

**City of West St. Paul
Open Council Work Session Minutes
February 24, 2020**

1. Roll Call

Mayor Napier called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Dave Napier
Councilmembers Wendy Berry, Lisa Eng-Sarne,
John Justen, Bob Pace and Dick Vitelli

Absent: Councilmember Anthony Fernandez (excused)

Also Present: City Manager Ryan Schroeder
City Attorney Kori Land
Lt. Matt Swenke
Finance Director Char Stark
Parks & Public Works Director/City Engineer Ross Beckwith
Community Development Director Jim Hartshorn
City Clerk Shirley Buecksler

Luke Moren, Engineer - Kimley-Horn
Brady Busselman, Practice Leader, Commercial – Sambatek
Ben Schultes, Vice President – Jerry’s Enterprises, Inc.

2. Review and Approve the OCWS Agenda

Motion was made by Councilmember Eng-Sarne and seconded by Councilmember Justen to approve the OCWS agenda, as presented.

All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

3. Review the Regular Meeting Consent Agenda

The resolution to establish West St. Paul as a Bird City, USA, will be removed from the Consent Agenda to be introduced and approved with all other items on the Consent Agenda.

4. Agenda Item(s)

A. Thompson/Oakdale Trail Feasibility Study Update

At the January 13, 2020 City Council meeting, the City accepted a \$30,000 Local Communities Grant from Dakota County. This grant was to fund a bicycle and pedestrian feasibility report along Thompson Avenue (Robert Street to Trunk Hwy

52) and Oakdale Avenue (Wentworth Avenue to Butler Avenue). The City hired the engineering firm Kimley-Horn to prepare the feasibility report. Dakota County staff have been involved, as well, since these are both county roads.

City staff recently met with St. Croix Lutheran High School and the Living Longer Stronger group to discuss the study and listen to their bike and pedestrian concerns along these corridors. The Park and Recreation Committee also had a discussion about the different options. A public Open House is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on March 5 at the St. George Orthodox Church, which is along the corridor. Feedback from all of these meetings will be used to help guide the feasibility report. The completion of the feasibility report will provide facility recommendations and costs estimates needed for grant applications.

Project costs will be dependent on the facilities that are ultimately recommended. Two big costs will be right-of-way and retaining walls, which will vary based on each option. Staff is planning to submit for the upcoming Metropolitan Council Regional Solicitation grant this spring which, if successful, would pay for a percentage of the construction costs. Since both of these corridors are on county roads, Dakota County would also be a funding partner.

City Engineer Beckwith introduced Luke Moren, Engineer with Kimley-Horn, who passed out designs with views of different options. One of Thompson Avenue and two of the Oakdale corridor.

Mr. Moren provided the attached presentation for Council. He said they have come up with a recommended option for the Thompson Avenue roadway corridor. A multi-use on the south side of the trail and a sidewalk on the north stretch. The south side of Thompson Avenue has a couple of development projects going on. As part of that redevelopment, they would be required to build that trail, as part of the project. We already have the fiscal advantage of those two developments building the trail for the City, as well as the City owns right-of-way within the golf course.

Beckwith said the County would like to see a trail on one side and a sidewalk on the other.

Mayor Napier said we have an idea of what to expect with the County, having just gone through the construction of Wentworth Avenue. They wanted the exact same thing.

Mr. Moren said the County is in support of this recommendation on Thompson Avenue.

Councilmember Pace said we are supposed to get a roundabout at Thompson and Oakdale, and the County wants the City to take Thompson Avenue back. Is there any bearing on this? Beckwith said this is one piece of the puzzle. It is 2024 construction dollars.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if there is a trail on the other side of Highway 52 on Thompson. Councilmember Pace said there are sidewalks on Wentworth and both sides of Thompson. Councilmember Vitelli said we definitely need it.

Councilmember Justen said he used to run a business in the area and the majority of foot traffic is on the south side because of the bus stop on the corner, so this makes sense.

