

Dawson City Council Public Hearing
July 27th, 2021
5:00 p.m.

The Dawson City Council met on Tuesday, July 27th at 5:00 p.m. at the Swimming Pool Park Band Shelter. To accommodate the large crowd, Terry Overlander lent his PA system.

Councilpersons present: Councilman Charlie Prestholdt, Councilman Vince Adelman, Councilman Jeff Olson, Councilman Dean Petersen

Others present: Mayor Randy Tensen, Interim-City Manager Jill Kemen, Utility Billing/Office Clerk Kristin Daline, Maintenance Superintendent Kurt Collins, City Maintenance Colin Lee, City Attorney Rick Stulz, Jeff Kuhn and Blaine Green with Widseth, Rebecca Kurtz with Ehlers, Dave Hickey, Sue Westby, Butch and Mary Carlson, Lisa DuFrane, Lee Gunderson, Steven Farmen, Peggy Plageman, Burt Faehn, Lowell and Dawn Tyler, Carmen Beninga, Tami Schuelke-Sampson, Duane Hastad, Loren and Gloria Kassel, Lauren Olson, Merle Malecek, Gary and Pat Steinke, Dave Falness, David Hansen, Pat Olson, Ralph and Sue Gerbig, Jon Wager, Tony Aafedt, Zack and Caitlin Gilley, Dale Banken, Gerald Schueller, Donn Mork, Dennis Harding, Robert Lund, Dave Schmitt, Jim Michels, Kim Hahn, Kevin and Jan Savoye, Stan and Sharon Menning, Curtis and Sharon Johnsrud, and Chad Felton.

Mayor Tensen thanked everyone for coming and introduced Jeff Kuhn with Widseth.

Kuhn introduced himself along with Blaine Green and thanked everyone for coming. Kuhn supplied the audience with an outlined map that highlighted homes in the proposed Phase 2 area. All existing utilities need to be replaced. The project will consist of water, sewer, storm sewer, curb and gutter, and pavement. Sidewalks will also be added in areas on certain streets to line up with the Safe Routes to School plan previously started. An estimate of 1.8 million dollars will be assessed to property owners for the street portion of the project. An average size lot will be approximately \$5,500 with a side yard being charged at half rate. Widseth helped Dawson to secure a \$9.9 million dollar grant from Minnesota Public Facility Authority. This accounts for 75% of the water and sewer project. The rest of these funds will be through rate increases. A tax levy will take place to cover the bond needed to pay the remaining portion of the street. Rates were projected off of home values. To pay for storm sewer infrastructure, there will be a capital fee increase. The schedule for the project will continue. The city council will take comments under advisement and vote to end the project or move it forward on August 3rd. If the project moves forward, advertisement for bids would be placed with bid opening to follow in September. Depending on the bids, the project could start in the fall of 2021 or the City could decide to rebid at a later time. Property owners should plan on two years of construction ending possibly in 2023.

Rebecca Kurtz explained the financial end of the project. With the storm sewer updates, the capital improvement fees will need to be increased \$22.20 per month to total \$45.20 on the monthly bills. Streets will be paid with a tax increase. Numbers were explained in detail and could be seen broken down per year, month and day. Along with the tax implications, the assessment numbers were added to the financial spreadsheet. If a property owner chooses to have their assessment applied to their taxes, and average size lot would pay approximately \$490.00 per year.

After Kurtz's explanation, Kuhn discussed you would not see assessments until Fall 2023. There would be a final assessment public hearing and at that time, actual numbers will be presented. With the second phase running through Main Street, the engineers are working with the county on a joint project. Lac qui Parle County planned a mill and overlay along this stretch of the county road, however, due to services that will need to be upgraded, this will be a complete replacement. Sidewalks at that time will become ADA compliant as well. Kuhn also touched on the communication with the railroad on upgrading and repair of the crossings along 5th and 6th Streets.

At this point in the meeting, the mic was turned over for comments and questions.

