

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mike Geisel, City Administrator

FROM: James Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer 

SUBJECT: Planning & Public Works Committee of the Whole Meeting
Summary – Monday, August 23, 2021



A meeting of the Planning and Public Works Committee of the Whole was held on Monday, August 23, 2021 in the Council Chambers.

In attendance were: Chair Mary Monachella (Ward I), Councilmember Barbara McGuinness (Ward I), Councilmember Mary Ann Mastorakos (Ward II), Councilmember Aaron Wahl (Ward II), Councilmember Tom DeCampi (Ward IV); and Councilmember Gary Budoor (Ward IV). Councilmember Dan Hurt (Ward III) and Councilmember Michael Moore (Ward III) were absent.

Also in attendance were: Mayor Bob Nation; Mike Geisel, City Administrator; Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer; Zach Wolff, Assistant City Engineer; Steve Merk, Civil Engineer; and Kathy Juergens, Recording Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

I. Public Informational Meeting Regarding Proposed Improvements to Wilson Avenue

Chair Monachella began the meeting and stated that even though this topic had been discussed several times, there continues to be a great deal of confusion and misinformation associated with the project. She stated that the purpose of the meeting was to share the City's vision and intentions for the improvement of Wilson Avenue. It is the City's desire to minimize the improvements necessary for Wilson Avenue while retaining the rural character of the road. The City has no desire or intent to increase capacity or create an urban character. However, it is the City's responsibility to provide a safe and sustainable roadway.

Mike Geisel, City Administrator, then stated that there is no current project nor is there any funding currently allocated for repairs to Wilson Avenue. If the City obtains a grant, the money can only be used for the improvements specified in the grant application.

Mr. Geisel stated that while there are obvious needs, the impetus for this discussion is actually an effort to secure grant funding to leverage City money. There are a limited number of City maintained roads that qualify for federal assistance and Wilson Avenue is one of them. In order to effectively apply for grant funding, you have to have a well-developed plan and cost estimate. The Planning & Public Works Committee has recommended funding the engineering design phase that is necessary to develop a plan, which does not currently exist, to clearly describe the proposed improvements and the associated costs. Having a set of engineering plans will not only provide a complete set of plans and cost estimates, but it will also provide a vehicle to communicate with the public the exact improvements that are proposed while concurrently maximizing the City's chances of obtaining grant funding.

Mr. Geisel stated that at its most recent meeting, the Planning & Public Works Committee directed Staff to limit the scope of the project and to retain the rural character of the roadway. It is mutually beneficial for the City to limit the scope of the project and to minimize the improvements as this also minimizes the costs. The City has spent the last 30 years maintaining the road to the best of its ability. The City has spent considerable effort applying band-aids to some of the problem areas. However, that approach is not sustainable in the long term and the roadway will experience failure at some point in the future for which we need to be prepared for.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer introduced himself and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to provide information on the proposed Wilson Avenue grant/project and give the public the opportunity to comment and ask questions.

Mr. Eckrich gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation depicting the following:

- History of Wilson Avenue
- Current condition including deficiencies
- The Walnut Hill Subdivision request
- Resident survey results
- The scope of the unsuccessful 2021 grant submittal versus the revised scope of the 2022 grant proposal
- Staff's recommendation to allocate funds for engineering design services.
- Recommendations from the Walnut Hill and Todd Evan Trail residents' proposal with signatures of 42 residents in concurrence

Questions

Mr. Eckrich and Mr. Geisel addressed numerous questions from the residents and Councilmembers.

In addition to the questions, there were several speakers who filled out speaker cards. Those speakers are delineated below.

Speakers in Favor

Tim Schoen – 1215 Walnut Hill Farm
Sheryl Triplett – 1224 Wilson Road
John Foster – 18 Wheatley Court
Judy Blix – 1251 Walnut Hill Farm
Mehnaz Habib – 1230 Walnut Hill Farm

Speakers in Opposition – There were two speakers who submitted speaker cards and indicated opposition but they only spoke during the question / answer session. Many of the speakers who spoke during the question / answer session appeared to be opposed to at least certain aspects of the project.

Speakers - Neutral

Don Imholz – 16901 Todd Evan Trail. Mr. Imholz indicated that he was neutral on the speaker card but he was part of the Walnut Hill / Todd Evan Trail compromise referenced during the meeting. He indicated that he is in favor of the project only if the scope was limited as detailed in that proposal.

II. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Monachella thanked the residents for attending the meeting and providing input. She then adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.