

MEETINGS MINUTES

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL #2

Wednesday, May 12th, 2021

Great Falls Civic Center Gibson Room

7:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A quorum was established with Chair Shyla Patera, Vice Chair Tim Croft, and Secretary Frank Speidel as present. Member Elizabeth McBride was not present. Visitors include Wayne Olson, Jesse Patton (Interim City Engineer), Debbie Pickering, Paul Skubinna (Public Works Director), Rick Johnson (Civil Engineer), Amy Truong (AmeriCorps Vista/Public Library), Ann Whittlesey, and Lanni Klasner (Communications Specialist).

OLD BUSINESS

- There is an error with the February meeting minutes approving the January meeting minutes year. Chair Patera made a motion to correct the year to 2021. The February meeting minutes will now reflect the year of approval of January meeting minutes to year 2021. Vice Chair Tim Croft seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the motion.
- Approval of April 2021 minutes – Secretary Frank Speidel made a motion to approve the April 2021 meeting minutes, Vice Chair Tim Croft seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the minutes.
- Southwest Side Water Main Replacements, Phase I
 - Chair Patera advised she can either read the letter dated April 27th, 2021 from Richard Johnson, Civil Engineer, City of Great Falls to the Southwest Side residents, subject RE: Southwest Side Water Main Replacements – Phase I, O.F. 1432.1 into the record or just include the letter into the minutes. Vice Chair Tim Croft made a motion to include the letter into the minutes. Secretary Frank Speidel seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the motion. Chair Patera advised that the Council has to discuss and decide based on the recommendation outlined in the letter what we recommend what projects we as a Council recommend and how this project moves forward as it goes to the City Commission and the neighborhood. We welcome all public discussion on this issue, but we did have a robust discussion last month and we do need to provide a recommendation in a written form. Chair Patera opened the discussion to the floor with members of the Council but knowing that the public has the right to discuss the options we are discussing as a Council. Chair Patera asked does anyone on the Council wish to make a motion based on the findings of the letter? Vice Chair Tim Croft and City Engineers discussed the number of

trees to be removed that are stated in the letter. There was discussion on how making the streets a one way may delay the construction as stated in the letter. Vice Chair Tim Croft stated he would like to hear from the people living on the streets affected.

- There was a consensus that everyone likes the trees.
- Public Works and Engineering advised that even though everyone likes the trees, they would not be able to do the work required and keep all the trees.
- Vice Chair Tim Croft made a motion to accept the city proposal ADA sidewalks and curbs put in and water line and removal of the trees to the replacement of all the trees those 33 trees Rick? Mr. Johnson stated we are going to replace I think 29 to 30. Cut down 11-12 with a 3 to 1 replacement. Vice Chair Croft stated alright I make that motion the city's proposal. Secretary Frank Speidel seconded the motion. Chair Patera requested any public discussion on the motion itself. Paul Skubinna made a Point of Clarification on the motion. Mr. Skubinna states that the city forester will make a recommendation on the replacement rate of all the trees and it will be something in the ball park of 2, 3, or 4, he is usually looking for something in the equivalent diameter within reason, meaning we got a 40 inch tree we are looking similar in diameter in replacement trees, however space constraints, we are not going to get 40 trees in the area to replace one tree. Bottom line they will follow the city forester's direction. Vice Chair Tim Croft made a motion to amend his motion that we accept the city's forester's recommendation to replace the trees that will be taken down. Secretary Frank Speidel seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the motion.
- Lanni Klanser advised that the recommendation to the City Council will be in the minutes. The ultimate decision will be the City Commission. There is still an opportunity for the public to speak to the City Commission. The recommendation from Council they will weight that in their decision, but there will still be an opportunity for public comment.
- Chair Shyla Patera requests to know what the next steps for the Public Works are. Paul Skubinna responded their next steps with the understanding of where the Neighborhood Council recommendation will lie, when we bring this to the Commission, will be to complete the design watermain, go ahead and get that project to bid shortly on its heels. Will go ahead and finish the design of the street reconstruction. And that will be the second item that goes before the commission. They don't anticipate they won't be before the Commission for the watermain Jun or Jul. They are going to advertise open bids on the 23rd of Jun which would put that award go to the commission on Jul 6th for the watermain. They anticipate the construction will start on the watermain around the 19th of Jul. Vice Chair Tim requests to know when the trees will be cut down. Public Works and Engineers responded that that will be the initial phase for the roads. I would wait for the roads, probably back to next spring. Talking about coming forward projects for the roads anticipate design being done in the winter for

bidding and early spring for spring construction talking about Dec Jan approving the project.