- Lisa Dufrane asked about the lines from the home to the new infrastructure. She inquired if this had to be done and who's responsibility it is. Kuhn stated that it is not considered part of the project. He said once the lines are exposed the contractor can verify the need to replace at that time. He estimated the cost to replace the lines is \$3,000-\$7,000.
- Mary and Butch Carlson asked how far into the yard beyond the sidewalk does the work happen. Kuhn stated that they try to stay in the right of way as much as possible and should be working close to within the sidewalk limit. Butch asked what happens to the sidewalks on the north side of Chestnut if you want your sidewalk. Kuhn stated that sidewalks will be removed in sections where it is needed. At that time if the property owner chooses to, the sidewalks can be replaced at the property owner's expense or the remainder of the sidewalk could be removed.
- Lee Gunderson commented that he was quoted it would be \$6 - \$7 per square foot of cement for replacement from what he was told. Gunderson asked where the sidewalks stop on Chestnut and Pine Streets. Kuhn stated the project is following the safe routes to school which has sidewalks ending at 12th Street on both Pine and Chestnut. Gunderson asked if 12th Street was going to be a 9-10 ton road for truck traffic. Kuhn said this isn't in the plans but could still be looked at.
- Burt Faehn asked about his maple tree 5 feet east of the edge of the street. Kuhn stated that 388 trees were needing to be removed for part of this project. For better communication, the trees to be removed will be marked with a ribbon and the property owner would then have time to communicate with the engineers or project managers about the reason for the tree to be removed. Typically most trees removed are due to the root system. This is a large investment for the community and the goal is to make it service the needs for years to come.
- Gloria Kassel asked about living on a dead end road and how to get out. Kuhn stated that because alley access is not as prevalent on this side of the City, work would happen in phases so there would always be a way for people to leave.
- Duane Hastad asked if any trees were going to be replaced. Kuhn deferred to the City Council for their ruling on this matter. Councilman Prestholdt stated he does think trees should be given back to property owners requesting them.
- Peggy Plageman commented about her steep sloped driveway. Kuhn asked her to talk to him after the meeting so he can find out more about it. Plageman also mentioned that 6 singles live along the street. This is a huge expense for people who own property. She stated her water bill was very low compared to the fees that are currently charged.

- Lowell Tyler asked about his residence on 15th Street. He was told it would have curb and gutter but no sidewalk. His lot also touches on the back side 14th Street. He asked how that would be assessed to him. He currently owns two lots. Kuhn stated that the final decision on that would be council's responsibility and that it hasn't been decided yet.
- Pat Steinke asked if there would be sidewalks along Walnut Street. No sidewalks will be poured long that street.
- Lauren Olson is concerned with accessibility when closing off roads due to terminal health of her husband. Kuhn stated that special requests will need to be identified and make sure that access is available to enter and leave the property. He will make contractors aware when the project comes to their area. The same is to be said for EMTs and firemen who keep vehicles along the road for easy access to leave if they are on call. The contractor will need a heads up on these special instances.
- Peggy Plageman asked if she can have the sidewalk poured herself or if the contractors have to do it. If a portion of the sidewalk is taken out to the street, it will be replaced at no cost to the owner. This portion will be replaced to the right of way not to the street.
- Butch Carlson asked about the patchy sidewalks along Chestnut's North side. It was confirmed that some could take theirs out while others decide to leave them in.
- Carmen Beninga asked about pavement being put back with no curb and gutter by her home. Kuhn stated he would need to check on that. Kuhn also mentioned that talks are just beginning between the City and Riverside Township regarding an emergency life/safety road access.
- Merle Malecek was concerned with the sidewalk only being on South side of Chestnut when the school is on the North side. Kuhn said due to retaining walls and outlying circumstances that came into play, the South side was chosen to provide safe, handicap accessibility to school.
- Steven Farnen brought a bag of rocks and other debris to share his concern about the current project (phase 1). He shared his opinion about the work that was being performed.
- Lee Gunderson asked why the contractors in the Fall of 2020 were so gung ho and now that ambition has seems to dissipate. Pat Fredlund Olson said she spoke with them and was told the contractors are way ahead of schedule. Kuhn thanked her and stated that Kuechle is in charge of all the subs. The City only has the ability to control Kuechle. Other contractors have multiple projects going on and City's that agree to flexibility often times have a lower cost.
- Sue Westby asked if the grass on the boulevard will be replanted. Kuhn said yes grass reseeding is bid into the project.
- Gary Steinke asked if 12th Street could be redesigned to make it a heavier ton road. Kuhn stated that the plans are not final and council could take a look.
- Burt Faehn inquired about the 25' on either side of Memorial Place that the City seems to own.
- Peggy Plageman shared that the trees are what attracted her to Dawson and it would be awful to have so many removed. It would take a long time to replace the ones coming down and would change the appearance of the City.
- Sue Westby understands Peggy's comments. All the trees have matured and are beautiful. It makes her sick to have to lose so many. She questioned why the City won't help replace the trees that property owners are losing.

- Duane Hastad stated he has helped Madison and Montevideo write tree ordinances. He would be glad to help any way he can. He also asked what will happen to his brick driveway. Kuhn stated they have to get back to him regarding the driveway.
- Peggy Plageman asked when we find out final assessments. Kuhn said there will be another public hearing with those numbers after the project completion.
- Councilman Charlie Prestholdt said this project has been a long time coming. He empathizes with the citizens but the City has already waited too long to do anything. It is a no win win situation.

After all the public comments were heard, Kuhn thanked the property owners for attending and said they will be around to hear further comment.

The public hearing adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

City Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor