



CITY OF WAUWATOSA

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CITIZENS ADVISORY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 6, 2009 – 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: J. Albert, G. Becker, T. Brown, F. DeFrain, J. Kohout, S. Kroeger, P. Matthews, M. Moylan,
C. Wilson; Ald. Walsh -10

ABSENT: J. Engelhardt J. Kasdorf, T. Stacey

ALSO W. Wehrley, City Engineer; W. Kappel, Dir. of Public Works;
PRESENT: J. Plass, Acctg. Mgr.; J. Archambo, City Administrator

Ald. Walsh in the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Capital Improvements Program 2010-2014

Mr. Wehrley distributed maps showing areas where 2010-2014 sealcoating and sidewalk work is scheduled. Sealcoating is on a nine-year cycle when fully funded and sidewalks are on a 10-year cycle.

Mr. Wehrley pointed out that Schedule M, page 24, summarizes funding sources for the 2010 program, including the \$9,800,000 in bonding that would be needed for the program as proposed.

In answer to a question, Mr. Wehrley outlined plans to replace bricks with stamped concrete in the Village brick paver lot and on the pedestrian bridge but said there are no plans at this time for removing brick pavers along North Avenue. They are maintained on a five-year cycle with costs assessed only to commercial properties.

Mr. Wehrley was next asked about the “rubble-ization” included in some paving projects. He explained the process used to break up large concrete panels so that the base retains some structural strength but is more flexible and reduces the amount of reflective cracking. It is becoming much more commonplace; cost varies.

Committee members discussed how to prioritize projects when the full cost of work on a particular street is not readily apparent. In answer to their questions, Mr. Wehrley said that streets have some degree of sewer work with the exception of a street close to Milwaukee where Milwaukee owns the utilities. He said that none of the sewer work on streets in the 2010 paving program is driven by compliance issues. We have a compliance issue in three sanitary sewer basins where some of the repairs or rehab could potentially come from the \$1 million of spot improvements. Asked about rehab in areas where basements have flooded, he said that studies are underway in five areas now. Two are purely regulatory but, within those, we have basement backups. We are not out of compliance in the other three areas in terms of flows, but there are basement backup issues. The \$1 million for spot improvements will be targeted more to the basement backups, but any sewer improvements done as part of the paving program also help overall. If problems are found, the city would be able to go beyond \$1 million spot improvement budget through bonding in the following year.

Mr. Wilson asked if less spot improvements would be needed down the road if there was sufficient budget to increase sewer investigations now. Mr. Wehrley responded that he would like to be able to TV all sanitary sewers in the entire city to establish their condition and proactively replace where necessary before they would collapse. If funded, that could be accomplished by 2014 at the earliest.

Committee members discussed the proposed level of bonding for 2010 as it relates to their stated goal in past years of getting back to 4 miles of street improvements each year. They noted that they had long advocated for an increase in the bonding limit in order to do that. There was a suggestion to concentrate more on sewers next year inasmuch as residents are not assessed for those projects. Others favored concentrating on roads and sewers without any other projects. Based on the thought that large state projects in 2011 could impact bids on local work as well as materials, there was a question of sewer work being more cost effective that year. Mr. Brown stated that four miles per year is a fixed cost that has to be paid; otherwise, a huge liability is being created for future residents.

Mr. Albert asked if \$10 million per year in bonding is a reasonable amount for the city to handle. City Administrator Archambo confirmed that it would indeed raise taxes. Bonding went from \$3.5 million to \$6.2 million and was at \$5.3 million this year. The total annual budget is about \$85 million, and general fund expenditures come to about \$52 million. The capital budget is about 5% of the total budget. Mr. Wehrley pointed out that, although the street portion is financed in part by property taxes, sanitary sewer and storm water projects are financed by fees added to water bills, so the focus should also go beyond the tax roll.

Ms. Plass reported that the tax rate for 2010 is \$6.73 of which 42 cents is for debt service. In 2010 the tax levy would contribute \$2,250,000 to debt service. In 2010, principal is \$4,418,144 and interest is \$1,735,869.

The committee continued debate on maintaining infrastructure and increasing the bonding level. They noted that there is little in the program that is not related to streets. Committee members in general felt strongly about the need to focus on infrastructure and get back on the 4-miles-per-year schedule.

Moved by Mr. Albert, seconded by Mr. Moylan to forward the 2010-2014 Capital Improvements Plan to the Common Council having reviewed it and found it to be prudent and to recommend that the city fund the infrastructure improvements as priority capital expenditures, including roads, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water, major apparatus, lighting, bridges, buildings, etc. –

Kathy Ehley, Executive Director of the Village Business Improvement District (BID) reported that the BID is concerned that future street improvement projects affecting the Village are now expected to extend from 2011-2014 rather than occur in just one year. Village businesses have experienced construction in some form since 2005, and some businesses may not survive further construction in three out of five years. Ms. Ehley requested reconsideration of the scheduling.

Mr. Wehrley explained that if all the roads were done in one year, there would be no vehicular access to the Village at all—State Street, Milwaukee Avenue, Menomonee River Parkway, and Wauwatosa Avenue all would be closed. The city has opted not to have State Street and Milwaukee Avenue underway at the same time, and he explained how work on other streets has been similarly phased. He noted that past and future construction is not likely to have a direct impact in front of all the businesses all those years.

(Ald. Walsh excused, 7:30 p.m.; Mr. Albert assumed the Chair. -9)

The committee returned to debate of the motion on the floor. Mr. Kahout agreed with making a strong statement about investment in roads and sewers but pointed out that the mayor has stated that \$9.8 million is not acceptable. In approving the motion, this committee would not get a say in the decisions that are ultimately made when cutting that amount.

Mr. Albert conceded that cutting is likely but stated that the committee's purpose is to recommend what is best for the city. Mr. Wilson observed that the committee does not have enough information to recommend specific cuts. Mr. DeFrain said that this is a recommending body and any cuts are ultimately the Council's

responsibility. Mr. Brown commented that a certain amount is needed each year to keep up with the roads and sewers; the Council should then determine what else they can afford.

Ms. Matthews pointed out that last year this committee recommended against proceeding with Hart Park but the Council decided otherwise. This committee has been fiscally prudent, but a hard stance is necessary if we want to maintain streets and infrastructure and don't want sewage in basements. It is not fair for our children to inherit a crumbling community where projects will cost even more. Ms. Matthews observed that once the city identifies problems, they cannot be ignored.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 8; Noes: 1 (Kohout)

Discussion returned to the issues raised by the Village BID. Ms. Ehley commented that the option of entirely closing down versus spreading it out is not a very good choice. Committee members asked about the possibility of an accelerated timetable or incentives and pointed out the need for discussions. Mr. Wehrley said that the city does not provide incentives for early completion but does include penalties for late completion. Some contractors, however, work that into their bid. He noted that, besides businesses, the public and the fire department will also be affected; this is just the beginning of discussions.

Moved by Ms. Matthews, seconded by Mr. De Frain to recommend that city staff confer with the Village BID on the realities of getting the paving projects in the Village area done in a manner that meets the needs of the city and the BID –

Mr. Wehrley noted that since the capital budget is adopted on an annual basis, anything beyond 2010 could be rescheduled or postponed.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 9

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

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Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
City of Wauwatosa