

**Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Vergas Event Center**  
**June 28, 2023**

1.) A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at 9:00 AM at the Vergas Event Center. Present was Bruce Albright and Paul Pinke, Vergas City Council; Julie Lammers, City Clerk, Mike DuFrane, Utility Superintendent; and Blaine Green, Widseth via Zoom. Albright called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

2.) Agenda Additions or Deletions. Lammers wanted to add Complete Streets, sidewalk ordinance, and speed signs. **Approved.**

3.) Minutes for the 03/30/23 SSYW meeting were approved at the 04/18/23 SSYW meeting. There are also minutes for the 04/18/23 meeting, which we can review/approve at the next meeting.

4.) Council Recommendations. Widseth has a Confirmation of Request for Engineering Services (CRES) for West (W) Sunset Strip right-of-way (R/W) analysis. The Committee felt that we should table this proposal until a letter can be sent to the affected landowners regarding the proposed work. Albright felt the analysis should include a turn around for the snowplow at the end of W Sunset Strip. The bid for the engineering work was \$10,000, including a research phase regarding the existing conditions and a phase 2 for preparation of the new R/W plat and monumentation of the proposed R/W lines.

Widseth had a second CRES for W Lake Street (ST). The estimated cost is \$13,000. Lawrence Lake Acres and the subdivision developed by Terry Bennett should both have 33' of dedicated road R/W. It appears there are 3 tracts near County Road (C.R.) No. 17 that still need R/W. Lammers said that KLJ Engineering started the R/W work for W Lake ST, and she will check if there is anything in the file. Albright and/or Pinke was going to meet with Candor Township about proposed work for W Lake ST. There are several landowners on the west end of the roadway that use the road and are not located in the City limits. Thoughts are that these landowners should help pay for use, maintenance, repairs, and R/W.

The storm sewer mapping project that was going to be done by Widseth on Graphic Information Systems (GIS), estimated to cost \$4,000, was approved by the Council at their 05/09/23 meeting. DuFrane is waiting for a field meeting with Widseth.

5.) Budgets-Goal Setting. Lammers said the Legislature restored the Small Cities Assistance Program (SCAP) for 2024. In 2024, Vergas should receive \$17,861. In the City's general fund, we have \$31,438.19 for seal coating; \$14,897.04 for sidewalks; and \$41,438.77 for street improvements/equipment. Equipment includes pickups, snowplows, and loader. There will also be additional Local Government Aid (LGA) funding in 2024, and Vergas should get \$5,937, which has not been designated for streets at this time.

DuFrane would like to get bids for brushing the R/W along Townline Road (RD). He will check with Sonnenberg Excavating.

The Committee reviewed a proposed seal coating map for 2023. The map was prepared in accordance with the Comprehensive Street Conditions Survey (CSCS) prepared by Widseth earlier this year. 2023 work areas include Park View Drive (DR), Altona Avenue (AVE), and W

Main ST, S 3RD AVE, and W Linden ST, all west of S 2ND AVE. The City map also included W Main ST between S 1ST AVE and S 2ND AVE; and E Scharf AVE between W Main ST and Townline RD. These noted areas should be deleted from the 2023 seal coat project's list, as they are not identified in the CSCS. DuFrane will try and get bids from Driveway Service and Morris Sealcoat and Trucking, Inc. this week. He has also talked with the County, and they are not proposing any sealcoating projects in our area for 2023.

DuFrane has talked with Great Plains Natural Gas Company (GPNG) about the hole they have in the alley between the hardware store and Hanson's Plumbing. We have it in writing that we can repair the hole and send them the bill.

The hole/dip by the intersection of E Elm ST and N Railway AVE has been repaired.

There are still several asphalt patches to complete on E Scharf AVE along Keilley Shores.

DuFrane has ordered gravel from Sonnenberg Excavating for Townline RD and Bennett RD.

As noted for W Lake DR, DuFrane will also get bids from Sonnenberg Excavating for clearing and brushing of the R/W.

The Quote Form for the slope repairs on E Scharf AVE will be given to Ruther Excavating, Inc. for a bid for filling the slope along the north side of E Scharf AVE. Ruther will be in the area, as he's doing the utility work for Keith Bunkowske and Keilley Shores 3RD Addition (ADDN). Since the road was resurfaced a number of years ago, the landowners have been unable to mow their ditch because the slope is too steep. The Quote Form also includes a small area along the north side of Dianne AVE, needing the same type of repairs.

