

Streets and Alleys Committee
September 12, 2016

Present: Committee Members Fleck and Larmore, Buxton; Council Members Clausen, LeJeune, Scott, and Sovinski; Mayor Hazel; Auditor Strawn; Law Director Moore; Safety-Service Director Hitchcock; Bill Kincaid, The Daily Standard.

Committee Chairman Fleck called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm for discussion of the City sidewalk program.

Mayor Hazel reported a goal is to decide what the homeowner is responsible for. Sidewalks are required by the City. As it is, the builder needs to install sidewalks for a new development. The initial installation of a curb and gutter should be assessed to the property owners. The repair of the curb and gutter should fall on the City, unless a property owner damages it or cuts it for repair of utility lines to their residence.

CM LeJeune stated sidewalks should be addressed as emergent and non-emergent in all four wards. After the emergent areas are addressed, the non-emergent areas should then be addressed.

CM Scott stated sidewalks are included in the additional ½% and the City needs to be careful what percentage split is established.

CM Sovinski stated the last year the sidewalk program was conducted was in 2006. In the past 70 to 100 property owners were required to do sidewalk repair. Usually only 20 properties had the City make the repairs because it was cheaper for them to hire their own contractor. If a larger discount is offered, more property owners will have the City make the repairs. More money would then need to be budgeted. He believes the reason the sidewalk program was ended is because the bottom line numbers looked high and it was decided the City did not have enough money to fund it.

CM LeJeune stated the City's challenge is that a homeowner would see the City replacing sidewalks on a street project and be assessed for their own sidewalk that needs repaired. Mayor Hazel suggested an incentive be made for property owners to pay off their portion without adding it to their taxes. Law Director Moore stated he will look into the legality of an incentive.

CM Larmore suggested the five year assessment time should be shortened. CM Sovinski stated in the past, some residents paid it to the City to avoid it being added to their taxes.

CM Clausen suggested a better discount be offered to property owners that have more repairs to be made.

CM Sovinski stated if too much of an incentive is added, more residents will not replace sections of their bad walks waiting for the City to conduct the sidewalk program.

CM Larmore suggested a 95/5 split with a 3 year assessment. CM Scott stated he believes 95/5 is too high, would prefer 75/25. CM Larmore suggested Administration run some numbers and come back to Council with recommendations.

CM Sovinski stated he understands why the sidewalk program was halted, but with the available funding now, the sidewalk program definitely needs to be started up again.

CM LeJeune suggested during the term of the ½% he likes CM Scott's idea of the 75/25 percentage split. For a homeowner in an older home with more bad panels, the City needs to contemplate how to address their repairs to not put a burden on them.

Administration will bring a draft update of the sidewalk program back to the Committee for further discussion.

Chairman Fleck adjourned the meeting at 6:51 pm.

Submitted by Joan S. Wurster, Clerk of Council