

**PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES
5500 SCHOFIELD AVENUE
WESTON, WI 54476
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2007 – 6:00 P.M.**

SIDEWALK WORKSHOP

Village Administrator, Dean Zuleger opened up the workshop at about 6:00 p.m. Plan Commission members present were Mike Stenstrom, Keith Donner, Mary Hancock, and John Evans. Board Trustees were Vilas Machmueller, Sharon Jaeger, Fred Schuster, Loren White, and Barbara Ermeling. Park & Recreation Committee member Arthur Corallo was present. Community Development Director, Jennifer Higgins, Park Superintendent, Shawn Osterbrink, and Recording Secretary, Valerie Parker were present. There were about 30 residents in attendance.

Zuleger explained the purpose of this meeting is to discuss future sidewalks and pathways in the Village. He pointed out that there will not be any decisions made, that this meeting is an open forum. Zuleger then presented a slideshow (available for public viewing on the Village of Weston website: www.westonwisconsin.org) on "Creating a Walk-able Community", which was a look at the Village of Weston's sidewalks, bike paths, and neighborhood linking systems. He explained that the Village has received petitions and requests from residents on having more sidewalks. He stated that we are looking for the public's input tonight on their thoughts and opinions.

The following are some of the comments that came from residents who attended the meeting:

Most had concerns on Ross Avenue. They explained that people walk, run, bike, etc., on the road on Ross Avenue, which makes for dangerous situations because traffic flows too fast on Ross Avenue. They feel that Ross Avenue is wide enough that we should be able to make a separate pedestrian or biking lane to help keep people off the roadway. Some of the residents questioned if we could at least reduce the speed limit on Ross Avenue to slow the traffic down. Weston Elementary School Principal, Fritz Lehrke, stated that he gets calls from parents on their kids walking there along Ross Avenue all the time. People tell Lehrke that there is no safe way to get to school.

Zuleger questioned the audience if the Village were to pay for the sidewalks, would they be in support of the sidewalks. A few people were not in support. Some residents would be okay if the previously assessed people were to get some kind of reimbursement. One resident has an issue with the fact most bicycles do not use the sidewalks. He feels the bikes should be on the sidewalks also. One resident, who is a walker, feels sidewalks would allow people to get to the industrial park and serve as an alternative to driving, with the current high cost of gasoline prices. One resident suggested to have a painted area for bikes, and then put a sidewalk in for pedestrians.

One resident commented that new developments should be required to put sidewalks in, she then questioned if we could then have developers of established subdivisions pay impact fees to be used towards more sidewalks, since they are the cause for all the people living in those areas.

Corallo commented that he and his wife bike all the time, but his wife will not ride on Ross Avenue or Camp Phillips Road because of how dangerous they are with no sidewalks. He agrees with having a multi-use path on one side. Hooshang Zeyghami explained the reason Ross Avenue is so wide is because it was built to support two driving lanes and two parking lanes.

One resident stated that his property was just re-assessed and he does not want to pay more when his taxes have already gone up so much. Zuleger stated we are not planning to put sidewalks in everywhere. He stated that for the future, we are looking to have developers put more sidewalks in. He stated that we are looking at ways to safely connect people from their homes to the schools, parks, bus routes, etc.

A resident who lives on Sandy Lane commented that people are speeding all the time, and if the speed limit was enforced we would not need sidewalks. Zuleger stated that we are doing the "red zone" for these areas. Richard Waack stated that if you watch the speed zone sign, it is always flashing at speeders. Lehrke pointed out that when he calls the EMPD, they respond there right away. He said it is the second the police leave that the speed is up again. A majority of the people are concerned with speed. One resident stated that it should be stressed to students in the schools what side of the road they should walk on. Stenstrom questioned the audience who at this meeting are walkers, which most people raised their hands. One resident stated people need to be educated to respect walkers and bikers.

With regard to possible future planning of putting a sidewalk in on the west side of Sandy Lane only, a resident commented that it would be unfair for him to pay for sidewalk on his side of the road and not the neighbor across the street, when people from both sides would be using the sidewalk.