NEW BUSINESS

- Little Free Library
 - Amy Truong (AmeriCorps Vista/Public Library) gave a presentation of the new Little Free Library. They will be replacing the current structures due to wear and tear. The new ones are weatherproof. Expected to last 9 to 10 years. They will be registered with the international database. They are working with Parks and Rec to have them installed this summer. Anticipate somewhere between Jun and Sep but no time frame has been established. If Neighborhood Councils want additional structures, they will cost 520.00 dollars. That would include the post, box structure, as well as any additional hardware. Chair Shyla Patera voiced concern about ADA accessibility of the Little Free Libraries. The library will be handling the ordering and installing by Park and Rec. Lanni Klasner (Communications Specialist) advised that Parks and Rec will make sure the Little Free Libraries will be ADA accessible.
- Summer Meeting Schedule
 - Council discussed having a meeting in Jun. Potential plans are resuming meetings at West in the fall barring any unforeseen circumstances. Vice Chair Tim Croft made a recommendation we have a meeting in Jun. He will be gone in Jul. Chair Shyla Patera advised the Jun meeting will be the final one until Sep if we do meet in Jun. Vice Chair Tim Croft made a motion that we meet in Jun. Secretary Frank Speidel seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the motion to meet in Jun. We will meet the second week of Jun at the Civic Center. Jun 9th.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS (Public comment on any matter that is not on the agenda of the meeting and that is within the jurisdiction of the Neighborhood Council. In the interest that all parties can be heard, please limit your comments. When addressing the Council, state your name and address for the record).

- Neighborhood Concerns: Southwest Side Water Main Replacement and Road Reconstruction
 - A member of the community expressed concerns about a one way. Public Works and Engineering responded that a study would have to be conducted to see if it is feasible, which could potentially have us miss the funding opportunity which was addressed in bullet 4.
 - A member of the community stated they did not like the one ways option due to traffic issues. The member also stated they like the trees but would accept the number they plan on cutting down. One member of the community wanted the one way while another did not.

- Vice Chair Tim Croft requested Paul's input. Paul responded that he sincerely appreciates the council taking this issue up, talking it through, and working with the residents to get whatever information and consensus if possible. We recognized this is a really difficult decision and that's why we brought this to your attention as far as input in the project we'd like to bring the project to the commission with the support and recommendation from the Neighborhood Council. Beyond that it's a situation where we got some options here. I think from a practical standpoint we have some concerns about the road. You know we though we were in there, I forget what it was 5 or 6 years ago, did a little milling over layer, maybe a chip seal, I do recall talking from a street manager, that, was very likely the last band aid that they had for that area. So, you run the risk of a number of unknowns, the trees could pick up Dutch elm this fall and be gone by spring, on their own. The road could look like something that could swallow a Volkswagen by next fall. So, it is an extremely difficult decision and that's why we want to bring the project forward supported by the neighborhood council.
- A member of the community requested to know why they had to do both projects together. Public Works and Engineering responded that the projects scope primarily based on the watermain. We have unacceptable maintenance records at this point of time with the watermain in that area. So the street replacement or street rebuild is in the areas of the watermain scope with the understanding we don't have the money right now to do the entire neighborhood but as we work our way through the watermain, in the neighborhood that is very old and we anticipate in the coming years, we may or may not, depending on the performance of the utilities that exist in the ground //but you won't do the road unless you have to// that's sort of the impetus of the extra bang for the buck that's so to speak because when we do get in there and do that watermain, that's what makes sense to do the street at the same time. One of the reasons why you don't do the street without doing the watermain, especially in the neighborhoods that have 100-year-old watermains, is that watermain will break before the street's life expectancy has been reached. So, we tend to zoom in after, so we go through avenues or streets with some water replacement utilities in there and we just switched some of this focus, we are trying out on the street reconstruction, with the watermain for potential cost savings. //so, the reason you are not doing all of them is cost savings? // all of what ?//you are not doing all of third avenue Southwest? // we are not replacing the watermain on third avenue south right now because it has a weird break history that the other areas do not necessarily have.
- A member of the community wanted to know if the Service Line Warranties sent in the mail was legitimate. Paul responded that it is a legitimate insurance, its not through the city, but they always advise people to take a look at their current homeowners' insurance to see if there are options that cover them that they already have, or coverage that they already gotten. Lanni Klasner

responded that the program that you got information on in the mail is one that is sanctioned by the Montana City League, so it's a legitimate company and that's why the city // ? // yes, they have vetted it. A few years back we had a lot of broken pipes and there's been lot of issues So that is why that was looked for. So, there was a resource if they wanted to purchase it.

- A member of the community wanted to know what kind of expense is there, as far as left, if we just do water versus, expense of planting the trees, and the road. Public Works and Engineering responded that they are separate pots of money and the city will utilize those funds to replace and improve road infrastructure within the City of Great Falls. Lanni Klasner responded because the line is being replaced plus the opportunity to do it, that project may not come back for years. And it will end up saving taxpayers' dollars. Public Works and Engineering also responded that the life expectancy of the trees is 100 plus years. So, we could come back in 20 years or 25 years to renew the road, the trees are just going to be bigger, and in the way more at that point. But yes, I love the trees. We could do a study but once the money has moved, everybody knows how money works, tomorrow all the roads might have large potholes. We can't read the future. We do have funding right now allocated for this., street and construction in these areas but its going to affect some trees and as Paul has said we really want to get your input here, and as people have alluded to, we don't live in that neighborhood. So were just kind of here as your sounding board, answering some of the questions. We know that you would like both, but we have not been able to figure out how to do that. //at least you tried //
- A member of the community asked what kind of trees did they decide on? Are they fast grow? Public Works and Engineering responded, typically what they have been putting in on the Northside are Maples, Hackberry. So we feel we prefer Hackberry // ? // everybody, and take down recommendations for types of trees, where to plant them, so whenever I can put my document together, I prefer to give Todd input on species and locations of where you would like to have the trees planted. Given the number, it might have to be multispecies, just without giving to much of a lead time to growers, 34 trees that we want, 2-inch caliber, they may not be able to provide us that many on short notice. And diversity, Dutch elm or some other types that are acceptable. There was not overwhelming applause for Linden.
- A member of the community expressed concern about the traffic, and if fixing the street will the traffic get worse. Will the streets be wider or the same? Public Works and Engineering responded that the width will be the same plus or minus two 2 feet. // so, the main thing it's not going to solve the traffic issue. Its gonna get worse! // if there's a clear road // I honestly, given, so I don't know, if you build it, they will come. But your road isn't that bad right now. So, I don't think that the size of the potholes are deterring people from driving down it right now. And I don't, us rebuilding the road is not going to stop people from

parking on the street. Which in itself having a clustered, cluttered street, is a traffic calming measure. //calming?// Calming, yes, because if there was no one on the street, then they, you as a driver, would feel that driving is more open, and you could drive faster. So, what I am saying is that they are probably going to drive the same way. Just as a matter of standard statistics, on street parking will reduce traffic //really?// and just one other point that is, it's totally counter intuitive, that I have learned here, it's been awhile, but if you want to reduce street, speed level street, stop sign will work // no // Lanni Klasner advised that Council 8 is challenged with the one way, 1st and 2nd, there's a lot of speeding on one way's. People just cruise down those. So, there's challenges that a one-way will create, and I think you alluded to that. As homeowners its one direction, one-way parking. I am just giving my council on what I hear from other councils that have one-ways in their council area. It is challenging. These one-ways, and they are very narrow streets, but those are not city taken care of, they are MDT. So, I just wanted to make that point, not to get off track, but that I know from others, there is a challenge.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Neighborhood Council 2 Facebook Page
 - Neighborhood Council 2 Facebook Page is active.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

- Miscellaneous reports, announcements, and agenda suggestions from Neighborhood Council 2 members
 - Chair Shyla Patera thanked both Vice Chair Tim Croft for his interview question, which was selected, for the next Great Falls Police Chief, and Secretary Frank Speidel for his building of the Neighborhood Council Facebook Page.
 - Chair Shyla Patera advised that the City is looking for input and ideas from the community for the City crime task force.
 - Chair Shyla Patera advised that the Council always needs input, ideas, suggestions, and events from the community that are happening in our neighborhood so we can broadcast it to our neighbors.
- Council of Councils – May 25th at 7 pm in the Civic Center Gibson Room
 - Chair Shyla Patera will be attending as the Council representative. Neighborhood members are welcome to attend.
- 2021 Municipal Election Filing Apr 22 – Jun 21, 2021
 - Chair Shyla Patera advises that Council 2 needs members. Several members had to retire or leave. It is free to file if any neighbors would like to run for Neighborhood Council.
- New Rec Center Public Hearing Dates:
 - May 18 City Commission Meeting – Public hearing on Conditional Use Permit, administrative amended plan for Park Parcels, and vacation of the right of way.

- Chair Shyla Patera advised that the City Commission starts at 7 pm, and at 5:30 pm is their work session. They will be discussing on how they will be spending the “Cares Act”, or the “ARPA funding”, basically the stimulus funding.

NEXT MEETING AGENDA SUGGESTIONS

- Little Free Library
- Alluvion Health
- Vision Planning

ADJOURNMENT

- Chair Shyla Patera made a motion to adjourn. Secretary Frank Speidel seconded the motion to adjourn at 8:55 pm. The next Neighborhood Council #2 meeting will be at 7:00 pm on June 9th, 2021 in the Great Falls Civic Center Gibson Room.