

## LEGISLATION, LICENSING & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 11, 2003

Committee Room #2

PRESENT: Alds. Treis, Sullivan (7:43 p.m.); Bruderle-Baran, Ecks, Grimm, Subotich – 6

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Estness

Ald. Treis as chair called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

### **Proposed reconstruction of the freeway system in the Wauwatosa area**

Gretchen Schultz, 315 N. Pinecrest Street, Milwaukee was present representing Citizens Allied for Sane Highways (CASH). She told the committee that she recently attended a public meeting held by the Milwaukee County Board to discuss the freeway modernization and expansion plans. There were approximately 300 in attendance who were overwhelmingly opposed to the expansion. She also told the committee that the price tag for the Marquette interchange has doubled since the plans were originally announced. She asked the committee to consider “how reliable is the price tag and who stands to profit.”

Rosemary Wehnes, 7922 Jackson Park Blvd, also of CASH, said that she originally brought this issue to the committee for 3 reasons, the first being the local economy. She is concerned that the freeway expansion will pull jobs away from the Milwaukee area and out to the suburbs. Ms Wehnes’ second concern was for the community’s health. The current plan is for Hwy 45 to come very close to several schools in Wauwatosa. She said there have been at least 15 studies showing that being in close proximity to exhaust has an adverse effect on the health of children and high risk elderly. The third concern is the effect expanding the freeway would have on the Milwaukee County Grounds. Her concern is that the exhaust and noise generated by the expansion will adversely impact the public’s ability to use the forested grounds.

Richard Bachman, 2229 N. 115<sup>th</sup> Street, told the committee that when the freeway was originally built the residents were not consulted. Mr. Bachman said he understands the current freeway has problems but believes an expansion will not correct them. He told the committee he believes the design needs to be improved and mentioned the backup caused by a one lane on-ramp on North Avenue. He asked the committee to vote against a freeway expansion in Wauwatosa.

Mayor Estness told the committee that she had the opportunity to participate on the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) advisory committee. She said there had been a series of 3 votes. The first vote discussed reconstruction of the aging system then the debate became more difficult. The most difficult issue was reconstruction of the Marquette Interchange. During the committee’s discussions Mayor Estness expressed her concern over expanding the freeway from the Marquette interchange to the Zoo. Expanding this section would only reduce commuter’s time by approximately 5 minutes. It was her opinion that causing this kind of disruption to gain only 5 minutes in driving time at the projected cost is not a value driven plan. She also told the committee that it’s her opinion that Wauwatosa should pay special attention SEWRPC’s plans for the Watertown Plank Road and Hwy 45 interchange. There have been no drawings or engineering done to show how the plans will impact the interchange.

Kenneth Yunker, Assistant Director, SEWRPC, responded to Ms Schultz’s comments. He said the projected costs have increased because the plans have changed. The most notable change had been to the plans for the Marquette interchange. He also noted that the accident rate is higher on congested highways.

Ald. Ecks said he believes the question before the committee is, “does Wauwatosa want to take a position on the issue”. He stated his opposition to widening Hwy 45 and mentioned that the current plans would bring it closer to the Milwaukee County Youth Court Center and treatment facilities. Ald. Ecks also said that he believes SEWRPC doesn’t have proportionate representation in its structure and is looking at the Milwaukee County area only as a destination.

Philip Evenson, Executive Director, SEWRPC, told the committee SEWRPC has not considered the freeway plan yet because it’s not ready for presentation. The next step in the process is going back to the advisory committee with the recommendations made by the cities. He also stated that SEWRPC is not weighted against Milwaukee County.

Ald. Sullivan said he was glad the community has had this debate. He still has concerns about pollution, loss of businesses, proximity to schools, pollution and the continued upgrade to the Milwaukee County grounds. He has paid particular attention to the actions taken by other communities. He has a concern that if Wauwatosa takes no stand on the issue the final result may not be advantageous to the community. He said he would like a chance to revisit the item to consider drafting a resolution.

Moved by Ald. Sullivan to place the matter in file until the meeting of February 25, 2003. Motion fails for lack of a second.

Ald. Bruderle-Baran said that she had kept an open mind over the course of the discussion. The action taken by other communities is irrelevant to her. Her concern is making the best possible decision for Wauwatosa. She believes there are 2 issues involved. The first is an upgrade to the existing freeway system. The second issue is expansion of the system. Ald. Bruderle-Baran told the committee that she grew up in Philadelphia where the freeway expansion went on for years. There were many towns in the area similar to Wauwatosa which are now “dead zones”. Since the freeway construction, people have moved further out from the metro Philadelphia area and don’t notice the towns they drive through on their way into the city. She expressed concern that this would happen to Wauwatosa. She also noted that the present plan makes no mention of mass transit. For these reasons she doesn’t agree with SEWRPC’s current plan. She stated she would like Wauwatosa to go on the record as opposed to any freeway expansion.

Moved by Ald. Sullivan, seconded by Ald. Bruderle-Baran to recommend the city is in favor of freeway modernization and redesign but not in favor of lane expansion in Southeastern Wisconsin - -

Ald. Grimm indicated he thought it would be best to wait until SEWRPC presented the final plan before the committee went on record.

Ald. Bruderle-Baran said the resolution would only be advisory. When SEWRPC drew up the final plans Wauwatosa would be on the record opposing expansion.

Vote on the motion was, Ayes: 3 (Sullivan, Bruderle-Baran, Ecks),  
Noes: 3 (Treis, Grimm, Subotich) – motion fails

Moved by Ald. Sullivan, seconded by Ald. Bruderle-Baran to hold the matter until the meeting of February 25, 2003 and request the City Attorney to prepare a sample resolution using language modeling

the resolutions made by the Cities of Milwaukee and Glendale – 6

**License applications forwarded by the City Clerk for review**

There were no licenses forwarded for review.

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, CMC  
City Clerk

dmh