

SAUK CENTRE CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2010 – 2:00 P.M.

The Sauk Centre City Council met in for a public information meeting on Wednesday, September 8, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers pursuant to due notice being given thereof. Present were Mayor Brad Kirckof, Council Members Dave Thomas, Warren Stone, and Al Coenen. Absent was Councilman Keith Johnson. Also present were City Administrator Vicki Willer, City Planner Sarah Morton, Public Works Director Butch Wessel, and City Engineers Keith Yapp and Brian Lintgen. Mayor Kirckof presided thereat.

Mayor Kirckof thanked those in attendance for coming and explained that the purpose of these meetings (scheduled for 2:00, 4:00 and 6:00) is to provide information to the public on the proposed 2011 Storm Water Project and to gather feedback. The project is intended to address flooding and water quality issues in the City. First there will be a presentation by the City Engineer followed by a question and answer session and then an opportunity to individually find out what the proposed assessment is for a specific parcel. If after this meeting the Council decides to move forward, there will be a public hearing at a later date.

Mayor Kirckof then turned the meeting over to City Engineer Yapp.

Yapp reiterated that this is an information meeting about what the proposed project is and its impact on the property owners. We are looking for feedback so we have it from a design standpoint and also so the Council can determine if they wish to move forward. Yapp intends to cover why we are looking at this project, what we hope to accomplish and what the assessment means to each individually. The next step after tonight, if the Council chooses, is to have a Public Improvement Hearing where the Council will receive official testimony, after which they will decide whether to move forward with the project.

Yapp pointed out on the map where the chronic long term flooding problems have been occurring including the Walnut and 4th intersection, the Grove Lake triangle area and the Wobegon Trail/Hwy 71 (viaduct) area. This project is intended to resolve and mitigate those flooding problems.

Not only is the project intended to address flooding, it is also to improve the water quality of Sauk Lake. Right now, a large amount of storm water drains directly into Sauk Lake through an outlet at Sinclair Lewis Park. With this project, the majority of the water will be rerouted and discharged into the wetland on the east side of town where it can be filtered and treated prior to reaching the river.

Currently 96.3 acres drain directly north into Sauk Lake. Several projects in the past have resolved some, but not all, of the problem. The existing pipes are sized for a one year storm event based on the amount of area being drained and the impervious surfaces from the developed property. Currently two parallel pipes run under Elm, however they are under capacity and overwhelmed. Also, the junction structure by trail cannot handle the amount of water flowing through in a large rain event.

In addition, commercial areas generate more storm water than residential areas due to larger impervious surfaces. Also commercial areas tend to have more pollutants which are draining directly into Sauk Lake.

This plan will reroute part of the 96 acres immediately draining into Sauk Lake. There will be a new storm sewer trunk line installed from Walnut along 4th to the east and ending at the wetland and the river. There will also be new storm sewer from 8th to 4th on Getty and Oak Street Circle which takes some of the area to the South that currently drains to the underpass. This will now flow into the new trunk on 4th. There will also be some work done on 5th between Elm and Oak. Overall this will remove 61 acres of area from draining directly into Sauk Lake. This will leave about 35 acres that will continue to utilize the existing system.

Yapp reviewed the map of drainage area and explained that the assessment area is the entire tributary area that will benefit from the project. This includes the 35 acres that will continue to utilize the existing system which will now be able to perform adequately with a smaller drainage basin and also those areas whose storm water will utilize the new trunk to move their runoff to the new treatment area in the wetland at the east end of 4th street near Sauk River. Portions of the existing system will be utilized wherever feasible to minimize project costs. He understands that some assessments for various storm water projects have been levied in past years. This proposal will give credit for those assessments against this project.

The preliminary cost estimates are:

Construction	2,149,000.00
Contingency	322,000.00
Engineering Admin	<u>387,000.00</u>
Total	2,858,000.00

The project is proposed to be constructed in two phases. East/West along 4th Street one year and the North/South area the second year.

There will be some street replacement where street needs to be replaced due to storm water upgrade and is included in the numbers. All work is intended to be done between the curbs of the existing streets.

The assessments have been calculated based on a typical single family unit. This estimate is \$1,862.00. There will be an added cost if a new water service or sewer service is required. There are estimated that 41 new water services will be installed and 39 new sewer services.

Based on current policy the City is paying for half the cost, the Public Utility is paying for the Water and Sewer lines in the street and the balance will be assessed against the property. In addition, those who have paid previously paid assessments toward pipes that are being replaced are getting credited those dollars back and the City is picking those up.

