

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of Public Meeting
September 20, 2005*

Village of Downers Grove
801 Burlington Avenue
Committee Room

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Commissioner Marilyn Schnell
Commissioner William Waldack

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: James Speta, 6813 Valley View Dr.
Gordon Goodman, 5834 Middaugh Ave.
Christine Fregeau, 1918 Elmore Ave.

Commissioner Schnell called the Public Services Committee meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

August 16, 2005 Minutes – were approved, as presented, on motion by Commissioner Waldack, seconded by Commissioner Schnell. Motion passed by voice vote of 2-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Gilbert Avenue Sidewalk – Mr. Barber began by explaining the status of land conveyance issues with the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. He noted that the Forest Preserve District has a policy of not giving up any land without compensation. However, Mr. Barber commented that this policy has been waived on one or two occasions. The Forest Preserve's actions are consistent with their policy. In this case, Mr. Barber said he believes that the Village needs to make the argument that the road was intended to be the Village's a long time ago but the paperwork was never completed. He does not want to hold up the sidewalk project to deal with the land conveyance issue.

Commissioner Schnell asked how large the easement needs to be and Mr. Millette replied that it is about eight feet wide.

Commissioner Schnell asked where the Village stands with the Downers Grove Park District on this project and Mr. Barber replied that discussions have taken place and field meetings have been held. Mr. Barber added that staff formally transmitted a letter on the project to the Park District today. Further, Mr. Barber said that one concern mentioned by Mr. Cermak, Park District Administrator, was the potential future impact on the sidewalk if the baseball diamond is ever moved. Commissioner Schnell asked if the Village needs the Park District's approval for this project and Mr. Barber replied that was correct. Commissioner Schnell asked if the Village needs to approach the Park Board on this issue and Mr. Millette replied that staff does not know yet. Commissioner Schnell inquired as to whether this would hold up the project and Mr. Barber replied that it should not.

Mr. Barber stated that the Village has already taken bids on this project and that the apparent low bid is approximately \$215,000. Mr. Barber added that this is a huge improvement over the original

design and cost estimate of \$750,000. He stated that Mr. Millette had a great idea on this project and Commissioner Schnell agreed.

NEW BUSINESS

Village Bikeway Plan – Mr. Barber began by commenting that staff wanted to give the Committee an update on the status of the bikeway plan implementation as it has been some time since this was done. Mr. Millette referenced the bikeway plan map on display at the meeting saying that it is the result of the document approved in 2000 by the Village Council. The plan is also incorporated by reference into the DuPage County plan.

Mr. Millette described that the planned facilities are about 75% on-street and 25% off-street. He noted that some of the off-street facilities are expected to use utility easements or undeveloped Village right-of-way. Mr. Millette explained that on-street facilities will be similar to what now exists on Dunham Road north of Lemont Road. He stated that so far three applications for federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding for engineering and construction have been submitted and approved. These grant applications include work for the Central Corridor, Eastern Corridor and various bikeway connections. Mr. Millette noted that the first application was submitted more than three years ago and that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) took 14 months to review and approve Village engineering contract for this project. Mr. Balicki added that IDOT reviews the consultant's contract as federal funds are being used for design as well as construction.

Mr. Millette explained that staff is expecting a reviewable set of contract plans and specifications from the engineer next month with construction planned to take place in spring 2006. The Eastern Corridor will require new traffic signals on Fairmount Avenue at 63rd Street and 55th Street with requests for proposals for engineering on this project to go out this fall.

Mr. Balicki commented that while the Village's approach to relying on grant funds is leveraging Village funding, it has also extended timelines for implementation. The CMAQ grant application review process usually takes nine months and 14 month contract reviews by IDOT extend this time frame to years. Commissioner Schnell added that the problem in this case isn't the Village's commitment to implementing the plan, it is financial.

Mr. Speta stated that he believes there is too much studying and not enough doing in this case. He stated that this started in 1994 with the Total Community Development II (TCD II) project and he believes excuses that things take too long are being made. Mr. Speta asked if the Village is allowing others to hold this up. Commissioner Schnell replied that the TCD II project involved big picture thinking and also generated the Alternate Transportation Subcommittee of which Commissioner Waldack was involved. This Subcommittee recommended the development of a Village wide bikeway plan which began to take shape in 1998.

Commissioner Waldack commented that bike enthusiasts were present at these meetings but that the Village lost opportunities on Fairview Avenue and the Nicor easement because neighboring residents were opposed to the projects.

Mr. Speta commented that people elect representatives like the Village Council to do what is best for the entire community and that Downers Grove has allowed any small group to come and shout and stop projects. He further said that people in his neighborhood were originally opposed to McCollum Park and the water tower but now they are viewed as assets that have increased property values. Bike paths give a sense of community and also show that cyclists are a priority in Downers Grove.

Commissioner Schnell replied that the Village has made steady progress but these projects represent a lot of money. The Village has pursued grant funding but there is also a limited amount of funds available. Staff has worked with the confines of the grants. Commissioner Waldack added that the Village has lost some opportunities but that it is also a matter of money.

Mr. Speta replied that this is important and that the Village needs to create opportunities for people to exercise.

Mr. Goodman commented that he is pleased to hear this is moving forward again. He added that he sees a large amount of joint projects.

Commissioner Schnell wanted to confirm that the timeline for implementation involves building the Year 1 project in 2006, and Year 2 and 3 in 2007. Further, Commissioner Schnell wanted to confirm that staff will apply for future year projects in the next CMAQ cycle such that the Year 4 project will be done in 2008 and Year 5 in 2009.

Mr. Balicki added that the joint projects are a separate entity. There are many more issues identified with joint projects such as land acquisition, joint funding applications or technical challenges. One example is the planned path through the ComEd right-of-way to Hidden Lake Forest Preserve.

Mr. Goodman stated that another example would be around Lyman Woods. He described the joint project as a can of worms since they are the least simple. Mr. Goodman believes that the Village needs to begin chipping away at these as they will not solve themselves.

Mr. Speta asked if the planned bikeways connect to neighboring communities and Mr. Balicki replied that was correct.

Ms. Fregeau said that the good news is that grant funding is out there for these types of projects.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
(as transcribed from tape)

/s/ Stan Balicki
Stan Balicki, Recording Secretary