

MINUTES
City Services Committee
June 21, 2005
City of Batavia

Chairman Volk called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members present: Aldermen Volk, Vance, Dietz, Liva (7:02 p.m.), Barnard (7:15 p.m.), and Wollnik (7:20 p.m.)

Members absent: Alderman Frydendall

Also present: Aldermen Schmitz (until 8:35 p.m.), Sparks, Wolff, and Clark; Mayor Schielke; Bill McGrath, City Administrator; Dennis Anderson, Police Chief; Noel Basquin, City Engineer (7:30 p.m.); Scott Haines, Street Superintendent; John Kennedy, Engineering Assistant; Kathy Montanari, Recording Secretary

MOTION: To make ad hoc appointments of Aldermen Schmitz, Sparks, Wolff, and Clark to the City Services Committee for the June 21, 2005 meeting

MAKER: Vance

SECOND: Dietz

VOICE VOTE: 3 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

2. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: To approve the following City Services Committee minutes:

- April 19, 2005
- May 11, 2005

MAKER: Vance

SECOND: Wolff

VOICE VOTE: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

3. Final Acceptance of Davey Farms Development

Clark noted that the common area in this subdivision was very poorly maintained. Volk suggested that staff be directed to look into this situation to see if there were ordinance violations.

Ken Krupp, 460 Graff Street in Somonauk, stated that he represented Dartmoor Homes, the developer of the Davey Farm subdivision. He has been in contact with residents in an attempt to have the association become active. Krupp's firm has been hiring landscapers to mow common areas. One issue related to the association's concern about upkeep of the native prairie wetland area. All documentation has been sent to the association regarding that concern. Krupp was not aware if an association had been formed yet.

McGrath said staff could obtain an estimate on maintenance costs and contact the association to find out if residents preferred to contract for the work or have the expenses levied on their property tax bills through the SSA for the subdivision.

Vance said residents may not be aware of their responsibilities and should be advised of the options.

Kennedy said he had spoken with a few of the residents regarding their concerns about the common areas. The homeowners association has not taken over responsibility for those areas. The pond was monitored by Planning Resources and accepted as a wetland by the EPA. After the pond was dredged, it actually had more capacity than what it was designed for.

Clark and Vance joined in the request to direct City staff to assess the cost for maintaining the wetlands and common property in Davey Farm and communicate to the association the amount of increase in taxes unless they assume responsibility for the project.

Regarding final acceptance of improvements, Kennedy reported that all improvements had been completed. The City currently holds a bond and will receive a one-year maintenance guarantee once improvements are accepted by the City Council.

MOTION: To recommend to City Council final acceptance of the Davey Farm development
MAKER: Vance
SECOND: Schmitz
VOICE VOTE: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

Dietz expressed concern that Davey Farm did not appear ready to maintain its property, and Volk explained that streets and public utilities were independent of the homeowners association. This action relates to acceptance of all public improvements, including streets and sewers. Maintenance of the retention pond and common walk is the responsibility of the homeowners association; if it is not taken care of, a Special Service Area tax can be levied on property owners.

Volk requested that future items of this type be placed on the Consent Agenda, instead of having a separate item on the City Council agenda.

4. Discussion: Parking Lot at Wilson and River Streets

McGrath reviewed his June 10, 2005 memo. At a recent meeting, the City Services Committee authorized engineering work so this project could be completed before the bridge reconstruction project starts. The site has a substantial elevation differential and would necessitate construction of an expensive retaining wall. The Route 25 jog project will not occur for at least 6-7 years, so the parking lot would be in place at least that long. Construction of the parking lot would also require removal of several large trees. After additional consideration, and input from several members of the Council, staff felt uncomfortable with the cost to move forward. It is now recommended that a very simple asphalt parking lot be designed to hold 8-10 cars, and extra spaces be sought elsewhere in the immediate area. Approval was previously given to execute a contract with the engineering firm, but it was not signed.

MOTION: To not execute the engineering contract for the River/Wilson parking lot
MAKER: Dietz
SECOND: Liva
VOICE VOTE: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

5. Resolution 05-42-R: Sale of Surplus Property

Anderson reviewed his June 15, 2005 memo.

