

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of Public Meeting
March 22, 2005*

Village of Downers Grove
801 Burlington Avenue
Committee Room

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Commissioner Marilyn Schnell

STAFF: David H. Barber, P.E., Director of Public Works
Mike Millette, P.E., Assistant Director of Public Works – Engineering
Stan Balicki, Assistant Director of Public Works – Operations

VISITORS: Robert Schiller, C.M. Lavoie & Associates

Commissioner Schnell called the Public Services Committee meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

OLD BUSINESS

Procurement of Professional Engineering Services – Mr. Barber began by stating that staff provided the background on this item at the March 15, 2005 Public Services Committee meeting. Mr. Chris Lavoie was ready to speak but ran out of time as the Village Council meeting was going to begin. Commissioner Schnell commented that a decision was made to have a special Public Services meeting tonight, as there is a need to get the Stormwater Master Plan project moving. Mr. Schiller said that he is present at the meeting as a messenger, further saying that Mr. Lavoie prepared a letter for him to deliver to the Committee. Commissioner Schnell asked if Mr. Schiller would like to read the letter and Mr. Schiller replied that he would prefer to distribute copies. He stated that Mr. Lavoie asked that the letter be placed on the public record and included with the minutes of the meeting.

Mr. Barber commented that the letter from Mr. Lavoie is a series of questions. Mr. Schiller stated that he does not expect answers tonight, but that Mr. Lavoie asked for a response via letter or e-mail and wanted to make sure that his questions were on the record. Commissioner Schnell added that the intent of last week's Public Services Committee meeting was to clarify what staff did, how and why it was done with respect to the Stormwater Master Plan. Mr. Barber said that the procurement process staff followed is not unique, though Commissioner Schnell noted that it is unique to this kind of service. Mr. Barber replied that it is not unique to the Village and that it is similar to what has been done previously, though the Village has not completed a lot of larger master plan type projects.

Commissioner Schnell stated that she asked last week who ensures that the Village has current statements of qualification (SOQ), and that it is the responsibility of the engineering firms. Mr. Barber added that staff typically gets updates in the mail. For example, a new firm in town stopped in and provided a brochure recently. Staff tries to keep as much as possible in the file. Mr. Barber stated that some known firms are better for bigger things and some are better for smaller things. In some cases staff does not want to waste time for a big firm to provide proposals on small projects. Mr. Barber said that Public Works wants a SOQ from C.M. Lavoie & Associates. He further stated that the only similar document on file for C.M. Lavoie was given to Joe Skatch and Kathy Desmarteau when the Village started the parking deck which amounts to a two or three sheet

qualification statement for doing the site survey work. Mr. Barber said that staff wants the procurement process to be as open as possible but also don't want to waste people's time putting proposals together for work that is outside of a firm's expertise. He noted that this is not a reflection on any one firm and that proposals cost money to submit. Mr. Barber said that staff does not want to exclude people and that was not the intent in any way in this process.

Commissioner Schnell stated that last week's discussion was that staff attempted to make this an open process. Commissioner Schnell commented that she still doesn't know whether or not C.M. Lavoie & Associates can do a project such as the Stormwater Master Plan as their SOQ is not on file. She added that if C.M. Lavoie did have the expertise staff was not aware of it as they began the procurement process. Commissioner Schnell said that in her opinion staff did not purposely exclude C.M. Lavoie. Commissioner Schnell asked for verification about whether there are other jobs where C.M. Lavoie's experience is appropriate. Mr. Millette replied that staff has solicited proposals from C.M. Lavoie & Associates with an example being some engineering work related to the Gilbert Avenue sidewalk project. Commissioner Schnell emphasized that if there are capabilities that C.M. Lavoie has as a firm then Mr. Lavoie needs to get this information to staff to make sure they know.

Mr. Barber commented that staff does try to use local engineering firms when possible, stating that there are several in Downers Grove such as C.M. Lavoie & Associates, Loftus, Intech and as of April, Burns & McDonnell. He reiterated that he would like C.M. Lavoie's SOQ on file, and that he will get a response to Mr. Lavoie's letter completed by Friday, March 25. Commissioner Schnell said that engineering firms need to provide staff with up to date information on their scope of services, qualifications and capabilities to avoid miscommunication. This is especially true with local firms as the Village tries to keep work local if possible.

In reviewing C.M. Lavoie's information with respect to their qualifications for the site survey work at the parking deck, Mr. Barber commented that he noticed the firm consisted of 10-12 staff that are not all engineers. He stated that the biggest stormwater project mentioned was the design of a retention facility for a subdivision in Naperville. If C.M. Lavoie's qualifications are better than this then staff needs to see it. That was the last piece of information staff had on file on the company's qualifications. This is not a reflection on the quality of any firm, as each firm tends to be better than others in certain areas. Mr. Barber commented that this is the nature of the business and that some firms are better in transportation, water or structural engineering. This is not a reflection on any firm not being capable of doing good work.

Commissioner Schnell stated that she will bring the results of this discussion to the Village's Council's attention this evening as there is still a need to know where to go from here. Mr. Barber replied that staff stands by their recommendation. Commissioner Schnell replied that it is likely the Village Council will wait to make a decision until after they see staff's response to Mr. Lavoie's letter. The Village Council needs to decide what to do at that point. Mr. Millette asked if staff has answered the Committee's questions on the solicitation and negotiation process and Commissioner Schnell replied that the questions have been adequately answered.

Commissioner Schnell asked if there are ways this process could be improved in the future. Mr. Barber replied that if it seems more appropriate to always include local firms in a solicitation regardless of qualifications this could be done if the Village Council so directs. However, Mr. Barber noted that it is his responsibility to make a professional recommendation for the best job for the Village at a reasonable cost. Commissioner Schnell closed discussion on this item stating that staff should go into some more detail in Council reports on the procurement process to make these go easier in the future.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Schnell asked what criteria exist for working around trees as part of new sidewalk construction, further asking if the Village provides handouts as to what residents should expect. Commissioner Schnell would like staff to better communicate objectives, limitations and expectations with regard to trees and new sidewalk construction.

Mr. Barber replied that staff does send a letter to all affected residents, but that it might be possible to include some additional information such as drawings. Mr. Barber added that staff has started using an open house meeting format which has improved communication over the traditional public meeting format to address individual resident questions and concerns.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
(as transcribed from tape)

/s/ Stan Balicki
Stan Balicki, Recording Secretary