

MINUTES OF THE CITY OF SUNSET HILLS

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

April 13, 2023

The Sunset Hills Public Works Committee met Thursday, April 13, 2023, at 4:00 PM via Zoom.

Roll Call.

Present: Cathy Friedmann - Chairman – Alderman Ward III,
Ann McMunn – Alderman Ward I,
Casey Wong – Alderman Ward II
Fred Daues – Alderman Ward IV,
Bryson Baker – Director of Public Works/City Engineer,
Wes Searcy – Assistant City Engineer

Also present:

Brittany Gillett – City Administrator

1. Approval of Minutes from March 2, 2023

Motion: Minutes,

Action: Approve,

Moved by Ann McMunn,

Seconded by Fred Daues,

Motion passed unanimously.

2. Citizen Comments (10 Minutes Set Aside for Comments)
(Comments Only – No questions – 2 Minutes Per Citizen)

There were no citizen comments.

3. Kennerly Road/Old Gravois Intersection Study – Alderman Daues

Alderman Daues said he attended a meeting with Winter Brothers and they are planning on a larger office building. He said the concerns were that this project may add more traffic to an already congested area. Alderman Daues explained he was curious of a study through MODOT of the application of a traffic circle at this intersection. Mr. Searcy pointed out that Old Gravois is a No Truck Route that trucks from the industrial area in the valley should not be using. Mr. Baker responded that the concern was more about Rahning

Rd. He said that the mechanism through MODOT is call a TEAP Grant and is applicable in studying an intersection. Mr. Baker explained that one of these studies was performed on Rott at Geyer and the construction cost for that project would not allow it to move forward. Alderman McMunn asked if the specific intersection was Weber Hill at Highway 30. Chairman Friedmann clarified it was Old Gravois at Kennerly. Mr. Baker agreed with chairman Friedmann. Alderman McMunn asked for more details regarding the problem. Alderman Daues said he witnessed the traffic here at 4-6pm and 7-9am on weekdays to be bad. He added that with further development, this area is worthy of improvement. Mr. Searcy asked if the scope of the study could take in the application of a diverging diamond on Highway 30 at I-270. Chairman Friedmann asked about the grant. Mr. Baker responded it is a TEAP grant, which stands for Traffic Engineering Assistance Program. Chairman Friedmann asked if Mr. Searcy's point could be included in the study. Mr. Baker expressed concern that these grants focus on smaller scopes than a diverging diamond level project. Alderman Daues suggested applying for both concepts and seeing what might result. The committee was curious of the Diverging Diamond concept. Mr. Baker showed committee members the application at Dorsett & I-270 on Google Maps. (Further study of diverging diamonds showed that they cannot accommodate side roads like Weber Hill.) Chairman asked for a motion.

Motion: Authorize the City to fund a study,

Action: Approve,

Moved by Fred Daues,

Seconded by ,

Mr. Baker asked if he could get a cost for the application first and bring it back to the Committee for consideration. All in attendance felt this would be appropriate.

4. No Mow April – Alderman McMunn

Alderman McMunn said other municipalities like Webster Groves has a program where residents can allow their lawns to go to see in the month of April for the pollinators. Mr. Baker pointed out the timing of citation, recitation, and eventually referral to Court is longer than the month of April. He added that we only have two residents with this request so in the scheme of things, there's not a problem with our current Code and follow-up toward this concern. There was no further discussion of this matter.

5. Project Updates

- Bass Pro Shops – Mr. Baker said that the right turn lane is open, and we'll see how it works out. He said it seems sufficient, but we'll see if it presents much of a problem if someone tries to use it as an exit. Chairman Friedmann asked when Bass Pro was scheduled to open. Mr. Baker said he believed it would be

the first week of May. He speculated that May 4 or 4 could be a soft opening with May 5th being fully open to the public. Alderman Daues asked if the Chief would be involved with any traffic mitigation for the first couple of weeks. Mr. Baker said he thought the Chief met with Bass Pro a couple of times already and speculated that a plan was assembled. Chairman Friedmann asked for Ms. Gillett's input. Ms. Gillett responded that there was a meeting, but plans are still preliminary. She added that we are waiting to hear more back from Bass Pro so that if a special event permit is required, that one can be expedited to meet the need. Chairman Friedmann asked if the gravel was installed. Mr. Baker responded affirmatively and that it looks good at this point.

- Eddie & Park Sidewalks – Mr. Baker responded that easement documents were received from Heimos, but we were still waiting on same from Balke-Brown. He said that as of last week, the anticipation was that we should have those back anytime from corporate and that they are agreeable to everything. Mr. Baker said he spoke to the School District today since they were looking to contribute \$30,000 to the project. He added that the bid documents are about ready to go, and the project should be good to bid in the month of May. Chairman Friedmann asked when we could expect to have sidewalks. Mr. Baker postulated that this was a 2–3-month project. Alderman Daues said he want to make sure the minutes reflect a recent political campaign statement that Alderman Lieber delayed another sidewalk for this sidewalk that is close to where she lives. He added that the other project was delayed in part due to Covid and the Eddie & Park Project was accelerated, and not by any alderman's effort or directive. Chairman Friedmann agreed with this recollection. Alderman McMunn agreed in that there wasn't as much push toward the Leebur sidewalk project.
- West Watson Road Improvement Project – Phase I & II – Mr. Baker reported Phase I has acquired two of the properties and the third is under agreement awaiting a 2nd reading of the ordinance at next week's Board meeting. He added that we are still working on the 4th property and that should be complete soon. Mr. Baker that plans are also getting finished for bids later this year with construction maybe over the winter, but more likely next spring. Toward Phase II, Mr. Baker said we should have a contract before the general Board this month for GBA who was selected to design this project. He added that once MODOT affirms that award, GBA can get started. Alderman Daues asked when construction will start on Phase II. Mr. Baker responded design this year and next, with property acquisition next year, and targeted construction in 2025.
- Other Construction Projects – there were no other construction updates.

6. Other matters deemed appropriate

Chairman Friedmann asked about the update to the UDO Traffic Study requirements. Mr. Baker detailed that this deals with the level of service petitioners have relative to proposed sites and basically is an elimination of the Service Level D consideration. He said that traffic engineers have told us that this is not used anywhere in the St. Louis area. Mr. Baker said that this is what is determining whether can or cannot approve a project. He added that staff feels it should more align with what is written in the cover page that these matters should be left to the Board's discretion in the consideration of a development based on how much the traffic is impacted. Mr. Baker gave the example of a Service Level E after study comes back a Level E, the matter is automatically rejected. He added that by removing the Level D designation, the Board can still at least look at the proposal based on its merits, verify that it hasn't changed much, and yet if it is a Level E and goes to a Level F, then the Board can deny the proposal based on the traffic analysis. Mr. Baker summarized that staff would like Level D removed to make the process fairer for applicants who may not be able to improve a property based on existing and inherited conditions. Ms. Gillett concurred with Mr. Baker's assessment and added that another consideration is the topic of "safety" and the relative ease of the confusion in the use of that term versus "impact." She added that the way the UDO will hopefully be structured, will allow you to still review matters and apply your subjectivity and thus your discretion if you so choose. Chairman Friedmann asked the zoning of the recent gas station proposal. Mr. Baker responded that was "LC." Chairman Friedmann responded that this wouldn't apply since the section under discussion deals with Planned Development. Mr. Baker responded this was a Planned Development as part of any new commercial developments. Chairman Friedmann said she did not know how that would impact Section A.1.5 as that refers to residential. She commented that residents are more concerned with not having traffic in residential areas and convenience. Chairman Friedmann commented that there is a difference between A.1.5 and 7.5 for commercial or planned development. She added that she was not aware that all future commercial development is now planned development. Mr. Baker specified that any redevelopment or any new development will be considered a planned development. Alderman Daves clarified that in the example of the Lindbergh/Gravois gas station, since the site is being completely demoed, it is a new project and thus a planned development. Alderman Wong echoed Chairman Friedmann's comments saying that this was not just safety but also (LOS) Level of Service, not Level of Safety. He commented that congestion itself is a level of priority to MODOT, our residents, or anybody that travels the area, and that removal of this section is a slippery, bad slope. Alderman Wong stated that if we ever exercised such discretion, the City would subsequently invite a lawsuit. He added that expecting untrained elected officials render conclusions relative to traffic impact is a bad idea. Alderman Daves stated that he does not understand how other jurisdictions seem to make this work and we can't. He cited two examples and expressed frustration over a Code that simply fails a similar but improved use of the property. Alderman Wong asked if more pumps were proposed on the new gas station. Ms. Gillett stated that it was important to consider that this would be a City-wide imposition. She said it has come up more than once and research of other jurisdictional