In response to a question from Dietz, Anderson explained that the surplus automobiles would be auctioned and the fax machine would be advertised for sale. The Crown Victoria with 61,000 miles is in poor condition.

MOTION: To recommend to City Council approval of Resolution 05-42-R, Declaring Certain Personal Property to be Surplus and Authorizing Its Sale
MAKER: Vance
SECOND: Schmitz
VOICE VOTE: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

6. Resolution 05-44-R: Award Bid for 2005 Crack Sealing Program

Handled after Item 7.

Haines reviewed his June 14, 2005 memo and explained that this program was not done last year. The program will run until the budgeted amount of \$50,000 is expended. Haines indicated that the low bidder, Denler and Sons, Inc. of Mokena, has done work for the City in the past with satisfactory results.

MOTION: To recommend to City Council approval of Resolution 05-44-R, Awarding the 2005 Crack Sealing Program bid to Denler and Sons, Inc. of Mokena, Illinois for the sun of \$0.228 per linear foot, not to exceed \$50,000.00
MAKER: Vance
SECOND: Barnard
VOICE VOTE: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

7. Ordinance 05-22: Revising the Cemetery Code

McGrath explained that the purpose of the ordinance was to update the Municipal Code and bring it into compliance with State regulations. A survey was conducted of area cemeteries and Batavia's fees remain the lowest in the Fox Valley. The ordinance allows fees to be changed on an annual basis.

McGrath commented that the City prides itself on taking good care of its cemeteries. One of the increases relates to perpetual care. A sinking fund was used over the years,

but it is nearly depleted and must be replenished. McGrath said Attorney Noble also reviewed the proposed ordinance.

Volk agreed that it was important to take proper care of the cemeteries, and said the Street Department does a fine job maintaining them.

In response to a question from Dietz, Volk said it had been about ten years since the cemetery costs were last reviewed.

Mayor Schielke expressed support for proper maintenance of the cemeteries.

McGrath reported that Gary Larsen had looked into the possibility of installing simple fences along the fronts of the cemeteries to separate the area from the roadways.

Dietz asked if the fees should be increased more, and Volk said that Batavia's cemeteries are public and fees should be adequate to cover costs. Dietz preferred not to revisit the fee issue every year and suggested raising fees slightly more now in order to provide more stability and fewer increases.

Mayor Schielke said the City's philosophy has been that cemetery fees should cover expenses only and not be used as a revenue source. Those buried in the cemeteries were mostly Batavia residents, and he felt proper maintenance sent a positive message to the community.

Clark noted that Haines' memo indicated an intention to tie increases to the annual cost of living rate.

Volk explained that the City Council had been working towards the goal of developing five-year plans for all departments, and this item could be handled in the same manner.

MOTION: To recommend to City Council approval of Ordinance 05-22,
Revising the Cemetery Code

MAKER: Wolff

SECOND: Wollnik

VOICE VOTE: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

8. Left-Turn Signal: Island Avenue to Eastbound Wilson Street

Basquin reviewed his June 18, 2005 memo. The City Services Committee previously discussed this issue at its May 19 meeting. Staff spoke with IDOT about the possibility of using existing loops and, while this is possible, it will require separation and installation of an amplifier in the controller. This results in a price increase to \$6,300 from \$5,900. IDOT will also design the project in-house if their maintenance contractor is used and formal bidding is waived.

Volk asked if this amount had been budgeted, and Basquin said no—a budget amendment would be required. Basquin said it was possible that Motor Fuel Tax funds

could be used. McGrath noted that this project would not increase total Engineering Department expenditures.

Vance asked if the State's maintenance contractor would be similar to a company chosen through the bidding process, and Basquin said yes. Basquin said he also learned that the City received grant funds to upgrade lights and pedestrian signals to LED lights at this intersection and at Route 31. The grant totals about \$6,000, and the project is estimated at \$20,000. Basquin explained that LED lights are more energy efficient and should pay for themselves after about five years. McGrath reported that County intersections in Batavia would be converted to LED lights, with the City paying a pro-rata share.

Basquin said IDOT expects to have the design completed by the end of July, and construction can commence after that.

Wollnik asked if the addition of a left-turn signal would lengthen the green time for Island and Shumway. She was concerned that eastbound traffic backed up to the Shumway/Island intersection would make it impossible to execute the left turn during the given time. Basquin said right-turn movements from Shumway contribute to the back up on Wilson. The Shumway/Island/Wilson intersection is interconnected with the Route 25/Wilson intersection and IDOT may need to adjust it. Basquin did not believe the changes would lengthen the total green time for Shumway/Island.

Volk suggested that signage be installed on Shumway to warn motorists of the new left-turn signal at Island.

Dietz asked if the lanes would need to be restriped, and Basquin said no.

MOTION: To recommend to City Council that formal bidding be waived for the Island/Wilson left-turn signal

MAKER: Schmitz

SECOND: Vance

VOICE VOTE: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

MOTION: To recommend to City Council awarding a contract to Meade Electric to install the left-turn signal at Island/Wilson for a cost not-to-exceed \$6,300.00

MAKER: Wolff

SECOND: Clark

VOICE VOTE: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

Basquin reported that the City's bridge consultant, Lochner and Associates, recommended against installation of bump-outs until after bridge reconstruction is complete.

Mayor Schielke said he has weekly conversations with the State Transportation Secretary's Office and was assured engineering would be approved within the next few days.

9. Ordinance 05-36: On-Street Parking Along Eastbound Wilson Street North of Route 25 (River Street)

Basquin reviewed his June 15, 2005 memo. Traffic backups occur in eastbound Wilson lanes just past Route 25 during peak times. Staff believes removal of parking during peak times on the south side of Wilson would help to relieve the bottleneck created by vehicles waiting to turn northbound in the left-turn lane. Basquin said Chief Anderson advised him that this also occurs on the north side of Wilson Street, east of River Street.

Volk also observed back-ups on the north side of Wilson Street and thought elimination of 1-2 spaces there would help the flow of traffic.

Vance asked how critical it was to have on-street parking in this area. Basquin said there was intermittent parking on eastbound Wilson, but the spaces on westbound Wilson were more frequently used.

Liva said he was concerned about the possibility that westbound motorists might move into the wider space and end up stacked behind a legitimate parking lane. Mayor Schielke noted that Naperville uses similar parking restrictions on Washington Street during peak times. Basquin said it will be a matter of enforcement. Anderson felt this concept should be tried on an experimental basis. He said warning tickets could be issued initially, but ultimately the space would need to be posted as a tow zone.

Basquin recommended the parking removal be tried on both sides of the street. Four spaces near the Baptist Church on the north side of Wilson would be affected, and the three spaces near the dentist's office would remain. The net effect would be a loss of eight spaces during peak hours. McGrath was concerned about removing westbound parking without first discussing it with downtown business owners. He preferred to remove the eastbound parking on a trial basis to see how it works. McGrath noted that on-street parking on Wilson Street also serves to slow traffic and provides a buffer for pedestrians.

Dietz asked how long the trial would run, and Basquin believed the results would be apparent very soon.

Volk requested that staff provide an update to the committee in September, so the next step could be considered.

Vance asked that aldermen in this ward keep track of the number of complaints they receive.

MOTION: To recommend to City Council approval of Ordinance 05-36, Prohibiting Parking from 7-9 a.m. and 3-6 p.m. on the South Side of Wilson Street Between Route 25 (River Street) and Route 25 (Washington Street)

MAKER: Wolff

SECOND: Vance

VOICE VOTE: 8 Ayes, 1 Nay (Dietz), Motion Carried

10. Discussion: Residential Speed Limit

Anderson reviewed his June 20, 2005 memo. He said the issue of lowering the residential speed limit to 25 M.P.H. was discussed three years ago, but the committee chose not to make the change.

Anderson then went over the positive and negative effects of lowering the speed limit. On the positive side, a reduction would be responsive to residents that complain about speeding vehicles, would provide greater revenue from speeding tickets, and would create speed limit uniformity. On the negative side, it assumes people will obey the limits, but studies show people drive the speed they feel is safe. There is considerable expense involved to lower the speed limit city-wide. A traffic study, estimated at \$20,000 three years ago, would be required. Many traffic signs would need replacement. Anderson felt the number of speeding complaints would also increase. State law provides municipalities with an opportunity to change limits, but there is a statewide limit for residential areas of 30 M.P.H. This is generally considered to be a safe speed. The change would also make speeders out of more drivers.

