



3RD WARD MEETING MINUTES – ALDERMAN DENISE RODD

April 9, 2014

AGENDA

- Derek Peebles, Civil Engineer
 - Pedestrian Signals
 - Complete Streets Program
- Citywide Issues
- Topics for Discussion.

WELCOME

Thank you for coming and welcome to our guest, Derek Peebles, Civil Engineer.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS/SIGNALS

Residents of 3rd Ward (Hap and Stephanie) had asked if City of Des Plaines will be providing audible pedestrian signals (APS) for the visibly challenged. Unfortunately, the residents asking were unable to attend the April 9 meeting, deciding instead to vacation this week in Florida (lucky residents). Denise will follow up with them and Derek can be available for questions.

Transportation system, years ago, was geared toward the automobile with pedestrians as an afterthought. The design was done around the “able-bodied” person. IDOT has jurisdiction over many DP streets, and a survey shows about a third of people do not drive (10% being adults). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) initially began by focusing on buildings becoming handicapped accessible. New guidelines from 2011 are turning focus to sidewalks and cross signals. Derek currently attended a demo put out by IDOT of crosswalk signals designed to function for the vision, hearing, and physically challenged pedestrians. Pedestrian Signal guidelines do not take effect until July 2014.

Accessible equipment like the push button system have gone through testing at the state level and is preferred state wide. Crosswalks will have push buttons for each cross intersection and be located on stand alone posts with specific measurements to an intersection. Push buttons will have a locator line, approximately 10 feet, and have an audible beep with 2 types of tones: first tone will get the person to the button, a second, verbal and faster, tone when pushed guides the pedestrian through the intersection. There will be directional markings on the button crossing plus LED indicators. One complaint has been the constant beeping can become annoying, therefore is situated far enough away and at a volume so as not affect houses/residents nearby.

Why need a button? There are fixed traffic times and push buttons make it easier for pedestrians. All signals are pre-empted by an EVP emergency signal for emergency vehicles to get through an intersection.

How will no-signal crosswalks be addressed? Active Transportation Alliance is working to change having cars stop as opposed to cars yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks. This is a bit beyond Des Plaines since IDOT holds jurisdiction over most streets.

Market Square Parking Lot has no mirrors on the east side, and cars come out blindly. What can be done? Mirrors have been there in the past, not sure why they disappeared. Derek followed up, and the mirror will be replaced.

Current pedestrian signals have a “countdown” system to allow for pedestrians to cross the street. Actual signals in the suburbs provide for auto traffic giving 30 second default green plus 3 seconds more per car making it even more difficult for pedestrians to cross. The Countdown system does not work with railroad crossings and will not be used for that reason in the downtown area.

When will crosswalk signals be implemented? IDOT applied for a grant to replace signals in bulk and includes stop lights. LED newer technology provides bulbs that are brighter, last longer and will not lose full signal. Downside is LED does not produce heat and could cause light blockage, as was the case this past winter if snow blew a certain direction. This is being addressed by manual clearing when that happens. Grant covers traffic lights including the reconstruction of a crosswalk/intersection and when the accessible cross walks are implemented. So far, 23 are done. The audible pedestrian signal request was submitted for 4 intersections including Lee and Algonquin and Downtown. Plan is to eventually get the rest of intersections completed.

COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Grants have been developed for communities by the US Department of Health and Welfare, which can be used for projects that improve the health of a community. A simple four-page document contains guidelines for all different means such as cars, pedestrians and bicycle riders. Des Plaines is getting the most advantage from the grant by using it to rebuild a fair amount of the city streets (approx. 4% with adding on 5-10% in future). Federal financial grants take time to receive.

Every project to be done will be viewed under the Complete Streets Policy: Example: IDOT comes in to do a repair, and the Des Plaines Department of Engineering has a say in what improvements are done. This is how Des Plaines is able to get the accessible crosswalks.

What about adding a pedestrian crossing at Wolf and Greenview? This is a busy intersection with dog walkers and children crossing at this intersection to get to West Park and to the RTA bus that takes them to Maine West. There are limits to adding a crosswalk. Wolf Road is under IDOT's jurisdiction. IDOT would need to approve a crosswalk, which would be a stand alone project. IDOT's policy has been to implement special projects only when a street reconstruction is scheduled. It would take a long time and a lot of persuasion to have it happen on Wolf Rd. since reconstruction is not scheduled at this time. IDOT prefers that people cross at the light at Thacker/Dempster. From a design perspective, a pedestrian refuge median such as the one put in by the Metra station on Miner Street would work here. When reconstruction eventually happens here, IDOT would do a study - count the number of pedestrians crossing the street or standing in the turn lane as they try to get across the street.

