



Citizens Street Advisory Commission

Wednesday, January 12, 2005
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 2-B, City Hall

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Present:

JoAnna Butler
Dallas Hawkins
Donna Jilbert
Chuck Kearney
Max Kuney
Stan Stirling
John Talbott

Staff Present:

Roger Flint, Director, Public Works & Utilities
Tom Arnold, Director, Engineering Services
Scott Egger, Director, Street Department
Charlotte Thacker, Admin. Asst.

I. Introductions

Roger Flint pointed out that a number of the members had served on the former Streets Committee, and a copy of the latest Committee's report will be provided to all. He discussed the role of the Commission: to make sure that the City does what it has said it will do regarding the recently approved street bonds. Copies of the ordinance outlining the Commission's responsibilities and the Council Resolution regarding the Street Bond will be provided to members.

Upon distributing the City's 6-Year Street Plan, Mr. Flint explained that municipalities are required to have a 6-year capital improvement plan before seeking funding. Much more information is available to the Commission, and he advised that members should feel free to request hard copy of any of the documents posted on the Street Department web page, www.spokanestreets.org.

Mr. Flint provided a short description of the funding for capital programs, noting that funding must be in place at a certain level for programs on 6-year plan before application can be made for other State and Federal funds. Items cannot be placed in the main front section of the 6-year Plan unless they are already funded.

The group discussed whether the streets scheduled for reconstruction during the next ten years as part of the \$117,000 bond should be incorporated into the Plan; the consensus was that the bond construction schedule should be attached as an appendix to provide clear separation for the different street funding categories.

Mayor Talbott inquired about the status of the Street Utility initiative. Mr. Flint provided a brief historical perspective, noting the difficulty in creating a program that averted the problems wherein a recent street utility was found unconstitutional at the State Supreme Court level. Mr. Hawkins stated that many on the Commission would be interested in pursuing a street utility in the future, because it provides for a greater connection between the users of the system and the fees they are paying.

Mr. Flint described the City's pavement management system, wherein visual inspection of all streets by street crews result in scores of 0-100 for streets (100 being the best). Members of the Commission agreed with Ms. Jilbert that communications with the public and media would be an important component of their work. Mr. Talbott noted that one factor in communicating with the public would include surmounting the public's expected future satisfaction with this bond work and still getting them to vote again to secure a 60% for the any street bond sought in future years. The group endorsed Mayor Talbott's suggestion of having a report to the citizens videotaped and made available on venues like Channel 5 to keep the public up-to-date on activities of the Commission.

In order to ensure that streets be properly maintained in the future, Mayor Talbott suggested that the Commission might wish to address the possibility of recommending a Charter change that would require a certain percentage of General Fund monies be allocated to street maintenance. He inquired of Mr. Egger what the needed minimum percentage to maintain the streets would be. Mr. Egger responded that the Street Department is under funded by \$3 million a year for maintenance, but that even with proper maintenance, all streets eventually need replacement.

II. History and Background -- Scott Egger, Director, Street Department

Scott Egger brought the group's attention to the map designating the streets scheduled to be replaced during the ten -year duration of construction; 65% arterial, 35% residential. He explained that the amount of the bond was selected based on how much the City could afford, how much the citizens were willing to pay, and how much construction the citizens can tolerate in their community at one time. Input from citizens leading up to the bond ballot was critical in selecting the streets chosen for reconstruction. Mr. Flint noted that money could also be used for LID buy-down and utility match work, citing as an example the 3rd Avenue water main replacement, where, when the Water Department repairs half the road, the City might wish to use the bonds to finish the other half of the street.

The Commission discussed street cuts and was pleased to learn from Tom Arnold that City staff has been working with other entities for the past year to develop a pavement

cut policy. The policy will soon be in final draft and will be provided to the Commission. Mayor Talbott stated that the City needed good truck routes and adequate enforcement. Mr. Egger informed that the Police Department recently approved an overload unit. JoAnna Butler was joined by others in requesting information on how much, if any, of the fines collected would accrue to street maintenance funding. Staff did not believe any of the money would go to Streets, but stated they would have an update on the topic at the next meeting.

III. Current Project Schedule -- Tom Arnold, Director, Engineering Services

Mr. Flint explained that originally the bond construction was intended to start in 2006, as the vote had been planned for the spring of 2005. When the measure was moved to November 2004, it allowed Engineering Services to move some projects forward to 2005, requiring consideration of any utility projects that are planned.

Mr. Arnold distributed the schedule and reviewed the construction schedule. It was pointed out that we need to also look at what the State and County are planning and take advantage of opportunities like the County's work being planned for Country Homes Boulevard. That work will dovetail into our proposed work on the Maple/Ash Corridor.

Some Commission members were interested in the possibility of accelerating the schedule and doing more streets at once "to get a bigger bank for our buck" by attracting larger, out-of-area contractors. Others shared the view that it is good for local people to have the jobs. Mr. Flint reminded that, besides the street reconstruction planned, there would be concurrent street work being done by private and public utilities. Mr. Stirling observed that he had learned that having too many crews at work at one time becomes difficult, and Mr. Kuney added that asphalt businesses are reluctant to quote to an out-of-area contractor. Mayor Talbott noted that trying to get too much done at one time could actually drive the cost up for street paving. Mr. Arnold stated that the City doesn't usually get street bids from out of area because of the cost of mobilizing. Mr. Kearney and Mr. Hawkins summed up the discussion by stating that we should have no quick fixes, but do the work as fast as possible, and that the Commission should analyze scheduling of the projects to accelerate where appropriate. Mr. Stirling suggesting that the construction schedule be provided in a map form, and Mr. Arnold said he would make that accommodation.

IV. Election of Commission Chair

Mr. Stirling nominated Dallas Hawkins as Chair, stating that his experience would serve the group well. Ms. Butler seconded. Mr. Hawkins accepted after noting he would be happy to serve, since no one else expressed a desire to be considered. Mr. Hawkins nominated Mr. Stirling as Vice Chair, and the group was in consensus. Members were in agreement that the Public Works Committee would be the main contact between the Commission and Council.

V. Meeting Schedule

The group decided to meet regularly from 1:00 -3:00 pm on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at the Street Department, 901 N. Nelson, where parking is free. The Commission noted they could go to a less frequent schedule once they are up and running. The next meeting will be held on February 2.

VI. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

The agenda for the next meeting was built (attached).

Discussion of the agenda led to dialog regarding the undesirability of allocating funds where community development funds were available, and the preference of using volunteer assistance for public involvement as opposed to bond funding for staffing purposes.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 3:30 pm.