

**WALKER CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
WALKER FIRE HALL MEETING ROOM
Monday June 1, 2009 6:30 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Walhof

- Mayor Walhof called the public hearing to order at 6:30 pm.
- Council members present: Fjelstul, Finney, Wilkening, Worth, Walhof
- Council members absent:
- Others present during portions of the meeting included:

Terri Bjorklund, Administrator
Wayne Tennis, Police Chief
Bob Schlieman, Ulteig
Larry Pinerski
Susan Blaisdell
Joyce Hemmingson
Herbert Freeberg
Lara Stewart
Bonnie Stewart
Curt Vining
Tom Schackman
Margie Richardson
Mary Beth Mohr
Robert Mallory
Larry Kimball
Shelly Tennis
Ione Eischens
Kaitlyn Aldersen
Yvonne Ahles

Sylvia Bakker, City Employee
Edy Asell, Zoning Administrator
Kathy Pinerski
Marge Reinke
Lars Hemmingson
Isabelle Freeberg
Steve Bilben
Jon Stewart
Marlene Cooney
Mary Andrus
Delores Alger
Rollie Haugen
Brian Hein
Shirley Mallory
Steve Frick
Nancy Freeman
Crystal Freeman
Ashely Pemberton
Larry Howes

The Walker City Council will receive comments and concerns pertaining to, two options for an extension of the recreational trail in the area between 5th Street N. and the City Park. First of all I will read the correspondence that we have received.

Included below are comments provided by Stephen Frisco from MnDOT Permits in Bemidji regarding the proposed bike trail and extension of 3rd Street in the City of Walker.

1. If the City extends 3rd Street to T.H. 371 all existing accesses to T.H. 371 at Hardees and Dairy Queen would have to be closed.
2. MnDOT would prefer the two-way traffic option on Railroad Avenue as they feel this option would reduce traffic on T.H. 371 between 2nd Street and 5th Street.

3. MnDOT would like to see more detailed information on the alignment of 3rd Street. They would like to see 3rd street lined up with the access point on the south side of T.H. 371 at the proposed 3rd Street intersection.
4. There is no controlled access or legal access at this location.
5. They would like to have any access points to Hardees and Dairy Queen as far north on 3rd Street as possible to allow traffic stacking on 3rd Street near T.H. 371.
6. The area between 3rd street and 2nd Street on the north side of T.H. 371 does not have sidewalk. MnDOT suggests installing sidewalk within this block to accommodate pedestrian traffic from 3rd Street to the City Park. MnDOT may have funding available for the installation of the sidewalk between 2nd Street and 3rd Street. We should check with Terry Nichols in the Brainerd Office regarding possible funding.
7. MnDOT suggests the installation of curb and gutter from 3rd Street to the east entrance to the City Park. Should check with MnDOT on possible funding for the addition of curb and gutter.
8. May want to look at the addition of curb and gutter up to 2nd Street.
9. Make sure we abide by new design standards for pedestrian ramps.
10. There is existing storm sewer on the north side of T.H. 371; we could tie any new catch basins into. Stephen was going to see if he could find additional information on the existing storm sewer.
11. 3rd Street is a high point on T.H. 371 for drainage purposes.
12. MnDOT would like to see new crosswalk striping across T.H. 371 at 3rd Street to match into existing sidewalk on the south side of T.H. 371.

This one is addressed to City Council Members;

I am sorry I was unable to make the meeting tonight. I am sure as a council you will make a good decision.

In regards to the proposed bike trail through town. As a business owner who has been on Railroad Ave for 16 years I do not think a one-way street is necessary. It will affect business and our opportunity to serve our customers. From my understanding, it is once again coming down to "parking". And as I have said for 16 years, Walker does not have a parking problem. For about 80 days a year in the summer, you can't park right in front of the business you want on Main Street. But you can always find one within one block of it on the side streets. For the other 285 days a year, you will have a very good chance of parking right in front of business or within the same block.

For them 4-8 days a year when we have Crazy Days, 4th of July and Eelpout. Yes you do have to park 2-3 blocks from where you want to go. But that is not a problem to have to walk 3 blocks on days like that to get to the event. Walking 3 blocks for a large event is not a parking problem, at least not a large enough of one to make a street a one way just to accommodate 4-8 days a year. Sincerely, Brad Spry State Farm Insurance Agency.

Memo, dated May 29, 2009 to Walker City Council, Re: Bike Trail Plan Enhancement, from Dr. Steve & Jane Ekholm.

Congratulations! The Bike Trail is going to be a wonderful addition to Walker. However, in the process of improving the trail to our great community, we have concerns about the loss of:

1. **Green space** between the Dairy Queen and Hardee's, which is
2. A popular **commons area** for the public
3. **Safety factors** involved adding another side street in an area already containing many turn offs.
4. Increased impervious **surface** reducing natural recharge to our aquifer and increasing siltation laded runoff to our lakes, ponds, streams and wetlands.
5. Reducing the **natural ambiance** that draws visitors to our region and advancing our economy.
6. Destruction of a natural **drawing point** for people coming off the trail on foot and bicycle.
7. Loss of **root structures** that naturally hold back run off and run-on, add shade, provide eaesthetics, increase air quality, buffer noise and dirt from traffic and
8. Provide a quiet **oasis and respite** in the midst of the pleasant summer activities going on in downtown Walker and the City Park.

