

STREETS, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE MINUTES
OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2018

Municipal Council of the City of Vermilion
Municipal Complex, 685 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio 44089

In Attendance: **Vermilion City Council:**
Steve Herron, President of Council; Monica Stark, Council at Large; John Gabriel, Ward One; Frank Loucka, Ward Two; Steve Holovacs, Ward Three; Barb Brady, Ward Four; Brian Holmes, Ward Five

Administration:
Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director; Police Chief, Chris Hartung; City Engineer, Chris Howard

Call to Order: Frank Loucka, Chairman, RESOLVED THAT this Streets, Buildings, & Grounds Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

TOPIC ONE: **Fulper's Parking Lot** .

J. Gabriel said down the road there could be big plans for this corner property but in the meantime, it could take years for anything to happen there of any substance. His hope when heading into the next fiscal year is that they can dedicate to paving and striping the property, so it can be used as a parking lot rather than looking like a partially mowed field. It's a city property right in the center of town on a main intersection, and it's a welcoming parcel. He said he would have no problem using a Lake Erie Shores and Islands grant for this and allowing them to put their name on the parking lot if they want to contribute 50 percent of the blacktop. He said it literally could take years before anything from economic development or development would take place.

B. Holmes said he would be in favor of having the parcel paved and the Lake Erie Shores and Islands name could be put right on the side of the old movie theater. B. Brady asked how much it would cost to pave it and J. Gabriel thought this was the next step to take by asking the city engineer to provide council with estimates. C. Howard said he could put some estimates together for council. F. Loucka said paving and some landscaping would be nice in that area.

M. Stark said it's a much-needed parking area as it's being used currently all the time. Prior to her being on council, she had heard many times from residents that parking is needed. The city did purchase the parking lot from Grand Division but wasn't certain a lot of people know it's even there and she didn't think it gives the ample amount of parking that is needed as it fills up quick. She would like to make this parcel accessible for everybody to use for parking. It will bring more business to the downtown.

Mayor Forthofer said he along with the building inspector has done a survey of city-owned property and they are identifying the salable properties that will bring money to

the city. There are some street ends that are possible and the prime possibility is the Fulper's lot. He has been trying since January to get grant money to do a conceptual rendering of a possible use for this property that he could bring to council. However, he hasn't gotten it yet; although he is going to bring a report to council. He agrees with Councilman Gabriel that nothing is going to happen next year, but hopefully something is in play by next year, but in the meantime, it should be parking space. He had the building inspector do a study of the parking spaces in the downtown area and there are over 300 designated parking spaces available to the public; this does not count the Municipal Parking by the railroad tracks. In talking to the Metropolitan Planning Organization of Erie County they say that's more than enough parking in Vermilion for a normal day. There will never be enough parking for Woollybear or some Third Thursday's. He will continue to offer a plan of a possible use for that lot that would help make it a revenue stream for the city. He hates to over commit so much resource to the temporary appropriation for a better-looking parking lot that they hopefully are lucky in tearing it up some day.

M. Stark said she is going to stick to her concern because if the mayor is looking to develop that lot and they are going to bring more business, than where are they going to park to come to that business. She really thinks parking is what they need; they have other buildings and businesses for rent and for sale that aren't full in the business district. Parking is her main concern to help the businesses build and grow.

Mayor Forthofer said in future planning for that lot, parking could very well be a part of commercial development. Currently, Simple Pleasures seems to be the one business that is the most lingering non-sold place. There are a couple on Main Street that are in transition and downtown is close to being 90 percent full and he hopes it will be more. B. Brady said when they did Friendship Park they had looked at angle parking which was never done.

M. Stark said she looks at surrounding communities such as Amherst because within the last 10-15 years they have grown immensely, and they have added a lot of parking. They could have sold and developed those lots and put in more businesses, but how would people come to those businesses if people don't have places to park. She thinks a lot of their business growth has happened because they can find parking. She said Vermilion has great businesses, but they need to address the parking issues. She said a lot of people park on the current grassy lot at Fulper's, but others are sheepish because they're not sure if they're allowed to park there.

J. Gabriel asked the city engineer to provide council with some rough estimates. G. Fisher asked the engineer if he could provide estimates by the October committee meeting and C. Howard concurred.

TOPIC TWO: MPO Projects

C. Howard explained that the Erie County Metropolitan Planning Organization is accepting applications for 2023 projects. Currently they have \$1.6 million available for surface transportation projects. These applications are due September 28 and he

recommended that they submit two projects, realizing if selected, it would be for the years 2022/2023 and the money is an 80/20 split. Previously, the city submitted applications and didn't get chosen for Sunnyside Road (Route 6 to 350' north of Jerusalem Road). He recommended they split this project in half by doing it in two phases, and he recommended that the southern portion be done (350' north of Jerusalem Road to south of the railroad tracks – approximately .8 miles). They will do some pavement condition ratings to help justify the project to the county. He said total costs would be about \$854,000, with the city's portion being around \$219,000. The other project to consider is Vermilion Road Resurfacing Phase 3. Currently, they have a LPA project for Phase 2 which ends pretty much where Phase 1 ended at Brownhelm Station. It goes all the way to Jerusalem Road and this would continue further south from Jerusalem Road south to approximately 900' south of Cooper Foster Road; approximately .65 miles. This cost is approximately \$730,000, with the city paying 100 percent of the design fees as it helps with points in the application, so it would be about \$188,000 for the city's portion. He doesn't want to seem too greedy as the MPO would like to do as many projects as they can with this money, so this is something for council to consider.

S. Holovacs said they need to continue to look as it's far enough out and they are starting to get a handle on the finances. They are talking the years 2022/2023 and they can't pass it up and he thought it was a good idea that they do look. C. Howard said there is no guarantee the city will get it and they can only get one. He said if council is okay with his recommendation he will submit for both. G. Fisher asked if a motion to authorize him to prepare and submit application is sufficient and C. Howard said he would like a motion to submit, but then he would need a resolution adopted next week giving Council's authorization on both individual projects.

J. Gabriel asked if both projects would be for one year and C. Howard said he will space them out and define it by saying Sunnyside would be for 2022 and Vermilion Road for 2023. J. Gabriel said his only concern is if they have the matching funds down the road because there is nothing worse than applying and then saying they can't go forward on a project, so what's the comfort level as they don't know what they're doing in 2019. Finance Director Amy Hendricks believed with part of their refinancing strategy on some of their debt that it should open some things up.

B. Holmes noted that south of the tracks on Sunnyside is the worse part. B. Brady asked if it would help if Brownhelm Township could kick in and apply together because she thought at one point there was an advantage in combining with another entity in applying together, and Sunnyside Road is in Brownhelm Township.

S. Herron MOVED; B. Holmes seconded to authorize the administration to submit grant applications as recommended by the City Engineer.
Roll Call Vote 7 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Chairman Frank Loucka adjourned the meeting after no further discussion came before the committee.

Next meeting: October 15, 2018 @ 7:00 p.m.

Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk
