

MEETING MINUTES
Bloomington Common Council
Sidewalk Committee

Clerk/Council Library, Suite 110
Bloomington City Hall, 401 North Morton Street, Bloomington, Indiana
April 12, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m.

Committee Members present: Dorothy Granger, Dave Rollo, Chris Sturbaum (arrived at 12:10pm)

Members Absent: Jim Sims

Staff present: Scott Robinson (Assistant Director, Planning and Transportation), Steve Cotter (Natural Resources Manager), Roy Aten (Senior Project Manager), Andrew Cibor (Transportation and Traffic Engineer), Jane Fleig (Utilities Engineer), Dan Sherman (Council Attorney/Administrator), Stephen Lucas (Chief Deputy Clerk),

Members of the public present: Betsy Watson, Jim Watson, William Mandel, Micah Black, Jack Sills, Max Milston

1. Attendance and Agenda Summation

Sherman summarized the agenda and asked those present to introduce themselves.

2. Evaluation of Old and New Proposed Projects

- Review of Criteria:

Robinson explained that project criteria had been developed over the years to rank sidewalk projects. He said that the criteria were meant to provide an objective way to sort through projects. He pointed out that the criteria were a tool to assist in the decision-making process, not a final authority for funding projects.

Rollo pointed out that the pedestrian usage metric was potentially problematic because it did not account for an area's potential for pedestrian usage once sidewalks were installed. Sherman explained that density, proximity to transit stops, and the walk score captured the potential pedestrian usage. Robinson acknowledged the difficulty and noted a few other characteristics that played into the potential pedestrian usage for an area, which included separation from the road and traffic volume.

- Presentation of Preliminary Evaluation by Plan Department using objective measures

Robinson spoke about the prioritization sheet and briefly described noteworthy items. He said green-shaded projects were ongoing and yellow-shaded items were new requests for sidewalks. He explained how he used the criteria to rank the new project requests. He then reweighted the list. He noted that dates were listed to show when projects were introduced to the committee.

- Disclosures of any Conflicts of Interest

Sherman disclosed that he lived on a street that was on the project list.

- Discussion of Sidewalk Priorities (including new requests)

Robinson provided a brief overview of the new requests.

Robinson described the first new proposed project, located on Third Street between Walker Street and Patterson Drive. He said there was a new development proposal near that area put forward by Life Designs, who wanted to build some affordable housing. He said there was a gap in the sidewalk at that location. Sherman displayed the location in question. Robinson explained that the project would complete the missing gap in the sidewalk. He indicated the pieces of sidewalk that would be needed. Sherman asked if the developer would install sidewalks as part of the construction process. Robinson said installing sidewalks would be required and indicated where those sidewalks would be installed. Sherman asked if there was a determinate variance for the project. Robinson said he did not know. Sturbaum noted there was a network of sidewalks and paths at The Dillon apartment complex that tied into the sidewalks in the area. There were other sidewalks nearby that were also being added. Robinson pointed out that even though the development project had been going through the approval process, there was no guarantee it would actually be built. He said that it was not uncommon for a project to start going through the approval process but then not be built, perhaps due to funding issues. He said that could affect the scope of the sidewalk work.

Robinson described the project on Allen Street, which extended from Strong Drive to Adams Street. He explained that the request was to install a sidewalk on the south side of Allen Street where there were a few missing segments. He pointed out that it was a fairly dense residential area and there were a number of apartments that would be served by the sidewalk. He also said the area was served by public transit. He said the Planning and Transportation Department (Planning) had received complaints about speeding on Allen Street, which might have been due to nearby construction forcing vehicles to take Allen Street as a detour. Sherman asked if Planning was considering installing traffic calming devices in the area. Cibor said Planning had received requests for such devices in addition to the request for the sidewalk. He said speeds were high on the street.

Robinson described the Arlington Road project, which extended from 17th Street to Prow Road. Sherman displayed the location in question. Robinson said there were no sidewalks on either side of Arlington Road north of 17th Street all the way to Prow Road. Sturbaum asked for an update on 17th Street sidewalks. Cibor said the 17th Street project would include adding a path on the north side and a sidewalk on the south side of 17th Street that would extend west and go over Interstate 69. Rollo asked if that project was funding through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or through the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). Cibor said INDOT. Granger asked when work would begin on that project. Cibor said the project was in the right-of-way appraisal stage. He expected construction to begin in 2019. Robinson noted a public process had just finished to gather public input on aesthetic details of the project. Rollo asked about resurfacing 17th Street. Cibor said the Public Works was aware of the need to resurface the street and planned to do short-term repairs until it could be resurfaced. Sherman asked if the project was still on the sidewalk list. Robinson said yes.

Robinson reviewed the request for sidewalks along Oakdale Drive. Robinson said a manager of nearby property submitted the request to the committee. Robinson said there was not a lot of density within the quarter-mile midpoint radius that was normally considered. However, Robinson said there were a lot of people who accessed their residences via Oakdale Drive, and that area was very high density (Oakdale Square and Hidden Hills at Oakdale). He noted that there was an apartment complex near the road, which had its own network of sidewalks. Sturbaum asked if Oakdale Drive was maintained by the city. Robinson thought it was. Sherman asked who would otherwise be responsible for putting in sidewalks. Robinson said the policies had changed over the years. He said sidewalks were typically required when a new neighborhood was created, or when property was improved. Sturbaum wondered if the lot in question might be developable in the future, which could trigger a requirement to build sidewalks. Robinson thought it would be difficult to build on the lot. Sherman asked if it would be possible to connect sidewalks on Oakdale Drive to paths along Bloomfield Road. Robinson thought it would be difficult to match the grades of the two sidewalks.

Robinson described the project for Wimbledon Lane, which extended from Montclair Avenue to High Street. Sturbaum asked if a recent regulation would require property owners on that street to build sidewalks. Sherman explained the new rule only applied to local streets with adjacent sidewalks. Robinson said the sidewalk network abruptly ended on Montclair Avenue, north of Wimbledon Lane. Robinson said the city, through the MPO, was looking to convert the sidewalk on High Street to a wider path as part of Jackson Creek trail network, which might happen in 2021 or 2022. Robinson said sidewalks on Wimbledon Lane would be good for connectivity, but noted Wimbledon Lane also had low traffic volume. Rollo remembered that the area was previously opposed to adding sidewalks but said that the demographics of the neighborhood had changed.

Robinson reviewed the request for sidewalks near Bryan Park, which he noted was a general request. He said it was initially hard to evaluate the request because there was no specified area for the project. He said that after discussions with the individual who made the request, the area was narrowed to the southwest corner of Bryan Park. Sherman reminded the committee of previous sidewalk work that had taken place along the west entrance to the park. Sturbaum asked if additional clarification would be needed to figure out the exact location of the request. Robinson said yes, as the original request just asked for sidewalks anywhere in the neighborhood. Robinson said the city had also been discussing various traffic-calming options with the neighborhood, to possibly be located east of Bryan Park on Sheridan Drive and Southdowns Drive. He said there were other possible traffic-calming measure that could be located west of the park on Allen Street. Sturbaum asked if speeding was occurring on both Sheridan Drive and Southdowns Drive. Robinson said the traffic-calming request was more focused on the downhill portion of Sheridan Drive.

Rollo asked to add a location to the list. He asked that Maxwell Street between Miller Drive and Short Street be added. He said it was pertinent because there was a planned unit development (PUD) proposed for the south end of Maxwell Street being considered by the Plan Commission. He thought the PUD would add more than 30 residential units to the area. He suggested that perhaps the developer could assist with installing sidewalks as part of the PUD process.

Sherman invited the Watsons to speak about the Mitchell Street project, which extended from Maxwell Lane to Circle Drive. The Watsons said there had never been sidewalks on that portion of the street. Betsy Watson described water drainage issues in the area and some of the damage it caused to yards and driveways. She said the water issues affected the ability of residents to sell homes in the area. She said the area had a lot of walkers. She asked that the city help add sidewalks and improve the storm water issues. Sherman clarified that the Watsons would like the city to address storm water issues if the Sidewalk Committee decided to construct sidewalks in the area. Betsy Watson said that was correct. Sherman asked if design work had been completed for the project. Aten said the designs were approximately 80% complete. Rollo said the request for Mitchell Street was originally made in 2012. He said there had since been a pedestrian lane painted on Mitchell Street. He pointed out that a sidewalk on that street would help connect to a number of other areas with sidewalks. He pointed out that many people walked up Mitchell Street toward the university. Watson said there was a bus stop at Maxwell Lane and Mitchell Street.

Sturbaum called the committee's attention to Graham Drive, between Rogers Street and Rockport Road. He said that a number of ideas had been considered for Graham Drive, including traffic calming devices, turning the road into a one-way street, and installing sidewalks. He pointed out that the bus stops on the road were simply signs along the side of the street, and people waiting for the bus were waiting in the grass close to the road. He said that there might not be funds to address the area in 2018 but thought it should be considered for the future. Granger asked if it would be possible to address the area sooner. Cibor said that the neighborhood supported temporary traffic calming devices, which the city was looking at installing. He said there was no consensus on turning Graham into a one-way street. Granger asked when those devices would be installed. Cibor said before June 10, 2018.

