

Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes
Vergas City Office
June 30, 2022

1.) A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Thursday, June 30, 2022 at 10:30 AM at the Vergas City Office. Present was Bruce Albright and Paul Pinke, Vergas City Council; Mike DuFrane, Utility Superintendent; Julie Lammers, City Clerk, and Jeff Kuhn, Widseth. Albright called the meeting to order at 10:40 AM.

2.) Agenda Additions or Deletions. Albright wanted to add alley drainage; East Lake Street (ST); West Lake ST; Glenn ST; Townline Road (RD); parking; snow and ice removal; Keilley Shores 3rd Addition (Addn.); speed limits; and the pickle ball courts to the agenda. Approved.

3.) Yard Waste Site. The SSYW Committee explained to Kuhn the City's operations and issues. People dumping grass clippings and branches without a permit is our biggest issue. Lammers said to date, 201 permits have been issued at the rate of \$60/each. Past suggestions have included only operating the site for specific days/hours, gating the site, and manning operations. The goal would be to at least break even regarding the operating costs. The issue will continue to be monitored and discussed, and adjustments made as necessary. This year, residents are also required to display a "free" permit for dumping.

4.) City Long Range Road Plan/Funding. The Council hired Widseth to complete a street condition or pavement management system. Kuhn said the survey will basically look at the condition of the paved roads and give them a ranking or score in terms of their current condition. He displayed a map that Widseth has started working on, showing all of the City's roads, streets, and alleys. Roads can also be looked at from the perspective of the condition of the underground utilities beneath them, and when those utilities might need upgrading. Albright said the City has agreed to look at a Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) "Complete Streets Policy". Dated 10/03/11, the City also has a "Special Assessment and Trunk Area Policies and Procedures for Public Improvements and Maintenance Costs". Albright said the long range goal of the SSYW Committee is to have an annual line item in the budget for road repairs/maintenance. Vergas has also been the recipient of MNDOT's "Small Cities Assistance Program". The program was not approved/continued in the 2022 Legislative Session. Vergas had received about \$15,000/year from this program for road issues.

5.) Engineering Review of City. Either Kuhn or Blaine Green, Widseth, will set a date to review all the City's roads, streets, and alleys. This will be done with City staff, and members of the SSYW Committee could also attend, if they so desire. Again, looking at the "preliminary" map of the roads as prepared by Widseth, it was noted that "West Sunset Strip" is not officially a city street. Procedures to make it a street were discussed. It was decided with the current workload, we'll wait with moving forward with this particular issue. Albright noted the City also has "dedicated" truck routes, which limit truck traffic to the County Roads (CR) system.

6.) Alley Drainage. Albright said he was contacted by a landowner regarding rainfall runoff concerns/erosion in the alley draining from the Methodist Church parking lot between North (N) Second Avenue (AVE) and South (S) First ST. After a recent heavy rain, Albright took photos of the erosion and amount of dirt that washed onto S First ST, or CR Number (No.) 17. Part of the problem is most of the drainage from the church parking lot/N 2ND ST, all runs down the alley. Albright questioned if some type of diking/detention could be installed at that location, then directing that water straight north to a wetland area. This is the same outlet the water goes to

if running down the alley to CR No. 17. DuFrane thought he might be able to pack some asphalt millings into the eroded areas on Merle Quam's driveway.

7.) East (E) Lake ST. Kuhn said the \$2,500 authorized by the Council for engineering services to deal with the railroad right-of-way (R/W), will be a start to resolving said issues. N Railway AVE and E Lake ST both encroach on the railroad's R/W. Kuhn has the surveying information completed by KLJ Engineering. Widseth's surveyors may want to verify the information before contacting the railroad.

8.) Glenn ST/West (W) Lake ST. Widseth was authorized by the Council to begin preliminary engineering on both road projects, in conjunction with the development of the Lawrence Lake Acres Subdivision. A year ago, the City completed a R/W relocation of Glenn ST, to better align the roadway with the neighboring property boundaries. Kuhn questioned if the City ever used the "green acres" provision to defer assessments on undeveloped properties? Gail Leverson, Widseth's Senior Funding Specialist, is looking at infrastructure funding (roads, sewer, water) for the Lawrence Lake Acres Subdivision. Besides the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) possibilities, there may also be funding through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). Once the SSW Committee has the preliminary numbers for each roadway (Glenn ST and W Lake ST), informational meetings with the affected landowners will be held. Street reconstructions are assessed 50% to the abutting property owners. Kuhn questioned who the City works with on bonding issues, Lammers said we use Ehlers.

9.) Townline RD R/W. Tom Winters, City Attorney, has mailed the revised offers to the affected landowners, and to date, there has been no response. The City is trying to acquire the 33' of R/W on each side of the section line, so we can properly maintain the road, remove brush and trees, etc. Because of the City's past use of said roadway, the former City Attorney, determined that we do not need to acquire the existing graveled portion of the road. There are four affected landowners. Albright felt if we do not get a response from them, the SSW Committee should schedule an "informational" meeting with them sometime around the middle of August, 2022. One landowner has also expressed concern about potential damages to his fence. The SSW Committee feels that if the fence is not within our 33' of road R/W, we would be responsible for any damages caused by the City to said fence. We will not be held responsible for any fencing within the the road R/W (when obtained). Landowners have also expressed concerns about "possible" future road improvement assessments. The Committee feels there are venues in the process to address that issue when or if the road is ever improved. Lammers will take care of arranging for said meeting.

