

Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes
Vergas City Office
December 28, 2022

1.) A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Thursday, December 28, 2022 at 4:00 PM at the Vergas Event Center. Present was Bruce Albright and Paul Pinke, Vergas City Council; Julie Lammers, City Clerk, and Blaine Green, Widseth via Zoom. Albright called the SSYW meeting to order at 4:12 PM.

2.) Agenda Additions or Deletions. Green wanted to add a discussion about West (W) Lake Street (ST).

3.) Minutes for the 12/08/22 SSYW meeting were attached in the agenda packet. Pinke said he had not read them. Albright noted that Green had a correction for Item # 7, pertaining to W Lake ST. Albright has not made the correction yet. Approval of the 12/08/22 meeting minutes will be tabled until the next meeting.

4.) Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy. Attached to the meeting agenda, were the “draft” Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy and the 71.04 Declaration of Snow Emergency; Parking Prohibited. Later tonight, there is a hearing scheduled for the Ordinance. “Emergency” as defined under City Ordinance Chapter 32, is “An unforeseen combination of circumstances which calls for immediate action to prevent from developing or occurring”. The City has a number of different ordinances that mention or deal with snow and ice removal. 92.01, including (1) and (2) all mention this issue. 71.03 (B) references no parking for snow removal. 71.09, Impoundment, also references “hindering snow removal”. 93.03, Materials on Street or Sidewalk, (B) (1) states, “no person shall obstruct any street or sidewalk by depositing snow or ice thereon”. Albright just felt that all the various ordinances should be consistent throughout and easy for the public to understand. The Committee talked about the differences between “Ordinances” and “Policies”. Ordinances are laws that affect the public. And Policies are guidelines for City staff to enforce the ordinances. Albright felt sometimes we try to interchange the meanings.

The Committee talked about the “good” things that came out of the two recent “snow emergencies”. City staff felt cleanup went easier with people moving their vehicles. Language for tonight’s hearing on 71.04 has been added (C) During a delayed snow emergency or **enough snow has accumulated to plow**, no motor vehicle shall be left parked on any street or public way in the city until the declared emergency is canceled or, if no emergency is declared, until the street is cleared on both sides or accumulated snow. Lammers said people called, and questioned where they should park during snow removal? City staff has started using orange laminated cards to place under people’s automobile windshield wipers to get them to move their vehicles.

The Committee spent a fair amount of work on this subject last spring, when they reviewed similar ordinances from a number of other small towns, such as Frazee, Walker, Battle Lake, and Nisswa. Councilperson Fischer sent Albright a picture of sign in Perham, it states “No Parking on any street during snow emergency. This is when a snowfall is 2 inches or more. Violators will be fined and towed, Nov. 1ST - April 30TH. She thought maybe the hours of midnight to 5:00 AM should be added.

Albright said a number of issues arose during the heavy ice/snow storms of December 13-15, 2022. One problem arose from the fact that the snowplow did not have tire chains. We

understand that this problem has been corrected. During that event, we were also down to one utility person and one plow. It will be helpful once the City gets their new one ton pickup with a snowplow. Both will not be available until May, 2023. The snowplow got stuck on DeDee Anderson's driveway, Sunset Boulevard (Blvd), and W Lake ST. None of these roads are easy to plow, turn around, etc. We had complaints of people blowing their snow back onto the roadways. Snow was also pushed onto City property behind the Liquor Store. Fischer suggested that maybe the City hire a crew to handle the snow removal on W Main ST, between Railway and 1ST AVE's. Albright hoped we could work within the existing City framework to address the businesses' concerns on snow removal. Green said the City of Crookston adopted a map showing which streets get plowed first. Albright felt this effort should be coordinated with Mike DuFrane, Utility Superintendent. We also talked about adopting a map showing the various sidewalks around town, and which ones are maintained by the City (public), which ones are private and need no maintenance, and the public sidewalks that are to be maintained by the respective business owners. Lammers said a part of the trail, down to the apartments is also receiving winter maintenance, as the apartment owners want to walk uptown.