As the golf course property begins to develop, Mr. Moren said it's a destination and will be convenient for them.

Mr. Moren said Oakdale is a little less clear. It's not as obvious of a recommended pedestrian and bike facility. Option A includes a multi-use trail, east side from Wentworth to Butler, additional sidewalk could be added to the west side. Option B has bike lanes with sidewalk utilizing the existing shoulders on each side of Oakdale Avenue to provide the pedestrian facility, a sidewalk could be constructed on the west side of Oakdale. The school said they would fund a portion of the trail on their property.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if there are 10 foot parking lanes on both sides and if it's even feasible to move the center line to the west and use some of the existing area, separated with a curb. Mr. Moren said we could shift lanes and open up some of that right-of-way with retaining walls. We will continue to look at it with the study but want to look first at the bike lanes and trails. There is some cost analysis.

Councilmember Pace said he lives on that street and bikes on it. In front of his house there is the stripe on both sides. You can walk or bike all the way to Thompson. It's dangerous with cars parked and you have to veer into traffic. Going on the east side, the river to river trail is at Emerson and then goes down to Thompson and crosses at the new development at the golf course. It's important to keep that river to river trail continuity there. He said he would not be in favor of anything on the street because bikes and pedestrians need to be off road. Or make it no parking but the residents wouldn't be happy.

Councilmember Justen said he would only be in favor of off street trail, unless the cost was insanely prohibitive.

Councilmember Berry said this was discussed at the Park and Recreation Committee meeting. If we want to get people out and walking, moms won't take strollers on the bike trail.

Councilmember Pace said St. Croix Lutheran voiced their concern for students crossing at Moreland. If this gets constructed it would be cool to have crosswalk painting or a sign.

Mr. Moren said we received feedback that students are using Moreland or walking up to Butler. We would recommend enhanced crossing or bumping in the western curblineline to make that a safe place or channelize people to cross there.

Mayor Napier said with students living there, a lot of them cross Robert Street.

Beckwith said we can look at bump outs or enhanced crosswalks.

Mayor Napier said it will be a huge challenge with easements and right-of-ways. Not every resident wants one going across their yard. It can enhance or degrade the property. Mayor Napier said he appreciates that we have this study done and can look at the feasibility of it.

Councilmember Justen asked about mature trees where the property trail is on the drawing. This is a big objection for residents who have mature trees. Mr. Moren said it's more of an issue on Thompson. They will need to look at this in detail, he said.

For Option B, Mr. Moren said it will be more cost effective to put in bike lanes versus a trail. Bikers do use the shoulders now to access the bike lanes at Annapolis and into St. Paul. He questioned if bike lanes from Wentworth to Butler should continue to Annapolis.

Mr. Moren said those are the two options we're looking at now. We met with the Park and Recreation Committee. Generally, they are in support of anything for either of these corridors. On Thompson, they agreed and liked the idea of either option of trail or bike lanes and the sidewalk on the west side. There were some differing opinions for the off street trail versus the bike lanes, but we didn't get a consensus. The suggestion was to bring it to the March 5 Open House for feedback.

Councilmember Vitelli said if you eliminate parking on one side and raise the bike lane with a curb, he assumes that would eliminate all the walls. A protected bike lane. Can bikes travel in opposite directions on the same trail? Mr. Moren said if we were to move the curb line in and the trail in, there could be bikes traveling in both directions and parking on the west side. This is probably a cost factor to look at, and the County will need to buy into it.

Councilmember Vitelli said looking for trail on the east side, not striping it, would actually raise it up as a trail. Councilmember Berry said Minneapolis stripes and has pylons. Mr. Moren said that is a protected bike lane but there's not width to take one of the shoulders and make a two way bike lane. Per State aid standards, 10 feet isn't enough to convert to a two way bike lane.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne asked if we are going to be coming back with additional comparison of numbers or if this is to determine one path. Beckwith said we will be back at the end of March with information from the Open House and preliminary numbers at that point.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne said, generally, she would support trail off the street but is also trying to remember back to October and November when this was a hotter topic. This is a directive we can do well, she said.