Zuleger questioned if the people feel we need more connections than what is shown on our future sidewalk maps – which a lot of people agreed. Zuleger then questioned if new developers should put sidewalks in their development – most said yes. Zuleger explained that when sidewalks do go in, we use the right-of-way. A resident stated that today's children are

not alert and should be taught where to walk. A resident stated it is not just the safety for the bikers or walkers, but motorists also.

Zuleger stated that historically we have assessed these projects to homeowners. He explained that he was informed by our assessor that you do get an increase in value by having sidewalks in front of your home. A resident stated he had sidewalk put in on Sternberg Avenue in front of his home and he was assessed for it. He stated that he just accepted it and finds that he uses it everyday and walks to and from work. No one in the audience wants the Village to keep our current policy. Waack stated that sidewalks and paths are a good thing to have. He just does not think it is fair to punish people because they happen to live on a street where sidewalk goes in. He feels that we should be equal to everyone and not be selective on where we use our policy. Waack then questioned why they have to shovel their sidewalks, and why the Village clears other sidewalks. Machmueller feels that the Village should maintain all of the sidewalks.

One resident feels our plans are good, we just need to see how we are going to get there with the economy. A comment was made to possibly make new sidewalks being neighborhood specific, have the entire neighborhood pay for a sidewalk in their area. Most people agree with having the entire Village pay for sidewalks. One resident questioned why people that have been in their area for 30-40 years have to pay for sidewalks needed because of the new subdivisions around them. A few people feel that the Village should not do anything now (leave things the way they are), due to the economy. Waack questioned if there will be a rebate policy for all the people who had to pay for their sidewalks before. It was stated that if the Village were to look at a rebate policy, we would have to look at an appropriate time period to go back to. There was some discussion on the Village-wide revaluation process and property values with respect to sidewalks and multi-family areas. A lady does not want to pay for sidewalks. Corallo stated that when his sidewalk on Alderson Street went in and he was assessed, it was hard for him at that time. He stated that now looking back at it, it was the best investment now and that his family uses it. A resident feels if we do not do something soon, the price on sidewalks will go up more with the cost of oil. One resident questioned, with the speeders, if we could add an extra amount onto the ticket to be used towards a sidewalk fund. Zuleger stated that as far as collection of fines, we are over 90%. Schuster stated that the number one complaint for this area is speed. Schuster explained to the residents that we only have 4 or 5 officers on the street at once. Lehrke stated that he is talking to parents and surveying them on the use of roads such as Ross Avenue.

Zeyghami feels that if the sidewalks are in a small residential area to use a formula for assessment, if the sidewalk is going in a public area than the Village should pay. A resident questioned how much the State pays. It was pointed out that a hazard elimination grant could be possible from State for the Ross Avenue area. Zuleger stated that there is a formula used when setting the speed limits for streets. Zuleger stated that from what he sees our current policy is sufficient as far as connectivity and safety. He stated that from what he is seeing tonight from residents, that new developers should be required to put sidewalks in (or make a connection to other neighborhoods). He has also heard different ideas from the audience - keep the policy the same, Village to pick up the costs, large neighborhoods to pay for their sidewalks, and to create a formula for small neighborhoods. Zuleger stated that there is some consideration for rebates for a certain time period. Zuleger stated that Burlington has gone back 5 years. Donner stated that we really could not practically go back any further than what we have records for.

Zuleger explained the next steps to come being that Plan Commission will evaluate the issue and determine a plan, then Public Works & Utility to take that plan and make priorities and a funding policy, then the Park & Recreation committee will look at path issues and secure funding, which then a report will be compiled for the Board to approve. We will note in our February newsletter the outcome. This will then be sent to the County for their master plan. Zuleger stated there are no borrowing plans for next year, unless we get some hazardous elimination (grant) money. He pointed out where we can link with other communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie R. Parker
Recording Secretary