Anderson explained that a new component to measure vehicle speed is now available for traffic counters. This would prove whether people are actually speeding or perceived to be speeding. The Police and Engineering Department would share the cost of the components if more are purchased.

Vance said she receives many complaints about speeders on McKee west of Randall.

Anderson explained that the speed component is portable and could be used in any area.

Barnard indicated that she also hears many complaints about speeding in her ward. She felt a speed limit reduction would be helpful, as it would cause people to lower their overall speed. Barnard asked if it would be less expensive to do a study and put up more signs or add another police officer to work on enforcement.

Vance asked how the speed limit on McKee Street could be changed from 35 M.P.H. to 30 M.P.H., since there is now a great deal more residential development in that area.

Barnard felt it was necessary to take action, since the issue keeps coming up. She felt more police visibility was needed to slow people down and get them to obey stop signs.

Volk said even if the study is done and the speed limit is lowered, there must still be enforcement since signs do not work alone. When he receives speeding complaints, he asks the Chief to post the stationary car in the area. Residents can also take license plate numbers so the Police Department can send the offender a letter, which seems to help. Volk pointed out that most of the speeders actually live in the neighborhood.

Liva asked what the results of the Photo-Cop unit were, and Mayor Schielke said Batavia was the first to try it but lacked the statutory authority to sustain it in the court system at the time.

Lori Lowe, 551 Waubensee Trail, stated that she is a nine-year resident of Batavia. She has contacted the Police Department various times about speeders on her street. More recently, a new 30 M.P.H. sign was posted that seems to have worsened the situation. Her street is very narrow and curved so it is very difficult to drive it safely at the 30 M.P.H. limit. Lowe said many municipalities are reducing residential speed limits to 30 M.P.H. and this would be a positive step for Batavia. She was involved in a vehicular accident because a driver could not negotiate the curve on the street. Lowe said she could not understand the committee's previous decision not to lower the speed limit. Volk responded that the general feeling of the committee was that signage was not the solution, and enforcement was essential. He said the Police Department conducts as much enforcement as possible. Lowe said she spoke with Chief Anderson about ticket issuance and was told the majority of tickets are issued on main streets. Volk advised her to record license numbers of chronic speeders and forward it to her alderman or the Chief, but Lowe said most of the vehicles are traveling within the legal limit.

McGrath believed it was important to gather meaningful data before making a decision. If more traffic counters can be equipped with speed monitors, it will provide more data to analyze the situation properly.

Susan Fous, 435 North Avenue, stated she is a two-year resident of Batavia. There have been three recent traffic incidents in her area. She has spoken with various members of the Police Department about the situation. When a traffic study was conducted on the North Avenue and Jefferson/Republic intersection, 53% of vehicles were exceeding the speed limit during a one-hour period; this seems to indicate the problem does not lie with perception. Other neighbors she contacted are concerned about the speeding problem but could not attend this meeting. Fous asked that aldermen respond to the issue before anyone is injured. She said that a lack of sidewalks also contributes to the situation, as people are forced to walk in the streets.

Vance asked how many accidents had occurred in this area, and Anderson said he was not aware of any injury accidents there. Mrs. Fous said there have been 3 accidents at that intersection.

Wollnik said she would be curious to see the average speed on Woodland Hills Road, since she receives many complaints about speeding and disobeying stop signs there. Because it is fairly wide and houses are set back, cars seem to travel very fast. She was interested in having more data, but did not believe a reduction in speed limit would have an effect on that particular street.

Clark asked how many officers are on patrol during a typical shift, and Anderson said it varies and can range from 4 to 8. She asked if anyone is specifically assigned to traffic enforcement. Anderson said 1-2 officers may be assigned to those duties about two days a week; others are doing it as part of their normal patrol. Clark said an increase in enforcement may require extra manpower. If speed limits are lowered, there must be more people to enforce it.

Vance said she would support purchase of the speed counters.

