

CITY OF GRAND MARAIS
2007 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT HEARING
MINUTES
February 27, 2008

Mayor Larsen called the hearing to order at 5:00 p.m.

Members present: Evelyn Larsen, Kay Costello, Tim Kennedy, William Lenz, and Edward Bolstad

Members absent: None

Staff present: Mike Roth, Don Davison, and Kim Dunsmoor

Jamie Mehle, S.E.H., City Engineer explained the scope of the infrastructure improvements. The neighborhoods: 1st, 2nd and 3rd Avenues would require replacement of the water, sewer and storm sewer mains, new pavement, curb and gutter. Sidewalks are proposed for both sides of 1st Avenue West because it seems to be a heavily used connection to downtown. Creechville would require new water, sewer and storm sewer construction and reconstruction of the ditches. The current cost of construction is based upon a 28' street. This would allow for parking only on one side of the street and the city would need to enforce opposite side parking. The 28' street would decrease stormwater runoff. We are looking for feedback on the construction for each area. If you have concerns regarding sidewalks, width of street etc., please contact city hall.

Gwen Lenz, Bethlehem Church asked about sidewalks.

Leonard Goodell stated that this is a poor time for people living on a limited income. Why would the city assess for sewer and water improvements?

Some of the cost will be assessed and some of the cost will be paid by utility rates.

Pat Martin, 3rd Ave W, asked if the homeowners are responsible for connections in their own yard?

The homeowner is responsible if they wish to upgrade the connection from the city line to their own home. If there are many homeowners who wish to upgrade their private lines, perhaps the city can assist in agreements with the contractor and homeowner to facilitate their upgrade.

Pat Martin also stated that her biggest problem is that they need curb and gutter to keep water from pouring into her yard from street.

Marc Tavernier questioned the estimated price per foot for assessments.

The city assesses 85% of new construction costs and 40-60% of reconstruction costs. Costs are paid by assessments, utility rates, and the general levy.

Marc Tavernier does not like the clearing of sidewalks falling on the property owners. When the snow gets deep, you shovel and then the grader comes by and plows it back on the sidewalk so you can clear it again. Whose responsibility is it to clear the sidewalks

and would the sidewalk be near the curb or set behind the boulevard? He would prefer sidewalks on the curb and the city to clear those along 1st Ave W.

Paul Anderson, 1st Avenue West, agrees that sidewalks should be at the curb. Students generally use the street and 1st Ave W is a busy street. What would be done with the alley for parking if the street is narrowed and the parking is reduced? Alternatives will need to be made for parking if the street is narrowed.

Shirley Norman questioned if the adjoining homeowners are responsible for the cost if sidewalk is in front of their property. She further suggested that the 1% Sales Tax should be used for these types of improvements. It is a bad time for people on a fixed income.

The cost will not be differentiated for sidewalks; it will be spread across the entire project. We don't have the authority to use the 1% Sales Tax for infrastructure improvements.

Leonard Goodell questioned if the city had applied for any grants.

The city has applied for grants every year for this project. We did receive a grant for the Creechville area, but not for the neighborhoods. In addition, the grants in Creechville are based according to the homeowner's income.

Irene Laine, 3rd Ave W, would prefer a 28' wide street with no sidewalk due to cost.

Leonard Goodell asked if odd/even parking would be implemented.

Marc Tavernier, 1st Ave W, bought 3 lots and was barely able to put in a small garage for off street parking. There are many homes with no place to park other than the street and nowhere to add off-street parking. The street should remain 40' wide.

Harley Tofte questioned the assessment schedule and interest rate.

Generally the assessment will be spread over 20 years at 1% higher than the interest than the city's bond rate. The average cost of assessments per lot for brand new construction is approximately \$25,000 resulting in payments on property taxes of approximately \$2000/year. Reconstruction assessments are less.

Bob Laine stated that the estimated cost shown would be about \$13,000/40 ft lot.

Jamie Mehle, City Engineer, estimated that streets 40 foot wide would add about \$160,000 to the project and current estimated assessment cost would be about \$21 per foot for reconstruction. Many communities are going to 28' residential streets to slow driver's down.

Irene Laine asked if homeowners would have the option of paying off the assessment rather than over time. Yes.

Deb Smith, Creechville, asked if they would be assessed per front foot or per stub out and how many stub outs would be placed per foot.

The assessment will be per foot. We may add stub outs for possible future subdivisions. We will work with you about where it is best to add stub outs and how many makes sense for your property.

Irene Laine requested speed bumps.

Generally speed bumps are not a good idea in this type of project.

Marc Tavernier asked how the estimated costs compare to the latest assessments.

The assessment estimates are based upon the last projects of 2nd Street and 9th Ave W and Cedar Grove Business Park. The biggest increases have been in pavement due to the oil prices. We think we will see more competitive bids this summer as contractors are looking for work. Generally, in the reconstruction project, the trenches will need to be wider to meet safety standards. The city does not assess for storm sewer improvements.

Grace Flow asked if the sidewalks will be on private property.

No. Sidewalks will be on city property.

Deb Smith asked if she should contact her neighbor who is currently in an Assisted Living Facility to make sure she is aware of the project.

Yes. Tell your neighbors to contact us.

Lou Goodell asked how the city will decide where sidewalks will go or not go.

The city will listen to the people.

Marc Tavernier would like to see a survey about the sidewalks. Students use the alleys now more than the sidewalks.

Sue Goodell asked about sidewalks where homeowners don't have the ability to shovel.

Elizabeth Pearson, 3rd Ave W, realized that she cannot walk on sidewalks because she is terrified to walk on the present sidewalks. There needs to be a beginning of continuous sidewalks. Currently, the sidewalks start and stop with no continuity and they are in poor condition.

Mayor Larsen urged the public to call City Hall with concerns about the project.

The hearing closed at 5:45 p.m.