Wolf Road north of Weller Creek Ditch (on the east side, just south of Golf) is being worked and re-scaped to make crossings ADA appropriate. Reconstruction will put in a sidewalk without stairs.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS:

- Residents are receiving letters on their street being redone. There is a difference between reconstruction and rehabilitation depends on the terminology in the letter as to what is being done.
 - Reconstruction is going down to sub level and includes all curbs
 - Rehabilitation is selected repairs to curbs.
- Sidewalks, how are they decided? Residents call in and location goes on a list to be reviewed - first come, first served. An inspector goes out to the site and uses criteria based on condition of sidewalk to determine if replaced.
- Why is it patchy and not a whole sidewalk? City doesn't do whole blocks just the area where the call indicated a repair.
- What about water main? City covers water main to parkway.
- Service line at Main was replaced, where does responsibility change between City and resident? Derek followed up and replied that the homeowner is responsible for the water service from the "B-box" valve to their home. The City is responsible for everything streetside of the B-box, and including the B-box. Note that the B-box is typically located within the parkway.

CITYWIDE ISSUES (Follow up):

- Snow Removal: How do we get snow off sidewalks by businesses? Pedestrians are walking in streets because of snow not removed. Cost is half a million to do snow removal for entire town. Canadian RR to River Road is cleared by businesses. Lee Street hasn't been entirely clear and placing a fine for not clearing walks may not help because it could be cheaper to pay the fine that clear walks. It comes to an all or none scenario. Downtown uses TIF money for snow removal.
- Ambulance: Item was tabled until April 21 as a courtesy to Alderman Brookman who could not attend Monday's meeting. Alderman Brookman is seeking outside counsel as he believes the Mayor's request to recind was out of bounds.
- Health Insurance for Elected Officials: This will not be on the agenda until May because of the ambulance topic. Recap: City offers elected officials health insurance at a rate of 12% of cost with city picking up the rest of a cost of approximately \$118,000 this year. Denise feels this is money that could be put to a better use, such as the food pantry or a charitable contribution. The obstacle is 3 aldermen are required to put the item on the agenda, so far there are only 2. Once it is on the agenda then it can be talked through in a public meeting. Naperville is also discussing removing this perk in their Council meetings now.
- Voting NWMC Committee: Council has voted for a \$10,000 membership a Northwest Municipal Conference task force to help with drafting Pension legislation. We now have a physical presence - the Finance Director will attend meeting(s) and help in the crafting of pension bills. This is specific with legislation and a group of municipalities and how to deal with pension issues. Need to be a member to vote.
- The bill recently signed by Governor Quinn is being tested constitutionally.

- April 7, House passed a Bill indicating the number of personnel manning of a Fire Department. Municipality and Union determines the proper manpower for equipment. If no agreement, it goes to arbitration. Bill is moving into Senate. We would not lose our 3 fire stations, it could affect personnel.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- Railing: JB Metals was picked to make railings to be placed at outside eateries in Des Plaines. City had requests for proposals to make the rails and decided to purchase the 2nd highest (JB Metals) at a difference of \$2,000 between proposals 1 and 2. We picked JB Metals for their quality of their work and referrals, the process they use which cuts down on maintenance, and providing the product in a timely manner. There are 8 restaurants (don't know which) requesting the rails. What if a restaurant wants tables without rails? Will check.
- Messages can be sent to the Aldermen through website showing name of the sender with a button requesting a reply. It is an individual preference on how often an Alderman checks email. Nothing comes requiring a reply from the Alderman's end.
- Residents can speak to an item when it is brought up for discussion at Council Meeting.
- Thacker and Jeannette are under construction as part of the Storm Water Master Plan. Might want to avoid that area during construction.
- Blood Drive takes place April 26 at Fire Station 3.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, May 14, at Prairie Lakes, 7:00 p.m.

All are welcome to the April 21 Council Meeting --- the more the merrier.

TO CONTACT DENISE

- Please contact Denise at drodd@desplaines.org or call/text (847) 514-6318
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