



CITY OF WAUWATOSA

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TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING Tuesday, January 13, 2009

PRESENT: Aids. Jay, Maher, McBride, Meaux, Stepaniak - 5

ALSO

PRESENT: W. Kappel, Dir. of Public Works; J. Archambo, City Admin.; Ald. Purins

Ald. Meaux as Chair called the meeting to order at 8:25 p.m.

Completion of 90-Day Trial – Stop Signs at N. 70th Street and Maple Terrace

Mr. Kappel reported that the 90-day trial at N. 70th Street and Maple Terrace began with creation of a three-way stop and concluded with a four-way stop. The four-way stop has been well received, particularly by staff and parents of adjacent Jefferson Elementary School. The committee received copies of a letter of appreciation from Jefferson principal Tom Seidl. Ald. McBride reported also receiving positive comments. Mr. Kappel recommended action to make the four-way stop permanent.

Moved by Ald. McBride, seconded by Ald. Stepaniak to recommend to Council approval of a four-way stop at N. 70th Street and Maple Terrace. Ayes: 5

Report on Snow and Ice Control Operations

Mr. Kappel discussed his January 7, 2009 memo to this committee addressing questions that most frequently arise after a snow event. He noted that levels and types of operations escalate from use of a few trucks for bridges, viaducts, and spot salting to full-scale plowing with approximately 35 pieces of equipment, which is then followed by cleanup and removal depending on conditions.

The most common issue is that of plows pushing snow into previously cleared driveways or sidewalks. Mr. Kappel explained that many times it is impossible to prevent this because snow seeks the path of least resistance. Also, when snow banks are high, plows need to travel at higher speeds so that snow doesn't drop right bank onto the roadway. Mr. Kappel also noted that plowing curb-to-curb after every snowfall would be an ambitious undertaking, but it would be cost prohibitive to have a bare pavement policy all winter long. The operational cost for a full-scale plowing operation is close to \$30,000. A salting operation is about one-third that cost. Those costs do not include any follow-up or special cleanup.

Mr. Kappel explained that alleys are designed with concave construction so they drain to the middle, the exact opposite of street construction. Snow plow blades, therefore, cannot get all the way down to the pavement and residual snow is left down the alley's center. The plows generally try to equally distribute snow to both sides of an alley but will plow snow in one direction if one side is open. In the case of streets,

he noted that the more efficient wing plow now on many of the trucks may leave slightly more snow on one side of the street, although more so in a 14-inch event than a five-inch event.

Tom Pluster, a resident at 2853 N. 122nd Street and owner of a business at 2954 N. 117th Street, complained of a continuing decline this past year in snow removal efforts. He recently forwarded a letter and photos to the mayor complaining of snow removal for the December 23 and 24 snowfalls. Five days after the event, he said, six inches of snow still extended roughly six feet from the curb on both sides of his residential street. The mail delivery truck fish-tailed in that area and Christmas guests got stuck backing out of his driveway. Business customers have complained about on-street parking conditions. With no sidewalks, conditions have been poor for walking between his home and business. He noted that the City details snow and ice removal requirements for public sidewalks, obviously recognizing the safety issue, but does not provide equivalent safe conditions on the west side where there are no sidewalks. Mr. Pluster referenced some of the requirements contained in the current snow removal operations handbook, which Mr. Kappel made available to him, and suggested that those requirements are not being observed. He felt that other nearby suburbs plow at higher levels than current Wauwatosa practices.

Ald. Jay asked about the issue of homeowners or businesses who plow snow out into the street or onto neighboring property. Mr. Kappel said that the City tries to prevent others from encroaching on the City's ability to store snow, especially on boulevards. It is often very difficult to determine who is responsible, however. Residents should be trying to keep the snow on their own property.

There was a brief discussion and information from Mr. Kappel regarding garbage and recycling collection during inclement weather or during the current sub-zero temperatures. He indicated that the regular collection schedule was maintained this week. If a collection is missed, carts should be left out for collection the next day.

The Chair noted the time constraints tonight for discussing the overall informational item and indicated that discussion would continue at the January 27 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

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