

Public Safety Committee
Council Chambers
October 19, 2016
7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilor Donald Hamann, Chair
Councilor Ray Barnett

Councilor Robert Gates
Councilor James Gray

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilor Peter Lachapelle (excused)

OTHERS PRESENT

John Storer, PE, Director of City Services
Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer
Deputy Chief Toussaint, Police Dept.
Christopher Berg, PE, Wright-Pierce

Minutes

Councilor Hamann brought the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Approve Minutes from September 21, 2016

The first order of business was to approve the September 21, 2016 minutes. ***Councilor Gates made a motion to approve the September 21, 2016 minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilor Barnett. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.***

2. Public Input

There were no members of the public present.

3. Eastern Avenue Ditch by Culvert Under Road-possible guardrail needed

This item was taken off the agenda.

4. Public Tree Removal - 71 Stillwater Circle

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Storer, Director of City Services, was present to discuss this particular tree issue and to present a draft tree removal policy. Mr. Storer said that a letter was received from Richard Langis of 71 Stillwater Circle explaining his concern regarding some of the pine trees located near his home that are on City property. He said that his home “is located in an area that is like a wind tunnel”. He

said one of the pine trees in particular scares him and his family. It is leaning toward his home and his children's bedrooms; he also stated it is a sandy area and the ground is unstable in this area. He would like that one tree taken down at a minimum. Mr. Storer stated that he and the Highway supervisor have looked at the tree. Urban Tree who holds the bid for tree pruning and tree removal deemed the tree healthy. Mr. Langis stated he had a well known tree company come out himself to get another opinion and have a quote to take all the pine trees down for less than \$1,000.00. Mr. Storer presented the Public Safety Committee with a draft policy and procedure memo for tree removal. He said it was similar to the one that Portsmouth has in place. He wanted to know how the committee would feel about adopting the policy; if a resident disagreed with a decision to not remove a tree, they could have a hearing at the next scheduled Public Safety Committee meeting. Councilor Hamann said he didn't see a problem with that. Councilor Gates stated that Mr. Langis's letter did not state what tree company that he had come look at the trees, nor whether they evaluated the health of the trees. Councilor Gray said the resident could petition to take the tree down themselves. Mr. Storer stated that the City Attorney counseled against allowing residents to enter City property to take matters into their own hands, given the liability. Councilor Hamann said he did look at the tree and if it were to fall in the right direction, it is close enough to hit the house. He stated that there is no way to eliminate the possibility of a severe storm causing damage. Deputy Chief Toussaint raised the possibility of another abutter objecting to the removal of a public tree. Councilor Gray said it should follow a similar process to the Planning Board, where all abutters are notified. Mr. Bezanson said the tree itself could be posted. Mr. Storer said he would revise the draft policy based upon this discussion. Councilor Gates said he should run it by the City Attorney for a legal perspective. Councilor Hamann asked Mr. Storer to keep him in the loop. ***Councilor Gates made a motion to keep the public tree removal policy and procedure, as well as this particular tree removal request in committee until next month. The motion was seconded by Councilor Barnett. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.***

5. Traffic Flow - Myrtle/Woodman Area

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Chris Berg of Wright-Pierce was present to discuss the design of the infrastructure improvement project and the change of traffic flow in the Myrtle/Woodman Street area. Mr. Berg said that the design includes Academy Street, Liberty Street, Myrtle Street, Woodman Street, Davyanne Locke Lane, Beaudoin Avenue, Ela Court, and portions of Congress and Charles Streets. He stated that they are proposing traffic changes to Myrtle Street and Congress Street between Charles St. and Myrtle St. These areas would change from a two-way street to a one way street. Councilor Hamann asked if school busses would be affected. Mr. Berg said

busses come in through Woodman Street and the parent drop off route is along Granite Street in front of the school. Mr. Storer asked if they would lose parking on Woodman Street. Mr. Berg said yes to accommodate sidewalks and two way traffic on Woodman Street, the right-of-way is not wide enough for on-street parking. There is a plan to add parking at Woodman Park along Myrtle Street. Mr. Berg said they will have a public meeting in the next couple of months, which will allow residents to hear the plan, ask questions, and voice any concerns. Councilor Gray asked that rather than sidewalks on both sides of Woodman, could one sidewalk, two way traffic and one parking lane fit in the right-of-way width. Mr. Bezanson stressed the importance of the sidewalks given the proximity of the school. He also stated that they had looked at this arrangement and recalled that it would not fit in the right-of-way width, but that they would take another look at this. Concerning the need for two way traffic on this end of Woodman (between Myrtle and Davyanne Locke), he stated that there is presently School Department staff parking is at the end of Woodman Street; further discussion with the School Department is planned regarding their future usage of this lot. Councilor Gray said that the School Department had a plan drawn up about 5 years ago that included extending Davyanne Locke Lane north to Congress Street. Mr. Bezanson said they would report back after the public meeting and further discussions with the School Dept. Councilor Hamann asked if this was going to be brought up at the Public Works Committee meeting on Thursday night. Mr. Storer said just an overview of the project. Mr. Storer asked what the tentative timeline is for breaking ground. Mr. Berg said they have some permitting and easement issues to work through, but we are hopeful it will be a spring start. Councilor Hamann asked what the plan was during the school year. Mr. Berg said the plan is to limit work in the immediate vicinity of the school to summer months and that bus traffic will be accommodated during the school year.

