



CITY OF WAUWATOSA
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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Tuesday, November 3, 2009
Council Chambers

PRESENT: Alds. Berdan, Birschel, Dennik, Donegan, Ewerdt, Hanson, Herzog (7:14 p.m.), Jay, Krol, McBride, Meaux (7:01 p.m.), Nickevich, Stepaniak, Wilke - 14

EXCUSED: Ald. Organ

ABSENT: Ald. Walsh

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Didier; J. Archambo, City Admin.; W. Wehrelly, City Engin.; W. Kappel, Pub. Works Dir.; N. Welch, Community Devel.; Dir.; J. Wojcehowicz, Water Supt.

Ald. Krol as chair called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m.

Road Maintenance Strategies and Practices

Ald. Krol introduced Ken Ward of Ruekert Mielke. He had heard Mr. Ward's presentation at the League of Wisconsin Municipalities and thought it was important to give the rest of the Council a chance to hear it. He noted that the city has not been able to do the four miles of road repair needed each year to keep on a more aggressive schedule. This plan may extend the life of the city's roads and save the city money.

Mr. Ward made his remarks in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. He outlined road maintenance strategy as using maintenance dollars to do more with less. He noted that Wauwatosa is on a very good track, but might want to do a couple of things to enhance the road maintenance program. An important part of maintenance is evaluating distress in pavements. He noted that while many cities use a road maintenance program that extends the life of their pavement by 50 years, Wauwatosa extends their roads by an outstanding 80 years.

Mr. Ward commented about pavement life saying that asphalt roads have a typical 15-year minimum, 30-year maximum pavement life if the proper maintenance is used. He also explained that Wauwatosa has a very effective pavement management system and the state has approved the city's use of a modified Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) system. The common causes of failure in asphalt pavements are: 1) inadequate drainage; 2) base failure; 3) fatigue; and 4) poor or improper maintenance.

Mr. Ward noted that pavement failure is shown in a variety of cracks in the surface of the road and down into the pavement. The deeper the cracks the more problems can develop due to water getting under the roadway or ice forming and melting. He added that understanding why roads fail helps to understand how to maintain them. Regular maintenance not only takes care of the cracks, but it also saves wear and tear on equipment. He is a strong advocate of sealing cracks every two years.

Mr. Ward explained that there are two kinds of crack sealant, slurry seal and chip seal. Chip seal is better and is the kind that Wauwatosa uses. Pavements should be sealed every seven years in order to extend pavement life. Periodic curb and gutter repair also saves money. He stressed that the city's program is very good with the more aggressive type of road maintenance yielding an 80-year life span. He gave the example of Waukesha which gets 30 years before they have to do any work on the roads.

Mr. Ward noted that the next question was where does the money come from? He said one option is the take some funding out of a different budget and put it into maintenance. He reiterated that he was an advocate of performing crack-sealing every two years. He described the city's road budget showing that the city spent \$118,000 in 2009 and will spend slightly less in 2010, with \$100,000 budgeted for crack-sealing. The city also spent \$188,000 in 2009 and will spend slightly less in 2010, with \$136,000 budgeted for chip-sealing. Although road construction varies the city spends approximately \$1,500,000 annually. In addition, the city does crack-sealing every 10 years, chip-sealing every 7 to 9 years, mill and overlay every 50 years, and reconstruction every 80 years. He advocated re-allocating funding to road maintenance. He noted that many cities are working to get a 20-30 year life, but Wauwatosa is trying to get a 40 to 80 year life out of the streets.

Ald. Krol acknowledged that the Public Works and Engineering departments are doing a great job with crack sealing and seal coating. He asked if there could be more operating dollars put into maintenance.

Ald. Birschel asked if the city has updated its program. Mr. Ward responded that overall most communities are not as far along as Wauwatosa with a 40-year program.

Ald. Donegan commented that the recommendation was to do crack sealing every two years. He asked if it was the same for the chip sealing. He noted that the city is already at 30 to 40 years out and the reason is multiple seal coats. Mr. Ward reiterated that proper crack sealing extends pavement life. Periodic curb and gutter repair saves money.

Ald. Donegan asked if the city should change to a schedule of crack-sealing every two years as recommended. Mr. Kappel responded that it is true that if the road is crack-filled every two years it is better for the roadway, but money has been tight and it would take five times what is in the budget to do this type of maintenance. He commented that the question is what level of road condition is the Council comfortable with. He was not sure that spending on the capital side would get the level the Council wants. They are not paying attention to the concrete roads as much as they should. He reiterated that they are getting an 80-year life span out of the roads.

Ald. Krol remarked that his street was done in the 1920s and he is amazed at the condition of the road. Seal coating does prolong the life.

Mr. Kappel suggested that if they filled the cracks on North Avenue every two years it would be good considering how the cold weather and the amount of traffic affects the roadway.

Ald. Krol asked if salt has a deteriorating affect on concrete roads. Mr. Ward responded that the recommendation is not to salt in the first year, but depending on where the road is and safety standards the city may need to seal the road and use salt before that.

The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Susan Van Hoven, Deputy City Clerk
City of Wauwautosa

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