

STREETS, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE MINUTES
OF FEBRUARY 10, 2020

Municipal Council of the City of Vermilion
Municipal Complex, 685 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio 44089

In Attendance: Vermilion City Council: Monica Stark, Council at Large; Emily Skahen, Ward One; Frank Loucka, Ward Two; Steve Holovacs, Ward Three; Barb Brady, Ward Four; Brian Holmes, Ward Five; Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk. ABSENT: Steve Herron, President of Council

Administration: Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Police Chief, Chris Hartung; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director

Call to Order: Steve Holovacs, Chairman, RESOLVED THAT this Streets, Buildings, & Grounds Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

TOPIC ONE: Vermilion Community Pool Plan

Terry Parker, Chairman of the Vermilion Parks & Recreation Board explained they have created a subcommittee to the Parks Board consisting of himself and Dennis Brudney from the Parks Board; Marc Weisenberger, Parks Supervisor (Co-Chair); Bob Cunicella, Pool Manager; Brian Holmes, City Council; Tony Valerius, Service Director; and, Jim Forthofer, Mayor (Ex-officio). They held their first meeting on January 21, 2020. Their target is to have a recommendation on what the future of the pool is for the Parks Board, City Council, and the community by January 1, 2021.

He said they have looked at what different communities have done in terms of how they handled looking at the future of their water facilities. He pointed out nine objectives as follows: 1. Review pool usage the last two years – 1,030 individuals in 2018 – 1,150 in 2019 (increase due in part to closing of the pool at Maude Neiding Park in Amherst). 2. Gather and evaluate community demographics - age groupings, location, including school data which is progress. They will look going forward at the age groups of the kids coming up and different class sizes. 3. Have present facility and equipment professionally evaluated (potential expert vendors have been identified). 4. Establish solid cost estimates for repairs. There were some estimates last spring, but they don't know what's under the pool. The deck needs to be replaced, but the question is what they will find when they dig it up. 5. Explore options for modernization, features, location – create concept plans and get prices. He said they will explore costs if they were to add a spray ground or a zero-entry area walking down into the pool. 6. Gather input via public meetings and surveys. 7. Identify and pursue funding sources for repairs and capital improvements (grants, sponsorships, private donations). He said he knows what the city and parks board checkbook look like, and the Park Capital Levy does not have the money that would be close to what they heard the costs would be in the spring. 8. Pursue management strategies to control expenses, and mechanisms to provide ongoing operating funds – critical for the future of the pool. He said the pool revenue runs anywhere from \$16,000 to \$18,000 annually and it costs \$52,000 to \$55,000 to operate the pool. He said they can't budget this out of the general fund on an annual basis, nor

can they do it from the operating levy, so what are they going to do long-term so that they don't have to do this crisis management every year or two and ask the community to donate, so they can have a pool. They will try to look at things to recommend in terms of a strategy because if the pool is going to have a future, they need to figure this aspect out. He said this year they will operate the pool with a minimum of capital repairs – just to be able to have the pool open. The Pool Manager said they can do some quick concrete work on the deck to get them through another summer. They've already agreed they will put a new roof on the pool house because there is some expensive equipment stored in it. The current heater is adequate, and they have a heater that was donated, and it will cost about \$4,000 to hook it up when needed. Memberships and daily admissions alone haven't operated the pool in the past and won't in the future. 9. To operate the pool in 2020 with minimal necessary repairs, sharing the operating expenses (beyond pool revenue and donations) 50-50 between the General Fund and Parks Operating Levy. Guestimate \$36,000 - \$38,000 total.

M. Stark thanked everyone who is involved with taking the time to try to keep the pool open. She is a big supporter of the pool and feels it's important to the community and the children. B. Holmes echoed Monica's sentiments.

Mayor Forthofer said he has been reluctant to keep throwing money or begging for money, but wholly endorses this approach, which is overdue. He said a fact-based analysis is important when making sound judgments based on facts. He doesn't mind spending the money to get through this year if this is what they're pursuing.

B. Holmes encouraged family members to sign up for memberships. He asked if they could start signing up now. T. Parker said memberships were down in 2019 from the previous year due to the weather. They haven't made a recommendation on rates this year, but for the traffic they have and raising the daily admission a dollar and memberships, it won't change the dynamic of what they're working with. They don't want to price people out of going to the pool. Currently, if you're over 65 years old you're free and if you're under three you're free. Daily admissions for youth pay \$5 a day and over 12 or 14 years of age is \$6 per daily visit. The vast amount of people in terms of regular use are people that have memberships. The same names show up almost every day on the sign in sheets. Mayor Forthofer said T. Parker spent days adding up the number of people who use the pool.

B. Brady asked T. Parker if he knows where people are coming from. T. Parker said this information is not tracked but is something they can track as they move forward.

