



PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MINUTES

4:00 PM February 07, 2024
City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Councilors Gary Bode, Brent Lenssen, Gary Vis

Staff Present: City Administrator John Williams; Public Works Director Jon Hutchings; Community Development Director Heidi Gudde; Programs Manager Mark Sandal; Office Manager Heather Sytsma; and Senior Administrative Assistant Jennifer Bell

Public Present: Mark Wohlrab, Marty Gering, Mary Lou Childs, Dean Francis, Caroline Bergeron, Jonathan Henry, Lynnette Ondean, Stacy Torrance

ACTION ITEMS

1. Review Minutes from December 6, 2023

Action

The minutes from December 6, 2023, were recognized and accepted by the Committee.

2. Elect Committee Chair

Action

Lenssen motioned and Vis seconded to nominate Councilor Gary Bode as Public Works Committee Chair.

3. Reconsideration of Pepin Parkway Alignment

Hutchings briefly reviewed the history of the Pepin Creek Corridor since the previous Council's layout was adopted in 2021. This layout extends Sunrise west and then south utilizing City property. He noted that, as conversations about development have progressed from there, sizeable inequities have been identified in the ability to access the parkway right-of-way from developable lands in that subarea. There have been many conversations with and among property owners about how inequity could be handled with regards to fees for road and other transportation and utility improvements. In addition, the question of how that roadway would interact with the realignment of Pepin Creek and how the realignment created a central interaction between trailheads, utilities, amenities all in one area and burdened one set of properties to the benefit of all others. The ultimate question is how to create a more equitable alignment of the road to act as a magnet to those who wish to develop and connect a transportation system to the parkway, removing the burden of having to make improvements later to connecting arterials.

Gudde stated that the City already owns the majority of the north-south section of the proposed corridor. Prior renditions had the Parkway going through Benson Park, but the newest sketch shows the Parkway going around the park. The Weg annexation would then have Parkway access. The central alignment is a more functional and equitable location for the deep sewer main that must serve most subarea developers. Gudde is working with Transpo Group regarding the obligations of property owners. The current proposal extends Homestead Boulevard west and then south along Benson Park. She noted that it's important that developments connect to each other for stronger infrastructure. There is also better alignment in the new proposal because there are fewer curves for a safer roadway, and it reduces conflict with the airport and airport runway.

Hutchings explained how the various property locations could benefit from existing sewer on Benson Road or a deep sewer line in Pepin Parkway. Williams added that the City is looking for legislative allocation for sewer infrastructure.

Mr. Francis expressed frustration with the City and the changes that have been made to the Pepin Creek corridor over the years. He explained that he has invested considerable time and money in his proposed development only to face further changes from the City. Bode stated that the City has spent a lot also, but the plan must define what is needed far into the future, which has caused considerable discussion and the resulting changes. Vis stated that developers should be cautioned regarding investing until the final plan for the property is developed.

Regarding Federal participation, Francis mentioned that maybe some assistance can go to the developers to alleviate the expense of building on this property. He also suggested that the City build the road and then have a latecomer agreement for developer participation.

Childs asked if the Transportation Impact Fee (TIF) pays for the road. Gudde explained that the TIF goes towards transportation infrastructure as a whole. The Parkway is one expense. Relocating the creek is another, as is improving Double Ditch and the northern portion of Benson Road. The general taxpayer is still helping to pay for all improvements. The City will try to get any funding available, but the TIF by no means covers all infrastructure required, regardless of how high it is. The City has received some Federal funding for the section of Benson north of Sunrise and has started preliminary investigations.

Vis asked if this would be presented at the next Council meeting. Hutching stated that is the intention. Lenssen asked if there should be a recommendation made at this meeting. The Committee decided that this can be brought to the City Council for discussion and a motion made at that time if warranted. Lenssen clarified that Community Development should have a draft Resolution ready for the March 4 City Council meeting with a vote potentially at a subsequent meeting.

Action

The Committee concurred and requested that the Community Development Department forward the Pepin Creek Realignment to the March 4 City Council meeting for discussion and possible action.