6. Corner of Charles Street & McIntyre Street - No Parking Sign Request

Councilor Hamman summarized the issue. Councilor Hamann said he checked out the area and there were 2 vehicles parked near the corner. Deputy Chief Toussaint said there was only 1 car near the daycare on Charles Street when he went by. Councilor Hamann thought the no parking request was for McIntyre Street. Mr. Bezanson stated that as well. Mr. Bezanson said it is a low volume road. Mr. Hamann said he will check with Samantha in the City Manager's office to see if she has a contact for this request to get more information. Kept in committee until next month.

7. Other

Crosswalk Near Parson Main

Councilor Gray said that someone spoke to him about the Parson Main crosswalk. The complaint was that vehicles travelling south on North Main Street that are turning to head north on Wakefield Street are not looking for pedestrians in the crosswalk because their attention is focused on the northbound traffic. Mr. Storer said there may be money in the budget for crosswalk safety. Originally the focus was on North Main Street and South Main Street from Lilac City Grille to the library. Councilor Hamann will make sure that this item is on next month's agenda.

No Parking - Waldron Street

Mr. Storer said that DPW was looking into the history of the "no parking" sign on Waldron Street. It looks like a City sign, however there are on-street parking spaces available. When someone tried to park there recently, they were told by an area resident that they could not because of the sign posted. Councilor Gray said that there could be a record of the decision to place the sign in City Council meeting minutes or on the deed.

Parking on South Main Street near Commons and Sanel Auto Parts.

Mr. Bezanson said that Mr. Storer and he met with Councilor Lauterborn regarding on street parking. A local businessman had requested that the parking along South Main Street across from the Commons be delineated more clearly, so that people were more aware that there was on street parking in the area. Mr. Bezanson stated that the parking lane is only 7 ft. wide and a parallel parking space needs to be a minimum of 8 ft. wide. Because significant restriping of the roadway would be needed to properly delineate parallel parking spaces in this area, DPW is proposing no changes until such time as the entire area can be restriped. Mr. Bezanson also stated that the businessman requested additional enforcement of the 30 minute parking restriction that is posted in this area. Deputy Chief Toussaint stated that additional enforcement beyond what is currently practiced is difficult due to the frequency that this area would need to be patrolled. This item was for informational purposes; no action taken on this item.

Franklin Street/Western Avenue-Project - Temporary One Way at Winter/Adams

Mr. Bezanson informed the committee when the Western Avenue culvert replacement portion of the project begins, Western Avenue will be shut down to traffic in the area. Pedestrian traffic in the area will be forced to use Winter Street to Adams Avenue, which includes a narrow culvert crossing and a narrow corner with very little sight distance. DPW is planning to limit vehicular traffic to one way between the culvert on Winter

Street and the Adams Avenue/First Street intersection. Temporarily limiting vehicular traffic flow to one direction from Winter Street to Adams Avenue will provide a much safer condition for pedestrian travel in this area. Councilor Gray expressed concern over yet another restriction on traffic flow in the area given that the residents are already having to deal with the on-going construction in the area. Mr. Bezanson stated that fortunately those that travel through the area are now aware of the on-going construction and will try to avoid the area when possible. He stressed that this change is being made for pedestrian safety. Councilor Gray asked how long this one way restriction would be in place. Mr. Bezanson stated that this would likely be in place through the winter and into the spring. Councilor Gray asked whether the time period could be shortened. Mr. Bezanson said the whole road would be opened up and that there is an extensive amount of work that the contractor needs to complete in the area of the culvert. Councilor Gray stated that the residents are getting hit from both ends. Mr. Bezanson stated the importance of keeping pedestrians away from the construction zone. Councilor Hamann said the children's safety is more important than a temporary traffic inconvenience.

Portland/Salmon Falls Road Intersection

Councilor Hamann said that Councilor Varney mentioned the four-way Portland/Salmon Falls Intersection. Deputy Chief Toussaint said there is a lot of enforcement done in the area. Councilor Gray said they would need a full engineering traffic study of the area to determine whether a traffic signal would be warranted. Consensus of the committee was that this would not be necessary at this intersection.

Update on Lupine Lane

Deputy Chief Toussaint said there is traffic in the morning for 15 minutes, but there is still a two way flow.

Tebbetts / Blackwater Road

Mr. Bezanson said that the City does have enough right-of-way in the area to clear trees and brush so that the stop sign is visible from further back on Blackwater Road. DPW is proceeding with the clearing in this area.

Councilor Gates made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 PM. Councilor Barnett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Laura Miller, Secretary II.