Lawrence Lake Acres. Josh Hanson, developer, has agreed to relocate the hydrant on W Glenn ST near the City Shop at his expense. He has a bid from Ruther Excavating, Inc. to do the work for \$6,800. However, Hanson wants the City to stake the new hydrant location. The hydrant is on a 6" diameter (dia.) line, and the City will pay to have a valve installed to the hydrant.

6.) Vehicles. Lammers talked with Nelson Fleet yesterday, and our new pickup is expected in mid-July. According to City Policy, the new Event Center Coordinator was using the City's 2014 Ford pickup to go to Fargo to get some supplies. The brakes went out near Hawley on the way home, and the pickup had to be towed to Vergas. There was discussion about having Vergas Auto make the necessary repairs. Lammers questioned where the towing bill should be assigned? The Committee felt the towing bill should be paid by the Events Center account. The bill was for \$343.50. Lammers said usually when she needs to travel for the City, she uses her personal vehicle and gets reimbursed. Lammers thought that when the Council or City staff use their personal vehicles for City purposes, they are covered by the City's insurance? Albright questioned for example, last week when he traveled to Duluth for the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) Annual Conference, he was covered by the City's insurance? Lammers said she will check with Vergas Insurance Agency in this regard. **Motion** by Pinke to see if we have insurance for the towing, and if not, the bill be charged to the Event Center. **Seconded** by Albright, **approved**.

Once the new pickup arrives, it will be taken to Bert's Truck Equipment, Moorhead, for installation of the lift gate, snowplow, lights, emblems, etc. DuFrane will call them to schedule the work.

When the new pickup arrives, we will have two vehicles for sale, the 2005 Chevrolet pickup and the 1990 Ford plow truck.

The rear end and leaf springs on the 2001 International snow plow have been repaired. There is still some cosmetic work to do on the passenger side from the railroad track incident. DuFrane will try to get this work done before winter. Albright questioned if the snow plow has been inspected by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)? DuFrane said the City qualifies for some state and federal exemptions in this regard. DuFrane said there is also some work to be done on the Anti-lock braking system, or ABS.

7.) Yard Waste Sign. The new sign has been delivered, but DuFrane has been too busy to install. The City will need a post hole digger, and the last time we needed a post hole digger, we rented one in Detroit Lakes and Summers Construction let us use their Bobcat. DuFrane wants the sign located so people see it when then drive into the site. **Motion** by Pinke to have JH Signs install the new sign. **Seconded** by Albright, **approved**. DuFrane will mark the sign location and will make the Gopher State One Call. Once the location is marked, DuFrane should let Albright or Pinke know, in case DuFrane is on vacation when JH Signs wants to install.

8.) Feasibility Report for W Lake ST. Earlier we talked about R/W acquisition needs for this roadway. There is definitely the need to have something done to the this road. Also, as Lawrence Lake Acres develops, there will be more road traffic. Albright and/or Pinke have been trying to meet with Candor Township, but their meetings are the same night as our City Council meetings. Similar to Sunset Strip, the landowners along W Lake ST will be invited to the August 8, 2023 Council meeting. Right now, it's looking like any construction for this roadway would be done in 2024. We have an agreement with Hobart Township on Townline RD, where they pay for 28% of the maintenance costs. A similar agreement should be worked out with Candor Township for W Lake ST. The Committee discussed a possible 60/40 arrangement. Another option if the Township is not agreeable to helping pay for the road, would be for the City to annex the landowners who use the road into the City.

Due to another meeting, Green left the meeting at 10:05 AM.

9.) W Glenn ST Extension. OTP needs to set a new transformer on the south side of Glenn ST. The current line from Pelican AVE is overhead, and the transformer is located on the pole by the City Shop. Because of the trees, OTP is proposing to replace this line underground at their expense. They feel because of the trees, it is just a matter of time, before they have trouble with this segment. The R/W was redid for this segment of roadway in 2020, to better align the road with the R/W. OTP will need the R/W staked so they know where they can bore their lines and set the transformer.

10.) R/W for E Lake ST and N Railway AVE. Tom Winters, City Attorney, should have all of the surveying documents for easement preparation. He should be in town next Tuesday, and Lammers will contact him to see where things are at. The last time she contacted him, he had left the documents in his Detroit Lakes office.