50% Street & 50% Storm assessed over tributary area prorated by land use runoff by area

Item	Estimated Project Cost	Assessable Units	Unit	Est Asmnt per Equiv Single Family unit	Typ Single Family unit (.25 ac)	City Cost per unit	City Cost	PUC Cost
Streets	\$ 1,055,494.65	6,470,652	SF	\$ 0.0816	\$ 888.19	\$ 0.0816	\$ 527,747.32	
Storm Sewer	1,158,244.47	6,470,652	SF	0.0895	974.65	0.0895	579,122.23	
Water Main	237,116.86		LS	-		-	-	237,116.86
Sanitary Sewer	236,714.21		LS	-		-	-	236,714.21
Water Service	100,820.65	41	Ea	2,459.04	2,459.04	-	-	-
Sewer Service	69,492.50	39	Ea	1,781.86	1,781.86	-	-	-
Est Total Cost	\$ 2,857,883.33				\$ 6,103.74		\$ 1,106,869.56	\$ 473,831.07
							\$ 51,994.62	Prev Asmnts
							\$ 1,158,864.17	
					Typical Single Family with out Service	\$ 1,862.84		

Public Comment

Resident suggested that the City knew what they were doing and intentionally installed an undersized system in the first place. He stated he feels the City should pick up the whole costs due to its error in judgment and that the residents shouldn't have to foot the bill. Stated the timing is bad due to a recession or depression going on.

Resident thanked the City for providing this informational meeting. Asked if anyone is pursuing grants for the project. *Willer explained that several avenues for funding are being pursued including grants from the Watershed, MPCA, DNR, and DEED along with looking for Federal Dollars for infrastructure. Yapp stated the numbers tonight are assuming no outside funding. Any other funding would reduce the cost.*

Resident commented that when you say the City picks it up you really mean that the residents pick it up because the City doesn't generate money other than taxes. Feels everyone should pay through the General Fund rather than singling out those in the area.

Resident asked if they would have an opportunity to vote on the project. *The project will not be up for vote, we are having these meetings to gather input so the Council can vote.*

Resident stated the City should consider a series of holding ponds and weirs. Stated that the City could purchase houses, tear them down and build ponds to cut down the cost of 2.5 million. *Yapp explained you would need a large area to that. In this developed area there is not much opportunity here unless we get a large tract of homes in a group.*

Resident stated he understands assessments for sewer, water street etc. He asked what percent is his property tax going to increase to pay the City's share. *This depends on the term of the note. Payment could be ten percent of the overall levy so city share of taxes could go up ten percent.*

Resident asked how big is the pipe at the end and if the fact that this is all river bottom has been taken into consideration. *Pipe is 60 inches at east end and 27 inches at south end. No ground water is being taken into the system so being in an old riverbed is not an issue.*

Resident asked how much is being spent due to the granite? *Soil borings have not been done yet. The information tonight is based on information we have from other projects. There are projects costs allocated for rock excavation.*

Resident questioned if this was really a problem. She can only remember flooding one time in the ten years she has lived here. *Wessel stated there have been flooding problems four times this year but on average about two times a year.*

Resident asked how old is the existing 4th Street storm sewer. *40 plus years.*

Resident asked how long flooding has been occurring. *More and more often over the past twenty years. There is more blacktop, larger rooftops, more development contributing to the runoff.*

Resident asked how much money the City has been setting aside in anticipation of this project. *The City has not put funds aside for this particular project.*

Resident stated this has been going on for 65 years. Suggested it should have been fixed rather than building a city hall.

Resident stated that now is not the time when the economy is slow. Nobody should be spending money right now. *Yapp agrees we have to balance when projects are done. However, currently they are seeing a bidding climate where costs are coming in 25% under estimate. That along with very favorable interest rates make the overall costs substantially lower that might be realized in future years.*

Resident stated he would hope this turns out better than Ash Street.

Resident asked why is Willow affected? *Even though the trunk line it is not going down Willow, the areas is benefited in that the existing system can now take the storm water away once the other areas are no longer part of the existing system.*

Resident asked how many people are involved. *Over 600 properties with 519 mailed notices.*

Resident asked if we have considered taking this disadvantage and use it to our advantage and create hydroelectric power for the City. *There is not enough elevation and head to create power. We have looked at enhancing resources at discharge. We are removing discharge from going into the lake. By rerouting we are mitigating pollutants getting into the river because of the large floodplain that has a large infiltration area.*

Resident stated that if we put in this system and dig into the old red tile sewer system, we are going to bust that system. He asked if you then just fix that one spot or tear out that whole system. *A good chunk of the sanitary system is being replaced. Half the water main is being replaced. The PUC is taking advantage of the open street to replace their lines. The services will be assessed but the PUC is paying for the lines in the street. 41 water services and 39 sewer services are intended to be replaced. If you are one of those, you would be assessed for that. PUC is looking at whether they are giving some sort of credit for those as well.*

Resident asked what the assessment would be for 15 years if you were one of those who have water and sewer. *If we move forward to the hearing we would calculate that out and have it available.*

Resident stated that he doesn't think it is right that people who get their assessment deferred due to age or disability have to pay them when they sell. They should be written off. *The City has authority to defer assessments until sale. There would have to be some criteria to identify who would qualify for a complete write-off. This would increase what everyone else would pay.*

Resident stated the City should save for this project first and then do it. *The City has done a lot in the last five years as far as cutting costs and has taken a strong stand on holding taxes down. Expenses have been reduced. We could have taken that savings and put it aside and earmarked it for future projects but taxes were reduced instead.*

Resident asked if the \$1,862 number is the same for everyone in tributary area. *Yes, the same rate is applied to all areas within each land use. The number will go up and down based on lot size. \$1,862 is the average size residential lot in the area.*

Resident asked why the trail overpass at Hwy 71 (viaduct) is included adding they specifically had a storm sewer assessment to fix that once already and asked why it wasn't done right the first time. *There was a storm water retention area put in east of the trail overpass which was assessed. There is now considerable more water flowing into that area than when the project was done. This project will divert the water coming down Getty from the water tower areas from going into that basin and will instead go to the new trunk. That will give this system better opportunity to work.*

Resident suggested the flooding at the trail overpass isn't a problem because the water eventually drains. People should know better than drive into a flooded roadway. *This is the public safety part of the project.*

Resident suggested that the City put this on their schedule for fifteen years out and save some money. During that time a fair amount of foreclosed homes will be tore down and new houses won't be able to be built on those lots because they are too small so the runoff will be less. Resident further suggested that if costs go up twenty percent over the next fifteen years we would still be better off.

Resident stated that when the Ash Street project was done the storm sewer assessment went up from the preliminary. Does that mean the \$1,862.84 will also go up before the end? *This is an estimate, it is not anticipated that it will go up. Other factors caused Ash Street Storm to go up.*

Resident stated that it is going to be very deep going under Main Street and asked what will happen to the other infrastructure there. *The proposed storm is 24 feet deep so will go under the water and sewer lines by tunneling. Main Street will not be opened up.*

Resident stated that the projects from 97 to 98 never alleviated the problem yet they were assessed. *There will be credit given for assessments within the district that was for pipes that are proposed to be replaced.*

Mayor Kirckof thanked everyone for their attendance and input. He stated the City understands the economic times. However, at some point in time we have to have a plan to correct the problems.

With no further questions or comments the meeting recessed at 3:12 p.m.

The second session was called to order at 4:05. Note that Public Works Director Wessel has left the meeting.

Mayor Kirckof repeated his welcome and overview.

Yapp presented the Engineers report.

Public Comments/Questions

Resident questioned how the drainage basin was determined. *The basin is determined by elevations from known data. Verification in the field will occur when the project moves forward. Everything within the blue line on the map drains into the area.*

Resident asked what construction is planned on Walnut. *There is no construction planned on Walnut except for the 4th Street intersection.*

Resident asked why the City allowed a rezoning to C2 which allows more tar if runoff is a problem.

Resident asked how long the business district will be shut down. *Highway 71 will not be shut down. Crossing is through tunneling.*

Resident asked how many people are flooded. He doesn't feel he will receive any benefit from this so why should he pay for it? *The benefit is the gained capacity in the system by removal of acres that currently drain into it.*

How many people affected? *About 590-600*

How many are complaining of flooding? *There has been damage to homes at Grove Lake and 4th/Walnut. The flooding at the viaduct is a traffic safety issue. We will look at this more closely as we move forward.*

Resident stated he assumes the City is pursuing funding from the State. *Yes, among others.*

Resident who lives by Sauk River by Richmond stated that this area of city is highly infiltratable. There is a mile of pipe being laid for this. There are five acres of boulevard. Suggested

boulevards be used for retention and rain gardens so a smaller system can be installed. *Not everybody's blvd is suitable for infiltration. We are looking at ways to have a combination of treatments.*

Resident estimates water will come out of the pipe at 100 cubic feet per second. He calculates the mitigation cost for replacement of the wetland will eat up the contingency. He wants to see infiltration used. *Costs for the ponding area are included in the numbers. We are looking at using rain gardens etc.*

Watershed representative stated that if you use your "best effort" first you have a better chance for funding when applying for grants. Utilization of rain gardens etc. help. *Landowners need to be interested in that, but that is a consideration.*

Resident asked if any study was done to split the project so the water from Main toward Industrial Park is reverted to the pond to the West. *The City looked at options to split the water. Council decided based on costs and their plan to remove water from Sauk Lake and the elevations that this plan was preferred. The Pond to the West drains to Sauk Lake and the uphill elevation would require pumps and lifts.*

Resident asked if there was an additional assessment for replacing 4th Street. *No, the costs are already included in the storm assessment.*

With no further questions of comments, Mayor Kirckof recessed the meeting at 5:20 p.m

The third session was called to order at 6:05. Note that Councilman Thomas is no longer in attendance.