Sherman displayed the cost allocation worksheet. He suggested that the committee look at projects that had received past investments and were in need of future funding to be completed. He displayed projects that had already received some funding.

Rollo asked if the \$198,000 cost for the Mitchell Street project included storm water improvements. Fleig and Cibor both thought that price included the storm water costs. Rollo asked if the Utilities Department could assist with that cost. Aten said he would get back to Rollo.

Sturbaum asked for a summary on the Union Street project. Robinson said there were sidewalks on the west side of Union Street, but sections were missing on the east side. Rollo asked if traffic on Union Street made crossing the road difficult. Robinson said there was some activity since the street was so close to campus. Cibor said it was not a low-volume street but it did not have a particularly high volume of traffic either. Sturbaum said he was not enthusiastic about the project. Rollo said he would prefer to add crosswalks rather than build a redundant sidewalk on the east.

Cibor described the worksheet, which showed previous allocations from the city administration or the committee. He briefly described the columns displayed, which included the design cost and construction cost.

Sturbaum asked if the South Walnut project filled a missing gap. Cibor said yes. Rollo pointed out that it was also a relatively cheap project.

Rollo asked if the intersection improvement project at Moores Pike and College Mall Road could be combined with the sidewalk project. Cibor said the sidewalk project would have to be an independent project because MPO funding for the intersection improvements did not include sidewalk work.

Granger confirmed the list was the priority list from the previous year. Granger said the committee seemed to be in agreement that the Union Street project was not a priority.

Robinson suggested that the committee attempt to get a project in each phase of the cycle, so that some projects could always be in the design phase while others were under construction. He thought always having a project in the pipeline would help keep the process moving. Sherman asked what the shelf life was for a project design before it would have to be redone. Aten said it depended on the area but estimated five years for some projects.

Fleig responded to Rollo's earlier question about the Mitchell Street project. She said there had been a placeholder of \$10,000 in the Utilities Department budget for storm water improvements for the project. She said the actual storm water cost for the project was closer to \$45,000 and did not know if there was sufficient money available.

Rollo said the South Walnut project was justifiable and the committee should make that linkage. Granger and Sturbaum agreed.

Granger said the Moores Pike project had been on the list for a while. Sherman noted there were two parts to that project. He asked if any of the projects on the priority list could be divided up further. Cibor said the projects were already broken up as much as possible. Sherman suggested that the committee could also select projects where more information was needed about cost.

Granger suggested that the committee get cost estimates for a few projects. Sturbaum wanted to see cost estimates for Graham Drive. Granger suggested getting estimates for 10th Street.

Rollo confirmed that the work to be completed at the Moores Pike intersection could not be combined with the sidewalk work to lower the cost of the sidewalk project. Cibor thought not. Sherman said the cost for the sidewalk work had already been reduced over the years and used to be much higher.

Sturbaum said he would like to see an estimate of cost for Third Street between Walker Street and Patterson Drive.

Sherman asked the committee to confirm the locations where it wanted estimates. Cibor also wanted to confirm the extent of the projects. Cibor indicated the location of previous work done on 10th Street. Granger thought getting an estimate for sidewalks from Deckard Drive to Russell Road on the west side of 10th Street would be appropriate. Rollo agreed. Cibor asked if the estimate should be for just the design or the design and a rough estimate for construction. Granger said she would like an estimate for design and a rough estimate for construction. Sturbaum asked why a portion of sidewalk west of 10th Street was set so far off the road. He wondered if there would be issues with the right-of-way or the slope. Aten said that area was in the county and he had not looked at it.

Cibor clarified that the scope of the estimate for Graham Drive was from Rockport Road to Rogers Street. Granger asked Cibor to also look into the cost if Graham Drive were converted to a one-way street. Cibor said it would not change the design much, but it might save on right-of-way acquisition and construction costs. Sturbaum thought having a comparison of cost would help the neighborhood make a decision.

Sherman verified the locations where the committee wanted additional information. Rollo also asked for cost information about the missing gaps on the west side of Maxwell Street, from Short Street to Miller Drive. He thought it would be timely given the possible PUD in the location. Granger also asked for the stormwater information for the Mitchell Street project.

Sherman asked how long it would take to get the estimates. Aten said he would try to have them ready for the committee's next meeting.

3. Traffic-Calming

Sherman confirmed additions to the traffic-calming list. Robinson noted Planning had purchased some temporary equipment that the committee might consider using in making its decisions.

4. Schedule Future Meetings

The committee's next meeting was May 2, 2018.

5. Other Matters

Sherman asked how the committee would like to approve minutes from previous meetings. Granger said that the minutes could be approved at the next meeting of the committee.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.