,900/ac.) was too low. This amounts to \$0.0666/sq.ft.). The rate for homesteads is \$0.45/sq.ft. Bunkowski’s also feel that the area designated as homestead should be larger to reflect their actual yard. Golkowski said that when the city acquired a road easement for Scharf AVE from him, they City used a different classification/rate. Bunkowski’s also felt that if they sign the easement, in the future, any damage to their fence caused by the City, needs to be reimbursed to them. Albright felt we could add to their

easement that “any fence located outside of the road easement, that is damaged, will be repaired by the City”. The existing fence is within the proposed road easement. DuFrane had pictures of the fence, taken this spring, that shows parts of the fence were downed by snow load and not City equipment pushing snow off the road. According to the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC), and their memo “Acquisition and Maintenance of City Streets”, “land professionals should appraise the property”. A common appraisal method for easements involves contrasting the fair market value of the the unrestricted property with the value of the property subject to the easement. The difference between the values, is the value of the easement. KLJ calculated the current values of the easement offers. If deals cannot be negotiated, the City would have the power of eminent domain. Albright said this process would involve an attorney, parcel appraisals, and City staff time. Short of going to Court, Albright felt if the agricultural land values were doubled (\$5,800/ac.), we might get the easements signed voluntarily, which would still cost less for the City in the end. Also, if the City is forced to use eminent domain, then all previous offers are removed from the table, and we start over with the parcel appraisals. The other concession that the landowners want is a guarantee that if the City ever decides to improve the road, they will not be assessed. Lammers has discussed this issue with Winters, and he said this Council cannot bind future Councils with their decisions. So therefore, that promise cannot be made. However, if the road was ever improved, there would be a legal process followed that could be contested at that time, if necessary. The SSYW Committee will recommend to the Council that they double their agricultural rate to \$5,800/ac. In an effort to settle this issue, short of going to Court (also expensive).

7.) Parking. Lammers has talked with the County Highway Department about changing the agreement language for allowing diagonal parking on S 1ST AVE, between W Main ST and E Linden AVE. They want a letter stating that instead of the agreement language that the diagonal parking stripes must be painted twice a year, that language would be deleted and substitute language would be added to say “the diagonal parking stripes will be adequately marked”. At the P&Z Meeting last night, someone suggested using the area north of the Event Center for additional parking. The Lion’s Shelter could be moved to the northeast behind the playground equipment. Other suggestions included diagonal parking along one both sides of S 2ND AVE between W Main ST and E Linden ST. Other parking analysis could include: behind the City Offices/Liquor Store, including the County Shop property (which the City should get maybe later this year); parking along S Railway AVE near E Herman ST. This site could be developed for boat and trailer parking. The Committee also talked about the need for Handicap Parking, maybe in front of the bank and City Office. DuFrane said the added parking at Summer’s Real Estate/Home Improvement is working quite well. He needs to add a stop sign at the intersection of S Railway Ave and W Main ST. The Committee felt Lammers should contact the Railroad again about use of their property along S. Railway AVE. Lammers said she will have the RFP’s from engineering firms for City services on Monday, May 2. After scoring, the Council will interview the top 2-3 firms. Once a City Engineer is selected, we might want to do a Work Order with them for a parking analysis behind the Event Center, S. Second AVE, and behind the City Office. The Committee felt we probably shouldn’t sign any new Work Orders with our current engineer until a hiring decision is made. Discussion took place about current parking opportunities behind the Event Center. Lammers said most days, that lot is also full. The Committee talked about the needs for proper signage, directing the public to available parking.

8.) Lawrence Lake Project. Future road improvements for W Glenn ST and W Lake ST were discussed. After the engineer selection process is done, the Committee felt separate work orders should be issued to the engineer to complete preliminary plans for each noted street, included cost estimates. Once the City has this information, informational meetings could be held for each street, to update the landowners about the plans. The work on W Lake ST needs to be coordinated with Candor Township.

9.) Alley Drainage. This is the area between the new Altona Square and the City Offices. KLJ looked at drainage options, including a valley gutter or storm sewer with a catch basin. With the recent rains, the historic problem of flooding behind the Liquor Store hasn't occurred. Altona Square has taken all of their roof drainage and connected that with the storm sewer. Albright said he also had concerns about placing a valley gutter right next to the front door of the Liquor Store, from a hazardous standpoint. The Committee felt we should wait with any modifications until the Altona Square building is completed, and then assess if the problem still exists? If so, we can look at alternatives then.