Mayor Kirckof repeated his welcome and overview.

Yapp presented the Engineers report.

Public Comments/Questions

Resident asked how much this will cost to each person. *The average assessment for the storm portion is \$1,862 which is about \$19.00 per month. If you need both a water and sewer service the amount per month is about \$52.00.*

Resident stated he heard the cutoff to the North was Sinclair Lewis Avenue but that is not what the map shows. *The northerly boundary is near Park Road.*

Resident asked how long will street be tore up? *One construction season each phase. (East/West phase and North/South phase) We would be trying to break each into sub phases. Some areas require more utilities besides storm such as sanitary sewer and water. You can't always put three pipes at same time because they are at different depths and locations. They need to be sequenced. The last improvement is the street itself.*

Resident referred to the outline on the map of the drainage area and asked how the outline was determined? *The areas within the blue line are the area tributary to the proposed system. Storm water runoff from this land is going to this system. It is based on the best information we have from elevation surveys. Crews will be doing physical ground surveys to make a final determination.*

Resident stated he appreciates what the City is trying to do but suggests more people should pay for it. This is structured so everyone that has parcels in it pays for it. He suggests everyone benefits from it so the whole City should pay for it. *This is split so that everyone pays a portion and those that benefit pay a portion.*

Mayor Kirckof explained the existing policy and how this trunk line will be for the benefit of everyone whose property drains to it. According to current policy, they are the ones assessed for half and the General Fund pays for half.

Resident asked how assessments are determined and if it is based on paved vs. not paved. *Assessment is based on land use with a dozen categories such as residential, commercial, etc. There is not an individual assessment of each parcel's impervious surface.*

Resident suggested this is not a problem because the water goes away. Asked how many structures have had damage. *Many homeowners have had significant damage from water. This year there have been four events. Typical is two events but as we have more structures we get more runoff and damage.*

Resident asked if anyone cleans the drains? *Yes. Drains and basins are cleaned and inspected on a regular basis.*

Resident suggested that four or five floods a year doesn't warrant this. It is not his problem!!

Resident stated when his basement flooded in the country he had to fix it on his own. He asked what is his benefit? *The benefit is your storm water is going away.*

Resident stated water is gone half hour after a rain event. What is wrong with letting that happen?

Resident asked why this wasn't done when they did Sinclair Lewis Avenue for which he was assessed. *The Sinclair Lewis project did not have a storm assessment. There will be no construction on Sinclair Lewis Avenue.*

Resident suggested the Engineer was at fault that the Elm Street lines are under capacity.

Resident stated that wrong grates are on the drains at Oak and 4th.

Resident stated the grates at Elm and 5th and Oak and 5th are too far away from the slope so you have to walk on ice all winter.

Resident stated he was told the Elm Street project would fix it all, what guarantee is there that this project will fix it and that there won't be flooding. *This design will not handle all storms. It is based on a five year rainfall event which is about 3.5 inches of water. It is not economical to build to worst case scenario.*

Resident stated the water is going to keep coming more and more and more. Has that been taken into consideration? *Everything within the basin has mostly been developed. Areas outside drain elsewhere.*

Resident asked how long will this last? *System is designed to last for fifty years.*

Resident stated for 65 years this town has been flooding. The forefathers put zero dollars aside for this. There are some up for election. Ask them if they are going to spend this money. *There are two ways to look at it. You could pay for it first through taxes and then get the benefit later or you could utilize the benefit while you pay for it.*

Resident asked how the interest rate is set. *That is based on the rate for the bond. We are seeing historically low bond rates right now. This is also a good time to do a project because the bidding climate is lower than we have seen for many years.*

Resident asked if the Project would be bonded? *Yes, we would borrow the money.*

Resident asked if the City has heard of the Obama money. *The City is looking at the proposed infrastructure funding allocations. They are structured for new facilities and not a lot of opportunity for rural areas but we are meeting on that.*

Resident asked if this was going to cause problems to the river? *The water goes there now, just a different route.*

Resident suggested that this is a problem only for those who own the houses that flood. Don't make it the problem for everyone.

With no further questions or comments, Mayor Kirckof adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Brad A. Kirckof

City Administrator Vicki M. Willer