TOPIC TWO: Fulper Lot

Mayor Forthofer provided a power point presentation to Council on the plans of the Fulper Lot. He explained eight months ago they had discussion about the city-owned property at the corner of Liberty and Grand. Some suggested they should turn this area into a parking lot, and he was of the opinion they should follow what some city planners do and what their own city planners did for the City of Vermilion, which is continuing the point of the interest to commerce or commerce and residential is what is traditionally done to keep downtown's vibrant. He was given the okay from Council to look for people who might be interested. In the eight months, he has had people who politely

showed interest, but no one who showed serious interest in investing in building something of this type. They entertained the idea of it being creative things – art areas, but none he felt that really gave back to the city as much as additional commerce and residential, or additional parking would. With a new season ahead of them and looking at the mud pit that the Fulper Lot has become, he thought now would be time to make a recommendation of what they could do next. He asked the City Engineer to make a recommendation of what could be done in this area. He said Bramhall Engineering proposed a parking lot of 27 paving spaces, which includes two handicap spaces. There will be green space facing Liberty Avenue, with a brick walkway that goes from Liberty to the municipal parking lot, which has 56 parking spaces. He said people can participate in Third Thursday's, and there are additional areas to view the parades. He showed Council an artist rendering of what the parking lot would look like from the street (see attached). He said he acquired a fence of some type to obscure the view of the parking lot from Liberty Avenue. He said some of the features that are not parking spaces can be used by the Arts Leagues, creative people, volunteer groups, Chalk Walks, things like that. He said maybe they can even take over the big brick wall and do some murals or something. He said it was suggested by somebody in his office that maybe the Chamber or Main Street could even have a drive-in movie theater at different times in the summer, where they can project on the wall. He showed variations of a board on board fence and a rod iron fence as an alternative.

He conveyed that the cost estimate is \$122,000 for an asphalt parking lot, green space, pavers of the walkway, striping, fencing, concrete drive apron, and seeding and landscaping. This would require about two months of document preparation and bidding. Construction would take about two months; maybe a little less, so completion could roughly be about four months, which would take the City to about June. When he had the property appraised in April of 2018, the appraisal cost for the entire lot was \$133,000 at market. Since then, they had the property resurveyed and broken down where two lots were joined into one lot and the walkway was divided into a second lot that will forever belong to the City. This was on the assumption that maybe somebody would come along and purchase the property to build on. However, he didn't think the City should wait any longer.

M. Stark thanked the Mayor for bringing this forward and agreed they needed to move forward to do something with this lot, and if the City can get something by summer it would be great. She said for the last few years this lot has been just a field in the middle of town and it's been used for parking, and she believes putting in a parking lot would help the west end of town grow and bring more business to the businesses in the area by making it accessible to those current businesses.

F. Loucka said it was a great concept and the green space is needed downtown. The fact there is no ingress or egress onto Liberty minimizes traffic congestion, where Grand Street is a little less congested. He agrees with M. Stark and totally agrees with this project and liked the looks of the wood fence.

B. Brady asked if the parking on Grand Street would remain and Mayor Forthofer said yes. She said the 27 parking spaces does maximize the space and for Third Thursday they could probably get three rows parked in this lot. C. Howard said there is a minimum width requirement of 24', so they have to stay within code. He said they could

take another two spaces away if Council desired more green space. B. Brady said no as she thinks they need the parking.

B. Holmes said there could be other ways to pay for this such as the storm water fund (pervious pavers). He said they could create a water shed or storm water features around the green space. G. Fisher suggested that the Mayor speak with Lake Erie Shores and Islands to see if this is a project, they would be interested in funding by incorporating their signage at the parking lot. Mayor Forthofer said he would talk with Larry Fletcher about this. Mayor Forthofer said this cost estimate didn't include any lighting. C. Howard said that pavers are more expensive and if they get into bio-swailes or rain guards they will take away from the green space. A. Hendricks said they have an Energizing Community Grant that the City can apply for through NOPEC this year that is a little over \$13,000 that might be able to go toward some lighting.

H. Taft asked in the short-term if it would be cheaper to gravel the lot. T. Valerius said City codes don't allow this. He said public commercial parking must be hard-surface. H. Taft thought it was a lot of money to spend if they had to tear it up again.

S. Holovacs said as an example they could look at the north end of LCCC, where they installed a concrete parking lot. The lights on the lot are set up where they can use one-half of the light stand and poles that light it up like an airport because the concrete is reflective. He said as a safety aspect, concrete is the most luminous surface you can use. He thought it was a good idea to make the Fulper Lot a parking lot. He said the entire lot was full during the Ice Affair and the parking lot needs cleaned up because it's muddy.

M. Stark MOVED; F. Loucka seconded to authorize the administration to go out to bid for the parking lot project located at the Fulper Lot. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

TOPIC THREE: Highbridge Road (OPWC Project)

C. Howard conveyed that Highbridge Road is an OPWC Project that was awarded to the City last year. They would like to put the project out to bid to get better prices. He advised Council they would need to authorize the administration to put this project out to bid. He said they will receive bid results by April. This project is south of the bridge to Brownhelm Station Road. He said the City received a grant for \$475,000. B. Holmes said the north end is getting bad too. C. Howard said they are starting somewhere.

S. Holovacs MOVED; B. Holmes seconded to authorize the administration to go out to bid for the Highbridge Road (OPWC Project). MOTION CARRIED.

Chairman Steve Holovacs adjourned the meeting after no further discussion came before the committee.

*Next meeting: March 9, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m.
Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk*