code has not yielded a better answer. Ms. Gillett wanted to make sure that the perception wasn't that we were trying to do something for a particular instance, but rather something more along the lines of code that will be good for the entire City. Alderman Daves commented that retroactivity of this code would not be good and commented that it was difficult enough to do business in the City of Sunset Hills citing the infrequency of meetings, dragging project timelines out and calling the process illogical. Alderman McMunn asked if not calling out a specific level of service, could we not say the project will not decrease the level of service and allow discretion of the Board. Mr. Baker responded that it is difficult to place this down into black & white definitive language. Chairman Friedmann asked if we could simply state that it will not degrade the level of service. Ms. Gillett responded that was discussed and the comment was that if the existing level was barely hanging on to a particular level, then that wouldn't be fair when compared to those that rate higher within and thus stay in that level. Alderman McMunn asked if we could simply set a minimum level. Mr. Baker responded that was where we were now and that anything below a "D," fails. He added we have existing properties rating an "E" and they can't be approved because they are already at a "E," thus allowing no improvement of the property. Mr. Baker said that was why we are just wanting to eliminate the "D" category. He explained that the levels of service are simply time frames based on mere seconds of time. Mr. Baker said he was hoping to see where everyone was on this topic and there seems to be a plethora of opinion. Alderman Daves commented that he felt the Board should be able to make these kinds of decisions. Alderman Wong suggested that if we go with this recommendation, then we should simply remove the traffic study requirement altogether. He added that maybe a certain percentage in delay times should become the trigger so that many of the items discussed earlier could be fairly addressed. Alderman Wong said he understood wanting to be fair, but degrading traffic with development is not a good thing, nor is leaving such matters to the discretion of elected officials. Alderman Daves suggested that the tact as laid out by Alderman Wong, would require a lighter use of proposed any forthcoming new development. Alderman Wong responded that if you take the current level of service and compare it to the LOS with the new use, if same, it passes, but if materially worse in an objectively quantifiable percentage, then no, it is rejected. Alderman Daves said he understands Alderman Wong's point, but practicalities will keep him from agreeing with him. He added that a Board, counseled by staff, seem to be getting this right in other jurisdictions in the St. Louis area. Ms. Gillett said this will be on for full discussion at the Board level, but that we wanted to get a discussion at this level first.

Alderman Wong asked about the MODOT resurfacing and sidewalks along S. Lindbergh project. Mr. Baker said that project was bid out last fall. He said they got one bid, and it was way over budget. Mr. Baker said it was re-bid and they are working through the approval process and a pre-construction meeting that should happen in a few weeks. He commented that it should be a year and a half long project.

Alderman McMunn asked if we looked at other city code relative to traffic study verbiage. Mr. Baker responded that it was more just discussions with traffic engineers. He added that it was more along the lines of their Board's discretion. Alderman McMunn suggested

looking at Crestwood, Fenton, and Kirkwood to see what they have codified. Alderman Daues agreed.

7. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn at 5:00pm,

Action: Approve,

Moved by Alderman McMunn,

Seconded by Alderman Daues,

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully,



Bryson E. Baker, PE

City Engineer / Director of Public Works

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