

# MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SMITHVILLE VILLAGE COUNCIL

## PUBLIC HEARING – FAIRLAWN AVENUE SIDEWALK PROJECT

MARCH 30, 2022

The Council of the Village of Smithville met in a special session on Wednesday, March 30, 2022, in the village hall for the purpose of holding a public hearing for the Fairlawn Avenue Sidewalk Project. Mayor Tom Poulson called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00pm. Members present at roll call were Larry Allen, Matt Haas, John Heitger, Tricia Mullins, Joseph reed, and Scott Thorn. Also present were Solicitor Jason Groh and Clerk of Council Becky Dannemiller. Visitors in attendance were: Jon Stahl, Susan Stahl, Tim Dalenberger, Joyce Garn, Harold Moser, Elsie Moser, Jeff Edwards, engineers Josh Slaga, and Jay Smith from the GPD Group.

Mayor Poulson had Council members introduce themselves to those in attendance. He then introduced Josh Slaga from GPD Group.

Josh Slaga began an introduction of the project giving those in attendance details about how it was determined which side to place the sidewalks. When looking to place sidewalks, it is determined which side would require the less work including relocating utility poles, infrastructure, and drainage. Relocating infrastructure is very costly and they also need to plan to not create any drainage issues and having proper grading. They found a couple spots where drainage issues already existed and these are areas that the drainage will be taken care of during the project. They estimated construction costs based on current projects going on.

Resident Joyce Garn (173 Fairlawn Ave.) asked why the west side was selected when there is a water line and gas line located there? She said she still has a drainage issue/sinking spot in her yard from a previous water break in front of her house. She explained there is a dip in her yard that is about 15" deep. Josh explained the water line crosses through Fairlawn and is 50/50 on each side. Joyce Garn inquired about being assessed on the entire frontage as opposed to sidewalk length (because of her concrete driveway that shouldn't be included). Josh explained the 1988 ordinance was written as such for assessments to be for the complete frontage not the sidewalk length. Driveway aprons are not included in the assessment. Joyce inquired about the life expectancy of a water main to which there was no answer. Joyce explained to the group that she sat on Council for 24 years and these sidewalk projects were postponed due to funding and they should have been done a long time ago. She feels Fairlawn Avenue is not a safe street to walk on due to speeding traffic. The Mayor stated he had no problem relaying that information to the police department.

Residents Jon and Susan Stahl (563 Fairlawn Ave.) attended to voice their concerns. Susan felt it was silly to have the sidewalk cross from side to the other. She complained about traffic not obeying the stop sign at Wilson & Fairlawn, and complained about the traffic not obeying speed limits. Jon inquired about the sidewalk being at ground level or if fill dirt would be brought in.

There is currently a swale in the area of the proposed sidewalk. Susan stated the storm sewer is sinking around the curve and though we've attempted to fix it by filling in the road, it continues to sink. Josh Slaga replied there is only one (1) area where the drainage will be fixed. Jon inquired as to whether there is grant money available for sidewalks to which Josh stated no, there is not. There are *SafeWalk Grants* but this project does not fit the requirements. Jon inquired as to why the cost is 2 1/2x times higher than the David Street Sidewalk Project. Josh stated that was 3-4 years ago and inflation is now driving the escalation of costs and there just may never be a better time when costs are lower. Susan felt the village should drop the sidewalk project and work on storm sewers. The Mayor responded that the village is in the process of spending over \$2million dollars on a study to find storm sewer issues and repair them over a 10-year period. It is hopeful the village will qualify for OPWC funding for these repairs. The Mayor stated the village is addressing the infrastructure but it takes time to do. Susan stated they don't have \$4500 to pay for sidewalks and they don't want to spend it on a piece of concrete. She stated just because the 1988 Sidewalk Ordinance was written with a plan in place doesn't mean we should have to continue to follow it. The village does not have to continue with the sidewalk plan written in 1988. Jon asked if they do a payment plan with the real estate tax assessment, are their fees involved. Becky stated the village absorbs those fees.

Residents Harold and Elsie Moser (181 Fairlawn Ave.) attended. Elsie Moser stated children won't use the sidewalk if it is installed. She inquired about the hydrant in her front yard and moving it. Josh stated it would be moved for the sidewalk. Mrs. Moser states she does not walk on Fairlawn because it is not safe due to speeders. The Mayor stated he would pass that on to the police department.

Resident Tim Dalenberger (583 Fairlawn Ave.) attended. Tim stated he lives on the dead-end cul-de-sac and wondered why sidewalk were necessary on a cul-de-sac., why not stop before it? Josh of GPD Group stated the sidewalk would extend to the cul-de-sac so the residents living on the cul-de-sac would have access to the walks to get to their house. After much back and forth discussion, Tim stated he felt like there were a lot of questions and concerns not getting answered. Josh stated these assessments were ESTIMATED only and when the bids for the project come in, they are hopeful the costs are much lower. The assessments will be actual based on the actual costs of the project.

Resident Brian and Traci Kindy (601 Fairlawn Ave). She wanted to know the exact cost of her specific sidewalk with detailed cost. Josh stated, as he had before, when the bids are in and we have an actual cost, the assessments will be based on those costs. She was invited to look at and review the maps on display and find her property.

Resident Jeff Edwards (637 Fairlawn Ave.) attended. Jeff questioned the sidewalk on the corner of Fairlawn and Wilson Streets, specifically as it relates to heavy snow/rain and the trash/large trucks turning the corner and currently running over the corner. He wondered if the corner should be looked at and reviewed for possibly widening of it thereby preventing trucks from breaking the sidewalk after it's installed. Josh stated he would look into the truck turning regulations. Jeff asked when this would be put out to bid. Josh stated as early as possible in

hopes of getting competitive prices. Mayor Poulson stated historically the earlier the bids are in the better the prices. He reviewed the maps on display at the various residents' frontage.

Council person Tricia Mullins made comments that she did understand the resident's concerns about the cost. She feels it is unfortunate timing but that sidewalks have been postponed and they'd like to get back on track with the plan. Tricia explained in the past when E. Center Street had sidewalks installed, she was a single mom with children and she was able to make it work, especially with the payment options available to the residents. She paid her 60% as required and stated she doesn't believe the prices will get any better, maybe even worse in the future. She stated the payment options available to the residents are options that will help.

Council person Scott Thorn made a statement to those in attendance that he and his family chose to move here and live in Smithville. They liked the values of the community as a whole. He appreciates the perspective of each person here but feels sidewalks offer more than a place to walk; they provide safety, value to the property, a safe place to walk, and by residents walking around town, offering protection to neighbor's properties while walking. This is a value to the community. The best time to install sidewalks is today. Yes, it can be a challenge for them but it keeps Smithville a place for people to come and hopefully stay.

Mayor Poulson made a statement in regards to the 1988 Sidewalk Ordinance. At the time it was adopted, there was a plan for the necessity of sidewalks naming priority streets. The village has placed sidewalks on many of those streets and are continuing with the plan to make the village a safer place. The village's ordinance is very generous in that we pay 40% of the costs and residents pay 60%. Many local cities and villages pay only a small portion (2%) of sidewalk costs and some pay 0% towards the sidewalks. The village does pick up the cost of all engineering and other costs associated with the project, such as drainage that is deemed necessary. Residents are assessed only the sidewalk cost based on their frontage.

Mayor Poulson asked if there were any other questions for the engineers, to which there were none.

At 8:03 pm, Allen made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Mullins seconded, and Council unanimously approved the adjournment.

  
Clerk of Council

  
Mayor