

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
May 7, 2019
Sixth Corner Meeting Room
4100 Lakeview Avenue North
Robbinsdale, Minnesota
Following the 7:00 p.m. regular City Council Meeting

AGENDA

1. CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION CALLED TO ORDER BY MAYOR PRO TEM
2. ROLL CALL: Blonigan, Rogan, Selman, Backen, Mayor Murphy
3. REVIEW: Special Assessment Policy for Alleys (attachment 1)
4. DISCUSS: Citizen Concerns
 - driving behavior by Cunningham
 - litter – trash busters
 - single use plastic straws (attachment 2)
5. DISCUSS SCHEDULE:
 - Partnership For Change-Information on Marijuana Dispensaries
 - North Memorial Helicopter presentation
6. REVIEW: City Code amendments required to comply with water surface management plan.
7. DISCUSS: RailVolution 2019 September 8-11. Meet & Greet 9/8. REDA 9/10.
8. MONTHLY UPDATE: Problem Properties
9. REVIEW: Strategic Goals
10. OTHER BUSINESS
11. ADJOURNMENT

Minutes excerpt from March 5, 2019

PUBLIC HEARING B – IMPROVEMENT HEARING FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ALLEY BETWEEN BEARD AVENUE AND SHORELINE DRIVE FROM 40TH AVENUE TO 41ST AVENUE

1. Mayor Murphy opened the public hearing.
2. Karen Thereau – 4034 Shoreline Drive – Commented on the corner house policy and would like the policy to remain the same; everyone paying the same amount.
3. Debra Trom – 4073 Beard Avenue North – Her home is on a corner lot and she understands that everyone needs the alley in some way and would be happy with whatever the Council decides.
4. Claire Shaw – 4055 Beard Avenue North – Requested further information on the City absorbing 10% of the cost and hopes that the Council moves forward with that.
5. Mary Wick – 3224 40th Avenue North – Stated she hasn't used the alley in 69 years. Her driveway is off of 40th Avenue. Would like to see the City move forward with the 10% reduction.
6. Member Rogan explained why he would like to consider a change in the corner lot policy. Council will reflect on feedback regarding suggested changes to the alley assessment policy for further discussion at a work session. Member Rogan will notify interested neighbors of the date of the meeting when it is set.

Funding :

It is proposed that the project be funded from a combination of the Special Assessment of all adjoining properties and the Stormwater Utility Fund for the porous pavement element. It is further proposed that the assessment hearing for this project will not be held until the completion of the project so that final costs are known.

The Engineer's Estimate for this project is currently \$110,000. Of this total, approximately \$20,000 relates to the stormwater element of the work. Based on the remaining \$90,000 and the current policy, this equates to an estimated assessment of approximately \$3,600 per lot. These figures are subject to change dependent on actual costs.

During deliberation of the Feasibility Report, City Council asked that additional information be provided to allow consideration of a policy change to how alley corner lots are assessed. A further review element requested by City Council is whether a proportion of general revenue should be used to 'write down' the total cost to reduce the assessment burden to property owners.

These elements are discussed next.

Assessment Policy Relating to Alleys:

The primary issue for review of alley assessments for corner properties revolves around improving equity. Under the current policy, each property with an alley frontage generally pays an equal assessment amount such that 100% of the construction cost is assessed back to property owners.

The issue raised by some is that there is sometimes no benefit gained from the alley as many corner properties (that generally pay a higher assessment for street reconstruction work), do not use the alley for vehicular access and sometimes not even for garbage collection.

The counterpoint to this position is that most of these properties do obtain electric and telecommunications utilities (phone, cable) from the alley and could benefit from fire-fighting access from the alley if necessary.

City Council had previously given consideration to providing a reduced alley assessment amount for corner properties with the difference being re-distributed to the internal lots however this was not supported by a majority of the City Council at the time.

A summary sheet that explores different options of reductions has been prepared and is included as *Attachment 1* for Council Members information. This summary compares approximate alley assessment amounts (for 40' and 50' lot widths in a standard 600' long block) based on the following –

- Existing Policy where 100% of cost assessed equally amongst all properties with frontage to the alley – Shown as Column A on summary sheet.
- Reduction of corner property allocation to 2/3 with the difference being redistributed to the interior lots – Column B on summary sheet.

- The City absorbing 10% of the cost and the remainder being assessed equally amongst all properties with frontage to the alley – Column C on summary sheet.
- A combination of Columns B and C – Column D on summary sheet.

