

Village of Weston Public Works and Utility Committee
Planning Commission
Parks & Recreation Committee
Sidewalk Workshop
February 25, 2008

I. Call to order.

Chairman Ziegler called the Public Works and Utility Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

President Schuster called the Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Jaeger called the Parks & Recreation Committee to order at 6:00 p.m.

Public Works and Utility Committee members present were Jon Ziegler, Karen Schmutzler, Greg Falkowski, Mark Porlier, and Tom Benishek.

Planning Commission members present were Fred Schuster, Mark Maloney, Mike Stenstrom, Mary Hancock, and DPW Keith Donner. Kim Fischer and John Evans were absent and excused.

Parks and Recreation Committee members present Sharon Jaeger, Jon Ziegler, and Roger Esker. Art Corallo was absent and Karla Lodholz was absent and excused.

Also present were Village Administrator Dean Zuleger, Village Trustees Barbara Ermeling and Loren White, Community Development Director/Zoning Administrator Jennifer Higgins, Park Superintendent Shawn Osterbrink, Building Inspector Scott Tatro, Finance Director John Jacobs, and Taxpayer Relations Coordinator Renee Hodell. There were approximately nine residents in the audience.

Zuleger began the discussion with a Power Point presentation called "Creating a Walkable Community" which discussed the current sidewalk policy that was created in 2002. (Please see attached.) This policy is designed to "connect" schools, churches, shopping, bus stops, major street linkages, parks, and other major facilities together. It includes sidewalks, multi-use paths, neighborhood links, and commercial walkways.

II. Discussion of Current Sidewalk Policy.

Schuster opened the discussion to the committee members. Items noted and discussed were the importance of prioritizing schools and children, keeping the current Connectivity Policy, multi-use paths versus sidewalks, retrofitting every neighborhood with sidewalks, the possibility of having developers incorporate walking paths/sidewalks in their subdivisions that would be accessible to all, the importance of demographics, the cost and the effect it would have on our tax rate, the possibility of "over connecting," what to put in by the skate park (sidewalk versus multi-use path) to make it safe for the people that will be using it, the effect sidewalks have on "rural" atmosphere, multi-use paths versus sidewalks on major thoroughfares, and sidewalks leading to the need for curb and gutter for the areas that have ditches on property.

Schuster asked for a "show of hands" from the policy-makers that were in favor of staying with the current plan for connectivity sidewalks rather than a plan for putting

sidewalks everywhere. It was unanimous to stay with the current plan. Schuster stated this would give staff direction.

III. Discussion of Possible Locations For Additional Sidewalks & Multi-Use Paths In The Village.

Considering previous comments, Zuleger said they would consider multi-use paths on the larger thoroughfares.

IV. Discussion of Funding Sources For New Sidewalks & Multi-Use Paths In The Village.

Zuleger explained that in 2002, with connectivity as a premise, the 2/3 to 1/3 funding mechanism was used for sidewalks that ran through neighborhoods. He asked if this is the formula the policy-makers would like to use for the sidewalks that provide a connection benefit (which is a general benefit to the community), but would be a burden to the taxpayer that just happens to live on that street. This resulted in discussions regarding the fairness to those residents who have paid assessments for past projects, the possibility of reimbursing those who have paid, how much should be reimbursed, how it should be paid (ie., in the same number of installments it was paid to the Village), should those who have already sold their homes be reimbursed, reimbursing only the person who originally paid the assessment and still lives at that residence, and how the Village would fund all of it. Jacobs stated the total cost of reimbursement would be around \$194,000. **<<The reimbursement issue will go to the Finance Committee for discussion and consideration.>>** The committee members also discussed the fairness of the 2/3 to 1/3 policy for the Connectivity Policy, making all taxpayers responsible for at least 75% up to 100% of bill, implementing a sidewalk/walking path formula for each new development and each new business that was being built and keeping green space in the Village.

Zuleger summed up the committee members' decision stating the retro-fitting of sidewalks as general connections is a general benefit to all residents; therefore, the cost for sidewalks will be spread across the tax base using GO dollars. However, there will still be assessments for street, curb, gutter and utilities that need to be put in. He noted that it would be determined by the Village and encouraged by the Planning Commission for developers to put in connecting sidewalks to parks, schools and retail at the developers expense. Zuleger then asked about a reimbursement policy for sidewalks, how far back it should go, and how it would be carried out. The decision was to have the Finance Committee look at reimbursements for sidewalks only, to have reimbursements go back to the beginning of the Connectivity Policy in 2002, to reimburse the original property owner only if they still reside there, to reimburse what has been paid, and to forgive what is still owed.

