

Mason City

CITY OF MASON CITY

Building and Neighborhood Services Department

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COUNCIL WORKSHOP - JANUARY 11, 2007

TO: TOM MEYER, CITY ADMINISTRATOR
FROM: PAT OTTO, NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST *PHO*
RE: COMPREHENSIVE SIDEWALK POLICY
DATE: JANUARY 9, 2007

I have prepared a process that engages residents of Mason City who represent a variety of perspectives to look at the issue of a comprehensive sidewalk policy.

The process involves (1) the creation of a citizen/staff committee to oversee the process and to prepare a recommendation, (2) gathering information on the current sidewalk situation through photographs and through information gleaned from other Iowa communities, (3) brainstorming ideas for a sidewalk policy, (4) reviewing options for potential recommendations, (5) gathering input on recommendations from stakeholders through focus groups, (6) making a final recommendation to the City Council.

The goal of this committee is to create recommendations for the City Council that will improve neighborhoods and other areas of the community through a comprehensive sidewalk policy.

There are several stakeholders in this issue that should be represented in the process. I've attached a summary of the perspectives that I feel should be represented by stakeholders and a process for the development of a comprehensive sidewalk policy.

DRAFT

Process for the Development of a Comprehensive Sidewalk Policy

1. Determine stakeholders to be represented in the process
2. Take photos of the sidewalk situation in Mason City
3. Gather and review information on the current sidewalk situation in Mason City
4. Gather and review sidewalk policies from other Iowa communities
5. Prepare potential options for a Comprehensive Sidewalk Policy for Mason City
6. Present options to Mason City residents at input meetings for their comments
7. Review comments received from input meetings
8. Prepare (1) options for Comprehensive Sidewalk Policy, (2) financing plan for the policy, and (3) timeframe for implementation of the policy
9. Workshop presentation to City Council for comments of (1) options for Comprehensive Sidewalk Policy, (2) financing plan for the policy, and (3) timeframe for implementation of the policy
10. Review of comments from City Council and possible changes to draft policy based on comments
11. Request for approval of the Comprehensive Sidewalk Policy and financial plan from City Council
12. Implementation of policy according to timeframe.

**Possible Steering Committee Member Perspective
for a Comprehensive Sidewalk Policy in Mason City**

Citizen / Neighborhood (4-5 members including one young person
representing both old and new residential areas)

Neighborhood Development Specialist (Facilitator)

Mason City Public Schools / Newman Catholic Schools

Concrete Contractor/Developer

Engineering / staff

Planning & Zoning / staff

Commercial / Retail

Cerro Gordo County Public Health

Mason City Police Department

MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION

The City Council of the City of Mason City, Iowa, met in worksession pursuant to law and rules of said Council, in the Mason City Room of Mason City Public Library at 7:00 P.M., on January 11, 2007. The meeting was called to order by the Mayor and on roll being called there were present, Roger Bang, Mayor in the Chair, and the following Council Members: Zook, Tornquist, Marsters, Nelson, Weaver, Jaszewski. Absent: None.

1. Levee:

City Engineer Rahm explained Terracon had the results of the first series of borings from Carolina to 12th Street and would continue up from there advising their preference would be to study the whole levee first and then report on the findings.

Tornquist asked how far east it would go and what concerns they had with Rahm stating they would proceed to the end of the levee or eight hundred feet and the concern was the sand pockets and limestone stressing it was not completely uniform. He also stated staff should have a recommendation from Terracon by the end of March and he hoped to have everything together to communicate to the public by April or May.

2. Sidewalks:

Administrator Meyer stated last year the Engineering Department had marked fifty sidewalks for repair. Forty-eight of those were either fixed by the homeowner or paid for upon completion emphasizing that was an extremely good success rate and staff had plans to expand the number of sidewalks for the upcoming year.

Tornquist stated he was in agreement with the current program but wanted to address the inequalities within the community and asked Neighborhood Development Specialist Otto to come to the podium and address the issue. She stated the idea was to establish a citizens committee and outlined the process (1) the creation of a citizen/staff committee to oversee the process and to prepare a recommendation; (2) gather information on the current sidewalk situation through photographs and information gleaned from other Iowa communities; (3) brainstorm ideas for a sidewalk policy; (4) review options for potential recommendations; (5) gather input on recommendations from stakeholders through focus groups; (6) make a final recommendation to the City Council.

Jaszewski stated he liked the idea of a citizens committee commenting on how successful it's been in the past. He stated he would be in favor of using that concept again, while at the same time continuing with the current program.

Tornquist commented on passing a resolution that would establish a committee with Administrator Meyer stressing that if the Council was looking at putting in sidewalks where they don't currently exist it would mean a financial involvement on the part of the City and if the City was not prepared to do that then there was no point in moving forward with the establishment of a committee.

Nelson stressed there was enough to do with the repair and replacement of the sidewalks without getting into this now adding it was controversial, and the citizens of the community did not need to look at another increase in rates with Marsters stating if the City was going to demand sidewalks it must be done across the board and forcing sidewalks in was going to be a big issue.

It was determined that Council could bring forward a resolution for the February 6th Meeting.

3. 19th Street Extension:

Administrator Meyer stated the developer on the north side of the projected extension would like the road paved to Illinois Avenue but current plans had the road extending only to Louisiana Avenue. He emphasized that right now none of the property owners were pushing this forward and, in fact, many of the neighbors were very much against it explaining that, in order for the project to move forward, there would have to be some type of assessment project and a majority of the land on the south side was in agricultural deferment. In addition, with this type of project it was not possible to assess the improvements so that half was paid through a development agreement and the other half through assessments so it would have to be the same for all.

Jaszewski asked about the developer going to just Louisiana with Meyer stating that would not benefit the developer pointing out there were exits onto Kentucky so the developer could still proceed with the next layer of development and that it was after Louisiana that it made sense for the developer.

4. Curfew:

Administrator Meyer stated a broader issue that went hand-in-hand with a curfew was the question of enforcement explaining there were three ways it could be addressed; by ticketing the offender, taking the person into custody (which raises the issue of detention) or selective enforcement. He pointed out there was minimal support regarding the effectiveness of a curfew and, with the new Police Chief coming soon, he would recommend waiting to get his input.

Jaszewski stated he was not in favor of a curfew and thought it was up to the parents to be more vigilant with Tornquist stating he was neutral on the subject and would probably vote 'no' but was just looking for some closure on this topic. He also agreed with waiting until the new Police Chief was on board.

Nelson urged giving the new Chief some time to get familiar with the job before asking him to address this issue.

5 & 7. Library and Police Station:

Library Director Huffman provide an update on the referendum set for November 2007 and also handed out a small section of the final report pertaining to the building assessment stating it would be some time next week when they would have the full report.

Tornquist stated he appreciated the Library's effort in moving this towards a referendum, however, he felt the Police Station and the Library should be two separate referendums because they were both very important items. He also thought Council should wait a year prior to bringing forward a referendum for the Police Station.

Nelson and Administrator Meyer concurred that each issue should be on a separate ballot and that anything having to do with the Police Station should wait until the new Police Chief had a chance to settle in.

6. Animal Shelter:

Administrator Meyer explained the City was working with the Humane Society to develop construction and operation agreements. He advised the Humane Society had acquired the property and both City staff and the Humane Society were diligently moving forward with negotiations for a joint facility.

Tornquist asked when groundbreaking was anticipated with Meyer stating the earliest would be sometime this summer.

Adjourn:

There being nothing further it was moved by Jaszewski and seconded by Nelson to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Roger Bang, Mayor

ATTEST:

Tom Meyer, Interim City Clerk