Councilmember Vitelli asked what timeframe they're looking for. Beckwith said it will be 2024 construction.

Councilmember Vitelli asked City Manager Schroeder about funding. Schroeder said it will be interesting to see how his cost estimate matches what they come back with. The County is looking at a different cost sharing formula that would be to our benefit. They are looking for some changes. The Council has provided direction through the CIP; this would take a few years of that.

Councilmember Justen asked if Thompson would be far less costly. Mr. Moren said that is correct. Schroeder said we have abatement funds allocated towards the south side of that. Councilmember Justen added that, as we have things going in there, it would be nice to get the trail going and that Hy-Vee would appreciate us moving quickly.

Mayor Napier thanked Mr. Moren for the presentation.

B. Cub Foods Outlot Proposal Review

Community Development Director Hartshorn introduced Brady Busselman of Sambatek and Ben Schultes, Vice President of Jerry's Enterprises.

Hartshorn said on August 23rd, 2010, City Council approved multiple applications for the development of several out lots at the 10 Acres Shopping Center (2001 – 2069 Robert Street).

Due to the extended period of time that has passed since the initial approvals were made and the fact that drive-throughs are no longer allowed in the front yard, Staff decided to bring two options forward to the City Council for discussion and recommendation:

Option A – Proposed out lot, similar to initial approval with a drive-through abutting Robert Street.

Option B – Proposed out lot, with the building up to the road with the drive-through in the side yard.

Staff has reviewed and discussed both options with the applicant, and the applicant has stated that Option A is more desirable, as the design allows for the stacking of more cars in the drive-through.

Hartshorn presented an older drawing from 10 years ago with two drive-throughs approved as Option A. He also provided a drawing that includes Starbucks to the north (needs a drive-through), Xfinity and another tenant. If we put the drive-through 25 feet from the roadway with shrubbery to block it, Starbucks liked this option a lot.

Option B shows a horseshoe. The problem is the stacking. There is minimal stacking and Starbucks would not approve of this option.

For tonight, Hartshorn said we are looking for direction on which option to pursue. If they move the buildings to the west, we will lose a row or two of parking. We also talked in the past about easing up on some of our shopping center district parking.

Mayor Napier asked if this is considered from the Cub driveway or how much frontage it takes up.

Mr. Schultes said the Chase building on Option B is to the south. It would abut to Outlot A on Mendota and South Robert Street. The top of the drawing shows a walkway from the grocery store building all the way to Robert Street. The main entrance is coming in from Robert. Going north, it's the only way to get access to this property.

Mr. Schultes said we have tried to jump start it over the past couple of years and largely went off the old plan, not knowing that it would need to be revised substantially. We are here to air it out a little bit and see what Council thinks of supporting the previously approved plan, which would be our preference.

Councilmember Vitelli asked about Option A, if it would be immediately south of the entrance into the center of the property that goes right up to the Cub store. The entrance is north farther, Mr. Schultes said.

Mayor Napier asked if Outlot A is owned by the City. Hartshorn said yes.

Councilmember Pace said he is personally in favor of Option A and said he doesn't know why we would restrict development. We have all been waiting for something to happen there.

Councilmember Justen said the building we see in Option A is in fact taking up a similar amount of room as the building in Option B. In the drawings, they appear to be different sizes and asked if they are relatively similar. Mr. Busselman said that's correct, it's just the scaling. We started with Option A and thought the 6,000 feet is what fit there. Option B was only designed to get the horseshoe and squeeze in as much building as we could. Councilmember Justen said they would lose about 300 square feet because of the horseshoe.

Councilmember Berry asked if the drive-through goes around the building in Option A. Mr. Schultes said yes, they could queue cars around the building. Mr. Busselman

said we counted from the ordering window to the end is eight cars. Mr. Schultes said Option B would be four cars. They would have to come in and order and make the curve, but there is only room for four cars before interfering with traffic.