5.) Parking. Widseth looked at the possibility of removing the sidewalk in front of Franklin Fence to widen 1ST AVE S. The sidewalk would not be removed by the FireHall, and those spots would revert back to parallel parking. With the modifications, the roadway width would expand to 34.67' on the west end and 37.25 on the east end. The modifications would allow 8 parking spots on the north side, and under the current diagonal parking, we have 10 spots. Albright and Lammers agreed that there are times when all of the diagonal spots are being used. The possible modifications referenced by Widseth could cost as much as \$50,000, and the County has already indicated that they would not help with the expense. Some of the diagonal parking spot snow removal issues should go away later in 2023, when we get the County Garage parking in place, and the Altona Square tenets rent 7 so of those spots.

The Committee looked again at the 3 options developed by Widseth for parking at the County Garage property. They liked Option 1B, which would have parallel parking on the south side, which could be used by vehicles towing boats in the summer. Parking lot traffic would be one way, from Linden ST to the alley. There was discussion that the apartment rental spots could be the first 7 spots next to Linden ST on the north side. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Council that they adopt Option 1B. Lammers will be writing the Community Development grant application to Otter Tail County for the building demolition, paving of the lot, and a fence between the Haarstick and City property. If approved, the grant could cover 50% of the costs of the approved work items.

6.) CSAH 4 and CSAH 60 Speed Study. The Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution on 02/23/22 asking the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to conduct said study. MnDOT has completed their study dated 12/19/22, and recommended no changes to the speed limit in the designated area. The County has already revised their sign from 55 MPH to 40 MPH as recommended. The City thought that maybe the speed limit in this area should be reduced from 40 MPH to 30 MPH because of all the use the trail is getting. Radar checks of the speed in this area last summer showed that the 85th percentile was 47-48 MPH. They felt this reflected a safe speed for the existing conditions. Options regarding possible park modifications were discussed, and how that could impact the roadway in this area in the future.

7.) W Lake ST Road Improvements. Green said he had his preliminary cost numbers for the road improvement assembled. His estimate is \$220,000, and this covers the road from County Road (C.R.) No.17 to the city limits by Robin Maneval. Green has looked at a number of assessment options. Lammers thought the road should be paved, and Green said this would basically double the costs. With the proposed Lawrence Lake Acres, there would be eleven

property owners along the improved roadway. Any road assessments would need to follow Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429. 429.051 states that “the cost of any improvement, or any part thereof, may be assessed upon property benefitted by the improvement, based upon the benefits received, whether or not the property abuts on the improvement”. Section 10 of the City’s Assessment Policies and Procedures, states that reconstructions of gravel streets are assessed 50% to the benefitted owners. Upgrading of existing gravel streets to pavement are assessed 100%.

There are a number of different ways the costs can be divided up among the landowners, based on footage, equally, or to “other” benefitted parties. Green felt the City better have a feasible distribution of costs the landowners can live with, before we start spending money on the preliminary design engineering. The design of the road really doesn’t change if it’s gravel or paved (22’ top). Green said he would file his preliminary estimate at the 01/12/23 Council meeting.

9.) Adjournment. Albright adjourned the meeting at 6:21 PM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by;

Bruce E. Albright, City Council Member

Council Recommendations:

- Option 1B for the County garage property.

Follow up Actions:

- Feasibility report for W Lake Street.
- Glenn ST extension.
- Address R/W needs for W Lake ST improvement project.
- Continue to work on R/W needs for East Lake Street and N Railway AVE.
- 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. Snow emergency routes?
- Look at making W Sunset Strip an official street.
- Cost estimate for N Railway AVE repairs north of Elm ST intersection.
- Start “budgeting” for Street Condition Survey work.

Additional Future Meeting Agenda Items:

- none.