10.) Pickup and Plow Purchase. Lammers said we have received the insurance check for the old snow plow in the amount of \$9,470. That will be applied to a new snow plow for the City's new 1 ton pickup. DuFrane said he will not be able to order the pickup until August, 2022. The Council wants an analysis of the costs, re-sale or trade-in value of our old Chevrolet pickup, and final costs for the new truck/plow, before the order is placed. Crysteel Truck Equipment, Fridley, MN has the state contract, and would be the ones installing lights, the snow plow, etc.

11.) Snow Removal Ordinances/Policies. Albright said he's found a couple other references in the City's ordinances referring to snow and ice removal. He'll note said areas, which should be updated at the same time we deal with this issue overall. That way, all policies/ordinances are consistent. We should have a little time to finish this matter, hopefully before fall and another snow removal season.

12.) Sidewalk Policy. DuFrane hopes to file his sidewalk report at one of the next upcoming SSW meetings.

13.) City Shop. Lammers has filed the paperwork/application fee with the State for the land use change for the City Shop along Glenn ST. She has not heard back from the State.

14.) City Long Range Road Plan/Funding. Widseth Engineering is sponsoring a free webinar, titled "Benefits of a Pavement Management System" on Thursday, April 28, 2022 at 11:00 AM CDT. They will present a very simple and straightforward GIS-based pavement management system for small to medium sized cities and townships. This system is a comprehensive way of looking at the condition and cost of improvements, so a capital improvement plan can be developed. DuFrane will be registered to attend. Road graveling and blade work will be required on some of the City's streets this summer. Albright felt RFP's should be developed for said services.

15.) Bennett RD. Albright has talked with Torey Sonnenberg, Sonnenberg Excavating, about grader summer maintenance on this road. He would do the work as part of his normal area maintenance on other area roads (about twice a month) at an hourly rate of \$125 - \$140/hour. We've had past complaints from landowners along this road about the City's maintenance. Albright felt having Sonnenberg grade the road, would eliminate these complaints. DuFrane questioned if W Lake ST and N Old Detroit RD should also be added to Sonnenberg's contract. Albright was not sure if Sonnenberg wanted all this work, he just agreed to doing Bennett RD, and he estimated the cost at \$100/time. Lammers said the City will need to enter into an official contract with him in said regard. Road grader costs for past years was reviewed. Perhaps one of the neighboring townships could be contacted for a "sample" agreement they have for annual road maintenance. Lammers said that City policy requires competitive bids for any work over \$1,000.

16.) Gravel Pit. Lammers said the KLJ drone flight of the sight took place today.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by;

Bruce E. Albright, City Council Member

Council Recommendations:

- Hold on alley drainage between Altona Square and Liquor Store to analyze area after Altona Square is completed.
- Require removal of Phase II cul-de-sac, Keilley Shores Subdivision.
- Require road design specifications for Phase III, Keilley Shores Subdivision.
- Increase agricultural easement value to \$5,800/ac. for Townline RD.
- RFPs for 2022 road grading and graveling (including recycling site).

Follow up Actions:

- Finish meetings with neighboring Townships regarding Yard Waste disposal site issues/concerns/costs. Hobart - done, Candor, get requested information, Dora - May 7th meeting.
- Continue to work on R/W needs for East Lake Street and Townline Road.
- Subdivision improvements for W Lake ST and Glenn ST issue work orders to engineer for preliminary planning/cost estimates. Landowner informational meetings thereafter.
- SSYW Committee to continue to work on budgets, and future road funding needs.
- Continue to work on City parking, issue engineer work orders to analyze parking potential behind the Event Center, along S 2ND AVE, S Railway AVE (assuming Railroad approval), and behind City Offices including County shop. Work on handicap parking spots.
- Assess needs/budget for Small Cities Assistance Program funding. Lobby legislators for future funding, explain our needs to Legislators.
- Evaluate County and MnDOT speed study data regarding public safety concerns along trail. Look at crating an "urban" district.
- Continue to work on snow removal, sidewalk, and parking ordinances/policies to address concerns.