Councilmember Vitelli said, adding up the footage on the horseshoe, you're at 191 feet. At 25 feet per car, you would still have 9 ½ cars in the horseshoe. Mr. Busselman said the key is the cars stacked behind the order board because that's where the first car stops. That's where there is a delta of four vehicles. Even though you're still providing some storage, it's not the volume Starbucks would desire.

Councilmember Berry said she likes Option A. Mayor Napier agreed.

Mayor Napier asked if they have any restaurants in the queue. Mr. Schultes said there is nothing scheduled for restaurants right now. There is one vacant or uncommitted bay on the south side at this time. The next most logical place to go is along Mendota on the south side and where we will start working on next.

Councilmember Justen asked if the concern with Option A, from the City's perspective, was just the visibility of the drive-through. Is there room enough for notable screening? Hartshorn said that's why we are pushing the buildings 20 feet into the shopping area so we have the room to do that.

Mr. Busselman said, with Option A, there is 15 1/2 feet from the property line to the curb. The sidewalk is all in the right-of-way.

Councilmember Vitelli said he has no problem giving up parking in the parking lot.

Mr. Busselman said we haven't done a parking study but thinks there is plenty of parking available.

Mayor Napier said we are excited for it and hoping it gets the rest of it going, also. Maybe we can partner with our gateway sign at that time.

Councilmember Pace asked about their timeframe. Mr. Busselman said when we initially met with Staff last fall, the message was that this was in line with the approved planned development from 2010 and was, therefore, a process that could go straight to building permit. But that changed and would impact our timeline. Starbucks is already ready to go. If we cannot go straight to building permit, it would be an issue and could push it to 2021.

City Attorney Land said the Chase building eliminates the drive-through and moves things around. There are no drive-through lanes on Option B, and it changes the dimensions of everything that we felt it was a significant enough amendment to their approved Site Plan, that it would need Planning and Council. However, this would only take two months. Because of the Chase building addition, it would include both of those parcels. If the dimensions are the same as what was approved, that would be

find, but she said she assumes they want the Chase building at the same time, which is a difference.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if the plan approved 10 years ago would only be with a drive-through. Attorney Land said yes, because that is what was approved. Both buildings had drive-throughs.

Councilmember Berry said Option A is just one building with one drive-through and asked why we cannot go with that one. Attorney Land said they can if they want to pull a building permit on that building. The problem is the Chase building.

Councilmember Justen said the Chase building is also in Option A, just not in the drawing. Attorney Land said that is the issue – the drawing changed.

Mr. Busselman said on the original Site Plan there was a drive-through that came all the way around, but Chase now wants an ATM.

Councilmember Vitelli said that's all an improvement. Attorney Land said if you look at what was approved, this is a different plan. The Planning Commission approved a Site Plan with specific dimensions and specific buildings with drive-throughs.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if the Chase building fits the dimensions of where it would be with a drive-through around it. Attorney Land said she does not know. Councilmember Vitelli said if it does and the building is within the dimensions of where it would have been with a drive-through, we wouldn't need to go to the Planning Commission again.

Attorney Land said we can take a look at what's being proposed. If it's doing the math and dimensions and the proposed building for Starbucks – if it's close enough, we can say that.

Mayor Napier said he would still like the Planning Commission to look it over, review it and move things along as fast as we can. They could even call a special meeting.

Councilmember Pace said he approves 100% and would like to move it along quickly.

Attorney Land said we could have it on the March 17 Planning Commission agenda and the following Council agenda.

Mr. Busselman said they will move forward with the north building, Starbucks and a building permit, and will discuss Chase at a Planning Commission meeting.

Mayor Napier agreed and thanked them for coming.

5. Adjourn

Motion was made by Councilmember Eng-Sarne and seconded by Councilmember Justen to adjourn the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

David J. Napier
Mayor
City of West St. Paul