To explore the impact of street assessments on corner lots and compare the aggregate of the two assessments (alley + street), additional columns have been provided on the summary sheet as follows –

- Approximate Street Assessment Amount – Column E on summary sheet.
- Combination of Alley and Street Assessments using current policy – Column A + E in summary sheet.
- Combination of Alley and Street Assessments using amended calculations – Column D + E in summary sheet.
- Percentage differences between corner and interior lots are also shown for each scenario.

Background assumptions are also included to help define the criteria used for the calculations, recognizing that there will likely be some specific cases that will vary from the general criteria and will have to be reviewed on an individual basis.

An important element that has not been incorporated into the calculations on the summary sheet relates to the capping of assessments (currently to a maximum of an arbitrary 6% of property values). Given that construction costs are increasing at a faster rate than property values, there are two options the City Council should consider –

- The self-imposed assessment cap be considered only with street reconstruction amounts, AND/OR
- Consideration be given to increasing the cap percentage to an amount higher than 6%.

This information is provided for City Council's review and deliberation. Should there be a change of alley assessment policy that involves additional City expenditure (the City absorbing a percentage of the alley cost), the additional expenditure will need to be incorporated into the tax levy each year.

Information for Consideration of Adjusting Policy on Alley Assessments (Summary)

Lot Width	Alley Assessment Options				Street Assessment				Combinations and Comparisons			
	A	B	C	D	E		A + E	% Difference	D + E	% Difference		
Corner / Interior Lot	Existing Alley Policy	Reduction of corner to 2/3	City Absorb 10%	B and C	Street Assessment		Combination Comparison		Combination Comparison			
40' Lot	corner	\$2,000.00	\$2,700.00	\$1,800.00	\$9,088.20		\$12,088.20	40	\$10,888.20	35		
	interior	\$3,133.33	\$2,700.00	\$2,820.00	\$4,276.80		\$7,276.80		\$7,096.80			
50' Lot	corner	\$3,750.00	\$3,375.00	\$2,250.00	\$9,622.80		\$13,372.80	32	\$11,872.80	25		
	interior	\$3,750.00	\$3,958.33	\$3,562.50	\$5,346.00		\$9,096.00		\$8,908.50			

Background Assumptions

Side Lot Lengths = 130' (average)

Alley Width = 14' (12' wide pavement)

Long Block Length = 600' = 24 properties (@ 50' frontage)
= 30 properties (@ 40' frontage)

Concrete Alley Cost \$90,000.00 (600' x 12' x 6" thick concrete + extras)

Assessment Rate \$106.92 (per lineal foot for 32' wide street)

Alley costs assessed to all properties, regardless of whether there is access or not

Average Market Value \$188,000.00 (based on prepared information for 2019 budget)

6% Assessment Cap \$11,280.00 (based on Average Market Value)

To be considered a corner lot for the purpose of the alley assessment, the property must meet each of following criteria -

- must be the last on the street or alley block
- must have at least two street frontages OR one street and two alley frontages

Dear Mayor Murphy and City council persons,

I Lillee Couture, a lifetime resident of Robbinsdale Minnesota, am sending you this letter to address my request for you (the city) to propose a motion to phase out and eventually ban single-use plastic straws throughout businesses in Robbinsdale.

Whether everyone believes it or not, the climate of our planet is changing for the worse because of our single-use society promoting polluted habits. Did you know that on average 500 million straws are used DAILY by the U.S. alone (that's enough to fill 125 school buses every day!)? That equals about 180 billion plastic straws per year. This staggering number of single-use plastic straws circulating our environment should be enough to persuade you but here is further information. Did you also know that only 9 percent of recyclable material are actually recycled? The remaining 91 percent is either incinerated or more likely dumped into landfills and oceans (information provided by the united nations environment program). Plastic straws being the worst since they are contaminated by food thus making them IMPOSSIBLE to properly recycle. This is the harsh reality of 21st-century plastic convenience, that we have the power to change. Some options for businesses could be the multitude of eco-friendly, biodegradable straws. Some links to more sustainable options are:

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- <https://cibowares.com/collections/paper-straws/products/10-25-white-wrapped-giant-paper-straws?variant=12628008370247>
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- <https://cibowares.com/products/5-75-black-unwrapped-cocktail-paper-straws?variant=12628003881031>
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I implore you to bring this pressing issue to the immediate attention of the city council and propose a motion to ban single-use plastic straws from all businesses throughout Robbinsdale. I wish for us (Robbinsdale) to be the example to other cities throughout the metro area to make a more eco-friendly city for our benefit as well as the planets'. Your responsiveness to other city members concerns gives me the certainty that you will give equal weight and consideration to my request. I greatly appreciate your prompt attention and time in order to safeguard our future.

If you would like to talk further or have any other questions regarding this issue please feel free to reach me at lillee.couture@stthomas.edu.

Sincerely,
Lillee Couture