9.) Parking. The City and County have approved diagonal parking along the west side of S 1ST AVE, between W Main ST and E Linden ST. DuFrane said the diagonal parking spots will be painted tomorrow. Parking availability is a huge identified problem within the City of Vergas. We also have limited handicap parking spots. Various committees have identified possible additional parking spots along the one or both sides of S 2ND AVE, between W Linden ST and W Main ST, by the Event Center. The Ehlke Family also owns a vacant lot north of the Bank, that someday, they might consider discussing parking with the City. The City is also working with the Railroad on some parking within their R/W, east of E Herman ST. There will also be some additional parking when the City obtains the County Shop, maybe later this year. Kuhn questioned if the City plans to use/maintain the building, or will it be removed? Lammers said we don't know yet.

10.) Snow and Ice Removal. Albright said the SSW Committee is in the process of updating all policies and ordinances in reference to this topic. This way, any references should be consistent throughout. Kuhn said that Widseth is working on a map showing the City's sidewalk system, and which sidewalks are maintained by the City, which ones the businesses

are responsible for maintaining, and which sidewalks are privately owned, and not subject to the ice and snow removal ordinances. Lammers said the Council is waiting on holding the required hearings on a number of different ordinances, so they can be combined and held at one time. The goal for snow and ice removal would be to have this done before the onset of winter.

11.) Keilley Shores 3rd Addition. To date, Kuhn has not received the specifications from the Bunkowske's engineer, Moore Engineering. Testing of the new road probably should have been set up as the "developer's costs". Kuhn said either Widseth can take road tests, or Bunkowske's engineer can take the tests and share the results with them. Albright said there are provisions in the platting ordinances for accounting for said testing.

12.) Lakeshore Ordinances. 88 Park View does not have a City of Vergas permit for a "beach blanket". The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) guidelines for said activity, require a 7 day notice to the local zoning officials, and that the blanket does not have a plant barrier, such as plastic, which the homeowner already has in place. Sand was delivered to the site. Lammers has talked with the DNR Area Hydrologist, Julie Aadland. If vegetative material has also been disturbed, then Mandi Erickson, DNR Fisheries, would get involved. The said blanket can only extend 10' into the water beyond the ordinary high-water level (ohwl).

At the 06/27/22 Planning and Zoning (P&Z) meeting, that Committee tabled a permit from 98 Park View DR, for shoreline riprap, as the daughter told one of the P&Z members of a more elaborate plan, including a garden shed, etc. The P&Z Committee also has concerns about 48 cubic yards of sand listed in the permit's narrative. According to the DNR's guidelines, "a filter of crushed rock, gravel, or filter fabric material must be placed underneath the rock". The amount of sand in relationship to the length of riprap, seemed excessive. Kuhn said that sometimes sand is used as a filter material.

13.) Speed Limits. The City has tried to work with the County on lowering the speed limit on CR Nos. 4/60, along the beach/park area. Right now, that speed limit is 45 miles per hour (mph). A request was sent to the County last spring to look at lowering the speed limit, in accordance with the law, they turned the request over to MNDOT to study the area. MNDOT's response was that there was not enough accidents along said roadway to justify lowering the speed limit, plus people will still drive as fast as conditions allow. Just last winter alone, there were over 10 documented accidents. The walking trail parallels the roadway and given the close proximity, the City and residents along said roadway only feel that it is a matter of time, before there is an automobile accident involving pedestrians. Lammers had information on electronic signs, posting oncoming traffic's speed. They cost about \$7,000 for two signs. Otter Tail County also has a "Driver Feedback Policy", where they "may" fund up to two signs per year, based on an application and scoring. Lammers has submitted two applications, one of the noted roadway, and other for C.R. No. 4, coming into to town from Pelican Rapids. Kuhn said he would be happy to discuss MNDOT's study with Trudy Krudusky, MNDOT, District 4, Detroit Lakes. Albright said the City might also consider creation of an "urban district", where driveways are less than 100' apart over a distance of a quarter of a mile.

From Otter Tail County, Vergas was scheduled to get three of the portable speed limit signs this summer, which do help slow down traffic. Lammers was not aware of the current sign scheduling.

14.) Pavement Management Study. Pinke thought that certain streets in town were paved with thicker asphalt to handle additional truck traffic. Kuhn said without knowing which streets these were, the best way to determine the asphalt thickness would be to take core samples. A testing company, such as Braun Intertec, could come in and do said borings. Kuhn said this subject could be addressed in their Pavement Management Study.

Pinke questioned the status of the ditch survey along the north side of Scharf AVE? Kuhn said they have not surveyed the area yet, and correction of the problem would probably be a 2023 project.

15.) DuFrane said due to the cement height of the pickle ball courts, and the amount of gravel fill placed around them, the doors to the nearby restrooms no longer open, nor are they Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complaint or handicap accessible. One way to correct the problem if the fill is not removed, is to relocate the doors to the east and west ends of the building. Albright will contact the pickle ball committee to see how they want to remedy the problem.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 PM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by;

Bruce E. Albright, City Council Member

Council Recommendations:

- None.

Follow up Actions:

- Continue to work on R/W needs for East Lake Street and Townline Road.
- SSW 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 creating an "urban" district.
- Continue to work on snow removal, sidewalk, and parking ordinances/policies to address concerns.
- Look at making W Sunset Strip an official street.