Barnard said she did not want to spend money for more data since aldermen already are aware of the speeding problem. She preferred to spend money for enforcement instead.

Vance said it was important to determine where the problems on a citywide basis. Once the data identifies hot spots, the Police Chief can be given appropriate direction.

Volk requested that staff provide a budget amendment request to purchase more speed counters. Problem areas can be identified so the City is able to direct its resources.

Volk then asked committee members if they wished to put funds in next year's budget to do a traffic study regarding reduction of residential speed limits to 25 M.P.H.

Vance said she preferred to review data before deciding if a study was necessary. Barnard felt something should be done now. Wollnik did not support money for a study in the budget, since she did not feel a speed limit reduction would do any good in her ward. Liva preferred to put it in the budget, since it would not be a commitment to spend the money; the discussion and data review can continue to determine if the study is worthy. Dietz said the study should not be put in the budget.

Clark asked if the City would even meet the criteria for lowering speed limits. She felt this should be reviewed before the decision on a study is made.

Barnard asked how the problem can be solved if the data shows there are not many places where people are speeding, and Vance said the Police Department could be directed to concentrate on those areas. Volk said it may be that more patrol officers are needed.

Volk requested that Chief Anderson report back at the next committee meeting with more details on what is involved with the study. He asked that the Police Department continue to be responsive to requests from aldermen for more enforcement in perceived hot spots.

McGrath felt there were other measures besides enforcement that could be used. He suggested that the committee consider experimenting with speed tables, mid-block bump outs, etc. Volk asked staff to report back at the next meeting with suggestions.

Vance asked that Anderson and McGrath determine how many speed monitoring components could be purchased now.

Anderson explained that when speeding complaints are received, an officer is directed to monitor the area and document the number of cars, speed, and time. Mayor Schielke asked that special enforcement be conducted during the next few weeks in this area. Vance asked that McKee be checked, as well.

Liva asked if any studies had measured the effects on driving habits of reducing speed limits from 30 to 25 M.P.H. Anderson said he could not cite any specific examples, but a previous traffic consultant for the City said it did not have the effect of slowing traffic down because people will drive the speed they feel is safe.

Wolff said a visible police presence seems to be effective in slowing down traffic.

Fous asked if it would be helpful for more residents to attend the next meeting, and Volk said residents are always welcome to attend committee meetings. He said the committee has continually been concerned about this issue and staff will put it on the committee agenda in July.

11. Other

A. Fire Station Update

Volk reported that a group of aldermen had recently toured several area fire stations, and he had written a memo of his personal impressions. The small working group continues to meet weekly to review criteria. The issue of whether or not to retain a construction manager is to be discussed at the next committee meeting. It is hoped to finalize plans by fall so construction can begin next spring. Volk said aldermen's comments were given to the City Administrator.

McGrath said he would issue a memo before the next committee meeting. He asked that aldermen submit their top 2-3 concerns so they can be addressed as soon as possible. McGrath explained that a general contractor and 1-2 construction managers would be invited to the next meeting to answer questions. McGrath said architects draft plans in a different way if a job is to be done with a construction manager instead of a general contractor. Chief Darin has been developing a list of construction managers that were responsible for area fire station projects, and McGrath said he'd like to issue a Request for Qualifications and perhaps do interviews at a special City Services meeting. He hoped to be able to start discussions with a firm by August.

Vance said during the tours, aldermen asked how pleased fire officials were with using a general contractor. Several good recommendations were received.

McGrath explained that construction management can be handled in one of two ways: use a general contractor and the construction manager is the owner's representative (most expensive) or the construction manager bundles project into subcontracts and the City acts as the general contractor.

McGrath said it has also become apparent that the furniture/equipment budget is not adequate and should be increased.

Barnard asked if the size of the buildings was adequate, and Mayor Schielke said that few areas of potential growth are left in the community. He believed that the 30,000 population estimate was very realistic. Schielke said discussions were underway concerning fire protection district issues with Sugar Grove.

McGrath noted that basements may be an economical way to provide more space at the fire stations. A recommendation regarding ESDA will be made shortly.

B. Request From Citizen Regarding Sidewalks in Third Ward

Resident not present. Item not discussed.

12. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Minutes prepared by
Kathy Montanari