11.) W Sunset Strip. Discussed earlier, the landowners will be invited to the 07/11/23 Council meeting to ask any questions they may have about making this roadway an official City ST. If everything goes good, the Council can authorize Widseth to begin their R/W work.

12.) Hardware Store Drainage. Last winter, they had an icing problem from their roof along S Railway AVE. We are waiting for Widseth to complete their storm sewer mapping project, so this information can be furnished to the Hardware Store. Pinke will visit with them, as all the

years he owned the Hardware, they never had this serious of a problem, but they used a lot of salt and also chopped at the ice chunk. Whether or not the current owners would like to try and tie their roof drainage into the City's storm sewer will be up to them, via our permitting system.

Correspondence has been furnished by Councilperson Fischer to Albright about correspondence between the Hardware Store and the County. The Hardware Store is still upset about having to remove their mulch from the sidewalk on the south side of their building, earlier this year. The request was made to relocate the mulch to maintain Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. Marcia Huddleston, co-owner, Huddleston Hardware, Inc. also contacted the County Attorney and Engineer. She feels the recent EDA/HRA meeting talked about them filing a complaint about the tractors parked at Vergas Ford. Huddleston maintains that they never filed said complaint. She also informed the County that she felt they were threatened over the mulch ordeal. The County Highway Department did contact Vergas Ford about tractors being parked on the road R/W. The County also determined that there was no sidewalk in front of Vergas Ford. There are no County restrictions for parking on a driveway.

As a result of the mulch issue earlier this year, some are asking for a review of the Sidewalk Ordinance. There are some minor adjustments to the Sidewalk and Trail ownership maps as prepared by Widseth. The sidewalk by Altona Square should not go across the alley along S 1ST AVE. The sidewalk along W Main ST and S 1ST AVE west of W main ST (along CR No. 17) should also be removed, except along the Merle Quam property. The sidewalk along the bank property should also be removed in their parking lot area.

13.) Parking. Lammers said her office has taken a number of phone calls this summer that there is no place to park downtown. Specifications for the demolition of the old County garage are underway. For this property, on the west side of the property, there will be a fence. On the east side, there will be a guardrail. Questions have been raised by area businesses, as to where we are going to move the County's cardboard dumpster that is currently behind the garage? The grocery store, liquor store, hardware store, and Hanson's Plumbing all use this dumpster. Another dumpster is located out at the recycling site along CR No. 17. A question was raised if the businesses should be responsible for their own recycling? There is also a garbage dumpster in the alley, which is on the Vergas Ford property, that the grocery store uses with Harrstick's permission. There is not room for both dumpsters at this location. A question was asked if possibly, the cardboard dumpster could be moved to the Summers property on the east side of S Railway AVE? Lammers will contact them. While it may still be a while before we get the County garage demolished, sooner or later the location of the cardboard dumpster will have to be addressed.

14.) Street Lighting. Lori Moxness, OTP, has been invited to the next SSW meeting on Thursday, July 20, 2023 at 9:00 AM. Albright has also picked up the street lighting file from Sherrie Hanson at the bank. Hanson met with Moxness last winter on this issue. The Community Club is interested in decorative lighting for Main ST.

15.) Other Issues. The City was approved by Otter Tail County for one electronic sign along CR Nos. 4/60. Lammers thought the sign would be installed before July 4th.

On January 24, 2023, Otter Tail County adopted their Complete Streets Policy. Vergas adopted a resolution establishing a Complete Streets Policy back on December 14, 2021. This will need to be an issue the SSW Committee continues to work on, as time allows. The County Policy will be used our template.

14.) Next Meeting. A date for the next SSYW Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 20, 2023 at 9:00 AM, Event Center. Lori Moxness, OTP, has been invited to discuss street lighting.

15.) Adjournment. Albright adjourned the meeting at 11:15 AM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by;

Bruce E. Albright, City Council Member

Council Recommendations:

- Authorize Widseth to complete R/W studies for W Lake ST and W Sunset Strip

Follow up Actions:

- Landowner review of Feasibility reports for W Lake Street/funding options.
- Glenn ST extension
- Finalize work on R/W needs for East Lake Street and N Railway AVE (waiting for Attorney).
- Continue to work on budgets, and future road funding needs. -
- Continue to work on City parking, Work on handicap parking spots.
- Continue to work on snow removal, sidewalk, and parking ordinances/policies to address concerns. Snow emergency routes?

Future Meeting Agenda Items:

- none, at this time.