INFORMATION ITEMS

4. Main and 1st Street Intersection Truck Turning Movements

Bode noticed that the house at the east end of Main Street was for sale. Sandal said the sale was pending, and the new owner said she is willing to work with the City regarding plans to aid the truck turning movements at this intersection.

5. Agreement for Airport Engineering Services – Precision Approach Engineering

Hutchings explained that the City would be entering into an agreement with Precision Approach Engineering (PAE), an aviation-specific engineer used in the past. With the questions surrounding development north of the Runway Safety Area, and with WSDOT-Aviation expressing concerns about the proposed development, PAE can assist staff with any decisions. The agreement will be on the next City Council agenda for approval.

6. WWTP Expansion Update

Hutchings asked to move this to the next meeting for lengthier discussion. Vis requested possibly having an additional meeting specifically to review the Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion. Hutchings said he'd think about whether this warranted a separate meeting.

Hutchings summarized that the application for an \$18.5M State Revolving Fund loan for construction of the WWTP expansion has made the initial list but a final list won't be released until late in summer. There is a lot of work to get the project to the point where Ecology is confident the City can meet the State Revolving Fund requirements.

7. Projects Update

The Committee briefly reviewed current projects and received progress information.

Cedar Drive Sewer and Overlay – Property owners have been provided with the current driveway designs and with the stormwater proposal. Going out for bid late February.

Judson/9th – Second phase going out to bid soon.

Waterline Improvements – Seeking to incorporate Guide Meridian service area for insufficient water supply at some homes/businesses.

Bradley Road – Design is advancing.

High School Parking Lot – The Committee was reminded that this is the exchange for Bradley Road right-of-way. This should be done as soon as school is out.

Pine Street Bridge – Construction to occur late 2024 to early 2025.

Hannegan/1st – Construction to occur this summer. Bode asked whether the Hannegan/Riverview left-hand turn lane can be incorporated into this project. Hutchings said it will take longer to work with Whatcom County to get right-of-way for this project.

Depot / 8th Trail – Williams stated he will discuss a ribbon cutting with the Parks Committee, but that it won't occur until the trail is complete.

As an aside, Sandal noted that the snowplows scraped up many of the domes. Striping of these areas and recessed markers has been proposed.

NEW BUSINESS:

8. Cedar Drive Updates

- Sandal stated he contacted Whatcom County about chip sealing the east end of Cedar Drive and the County asked for a list of other streets Lynden wants to chip seal. He will look at problem areas with the Streets Superintendent tomorrow.

- Sandal met with Marty Gering regarding the proposed roadway improvements. Bode asked if the Department of Fish and Wildlife is satisfied with the solution. Sandal stated yes. He added that he is meeting with an arborist on Friday to look at the trees on the east end to review how best to manage them in the long term. Gering stated he got results of the longitudinal stream survey. Sandal said to work with Reichhardt and Ebe Engineering for a path forward and to talk with Dave Timmer in Planning regarding the creek, ditch, permits, and critical areas.

9. Reverse Osmosis System Proposal

Wohlrab introduced a proposal for a reverse osmosis system that would remove fluoride from water. He explained that it could be located near the Water Treatment Plant and dispensed via fob linked to a water utility account to those wanting to fill containers for home use. He noted that the City of Bellingham once had a similar system at their plant. Wohlrab explained that cost depends on the size of system, from about \$10,000 to \$12,000.

Hutchings noted that his general observation regarding changing water chemistry (i.e. removing a treatment chemical) is that people may notice other effects such as taste, which is another issue to be explored.

Lenssen noted that the best solution is going to be something that not everyone is satisfied with.

Williams noted the fluoride issue is in the process of being presented for Public Hearing in May. He explained that notices have gone out to account holders in the mail, a public notice has been in the Lynden Tribune, a general advertisement will follow closer to the hearing date, and a notice will be added to the utility bills in March and April.

Williams added that there is no limit to who can comment at the Public Hearing, only the three-minute comment period per person for verbal comment. There are no residency requirements. Vis noted that the Council will not be offering solutions or answering questions at the hearing. There won't be a pro/con panel. This is just an opportunity for the public to voice their opinion to the Council at a public hearing.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 pm.

NEXT MEETING: March 6, 2024