V. Discussion of Sidewalk and Multi-Use Path Maintenance Policies.

Policy-makers discussed the Village's responsibilities and procedures used for snow removal. Park Superintendent Osterbrink explained how much time was spent on clearing sidewalks and what equipment was used to clear them. He also reported on which sidewalks were cleared, for both Village and privately owned properties. There were discussions and comments made on the Village's responsibilities, the residents' responsibilities, the absent land owners' responsibilities, responsibilities of the owners of vacant lots, businesses' responsibilities, the costs of wear and tear on equipment, man hours spent on snow removal, the cost of future maintenance after new sidewalks/paths

are added, enforcing the Village's ordinance for snow removal, billing those who do not follow code and snow is removed by Village, ways to provide assistance to those unable to shovel, areas that have never been cleared, the Village's ability/inability to comply with snow removal ordinance, the Village's liability if someone is hurt on a Village owned sidewalk/property that has not been cleared, the Village "cleaning up" after themselves when doing snow removal and causing large amounts of snow to fall where it has already been cleared, and the creating of a Snow District that would allow the Village to charge per linear foot for snow removal on sidewalks. Osterbrink suggested checking with other communities that clear sidewalks to see if they have Snow Districts.

<<Hodell will check with other communities that clear sidewalks to see why they started doing so and what their policies are.>>

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Paul Hantz, 5810 Willard Lane, recommended another type of connectivity plan, other than concrete, used in Appleton that consisted of a walking path that runs along the back of the subdivision. Hantz also expressed his thoughts on the sidewalk reimbursement.

Richard Waack, 3715 Sternberg Avenue, commented on the amount of snow thrown back onto sidewalks that have already been cleared. He asked why the Village has not been to Sternberg Avenue to clear the sidewalks after plowing or moving snow as they have been for other parts of the Village. He does not think it is fair, especially for the elderly, to be expected to remove what can sometimes be up to three feet of snow. He stated that if the Village decides where sidewalks go, then everybody should have to pay for the sidewalks. He also stated that if the Village was going to maintain some sidewalks, they should maintain all sidewalks.

Stuart Babl, 2206 Neupert Avenue, commented on people walking/jogging on the road where sidewalks were available. He stated this was a safety issue and these people should be ticketed by our law enforcement. Babl also asked why sidewalks couldn't be placed closer to the road to prevent "chewing up" so much of a resident's property and leaving more green space. He also noted that with sidewalks located on the east and south sides of Jelinek Avenue by Kennedy Park, the Village might want to consider a multi-use surface on the park side of Alta Verde Street and also behind the parking area located on Neupert Avenue. This would allow safe access to the skateboarders going to the skateboard park. Babl stated his concerns with the reimbursement issue.

Bob Stavron, 5703 Pine Terrace, expressed his concern about the decision to reimburse for sidewalks that have already been put in. He stated he had read in the newspapers of the negotiating that was done for sidewalks to be put in new subdivisions, and that this was how the 2/3 to 1/3 formula came about. Stavron said he feels it is wrong to go back and reimburse those who had fairly negotiated for the sidewalks in the first place. Stavron also asked the Village to consider placing bike racks in areas by bus stops. This would enable people who have too far to walk to bus stops to park their bikes and ride the bus. Stavron also expressed his concerns with the reimbursement issue. At this time, Mr. Waack stated there were no negotiations done for the sidewalks. Stavron agreed the Village should not be clearing snow for residents/businesses. He suggested creating a Snow District and bill per linear foot for sidewalks that we do clear to fund the employees and equipment needed.

Hooshang Zeyghami, 5306 DJ Lane, stated his chagrin with the mess made by snow plows coming after snow has been cleared. He said it was hard and costly to get the people he hired for snow removal to come back and clean up after the snow plows because they are busy.

Holly Mroczenski, The Holiday Inn Express, 4210 Barbican Avenue, stated they were at first told their sidewalks would be plowed. They were then told by Taxpayer Relations Coordinator Hodell that they were responsible to keep their sidewalks clear. Mroczenski asked why the owners of the land across the street didn't have to do the same. She also asked the reason why the Village couldn't keep up with clearing sidewalks. Zuleger explained this was not something done by most communities. He also told her the reason we have a hard time keeping up is because we don't have the staffing for it.

VI. Adjourn.

President Schuster proclaimed all meetings adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Submitted by,

Debi Brod
Assistant Utility Clerk