We are sorry that we are unable to be present at the meeting to assist in addressing this important issue. **Thank you** for your careful consideration of these issues in your decision-making.

In the Comprehensive **planning process** that is to take place, please consider these items as goals in the future development of our fair City.

At this time I will turn the meeting over to Bob Schlieman, Ulteig, City Engineer.

Thank you very much Mr. Mayor, as he said I am Bob Schlieman, I'm a Ulteig Engineer, we are hear tonight to discuss some options for the extension of a bike trail in the City of Walker, mainly from 5th Street to the City Park. First of all Thank-You everybody for coming this evening, I like to see a good turn-out, and what I would like to ask you to do is I'm going through the presentation, at different points I will stop and ask for questions, I ask that you reserve your questions until I ask for them, with that if you will raise your hand I will go ahead and take your questions and answer them to the best of our ability. With that we will get started.

The purpose of the Public Hearing is basically to present Conceptual Information regarding the Proposed Bike Trail Options. There are two options we are going to talk about tonight, as you can see in your handouts. I'm hoping everybody got a hand-out, of the exhibit, and if not there are some copies laying over by the microwave, I think most people got them when they came in, but if not there are some extras laying over by the microwave. As you can see from the exhibit there is Option 4 and 5, we are basically at options 4 and 5 as we go through this, so keep that in mind. This is to inform the Public of what's going on. There's been a lot of talk on the streets, a lot of coffee shop talk, and hopefully tonight you people can receive the facts, and like I said ask some questions. Receive your comments, public comments. Myself as well, as the council is very interested in your comments, and then obviously answer any questions that you may have.

The purpose of the proposed improvements is number one to extend the bike trail, the existing bike trail on the west side of 5th street to City Park, that's the main objective that

we are here to talk about tonight. With doing that we also want to maintain downtown parking, as you know there are a few issues down there with parking, and then also hopefully to sustain traffic flow in that downtown area. It's fairly congested down there, as you know being familiar with the area, it's not going to be an easy task, but we think we have a couple of good options to discuss tonight.

Existing conditions, I just want to go over briefly what the existing conditions are down there. The main area that we're talking about, and I apologize if this is blurry, this is actually a weak exhibit, C-1 if you look on the bottom right hand corner of your 11 x 17 color sheet, I believe it is C-1, so if you want to take a look at that you'll see for yourself. The area that we are talking about is basically from 5th Street over to 2nd Street, or the City Park, which is actually just east of 2nd Street. Right now with the existing bike trail on the west side of 5th Street, there is not an existing bike trail from this 5th Street Corridor over to the City Park. Bob Schlieman explained the layout of C-1, existing conditions to the public, and then requested if there were any questions.

Mary Beth Mohr, asked who is your firm, and who hired you? Again, my name is Bob Schlieman, I'm with Ulteig Engineers, we were selected as the City Engineer, I would say approximately 6 months ago. Any other questions?

Marge Reinke, asked how much of this has already been decided, that will be done?

Mayor Walhof responded, I can answer that. Nothings been decided, these are all preliminary drawings.

Marge Reinke, "so this is not like some other experiences we have had in town, that have been decided already"?

Bob Schlieman, "No these slides are all conceptual, we haven't gotten into any great detail on these, basically what we are presenting is a couple of concepts. We have not done any hard design on any of these.

Bob Schielman explained purposed option number 4. So with this option I will go ahead and take any questions you might have.

Kathy Pinerski, asked "so as I understand it where the bike trail and extending 3rd Street, there not contingent on each other"?

Bob Schlieman answered, "No, not at this time, unless the City feels differently.

Bob Schlieman explained about the tight corridor between 2nd & 3rd Street, and how the road might have to be shifted to the north.

Unknown Resident, "it sounds to me like it's all about parking spaces, not the trail moving or whatever, it just sounds like parking places to me".

Bob Schlieman, "I think with this particular project, the City is going to go ahead and try and get this trail connected up from the existing trail on the left side of 5th over to the City Park. That is the main objective of this particular project.

Marge Reinke, "Between 2nd and Ross Place is that a retaining wall?

Bob Schlieman, "Likely not, if you go ahead and look down there, the grade is fairly flat behind the curb and gutter, you won't be able to get a retaining wall in there".

Unknown Resident. " Are there any other options? Inaudible.

Bob Schlieman explained that the minimum width for a standard bike trail is 10 feet. If you are ever going to receive any funding for advancing this trail, you have to have at least two feet of width on each side.

Steve Bilben explained that a bike trail isn't the only purpose for the trail, but bike trails have standards. The trail can be used for snowmobiles, hiking, etc.

More discussion ensued.

Bob Schlieman explained option number 5; option number 5 is basically the same as option number 4, the stigmatic should say I think C3 on the bottom right hand corner, of the 11 X 17 color stigmatic option number 5. Option number 5 again is basically the same as option number 4, except we would have one-way traffic on Railroad Avenue, from 5th Street over to 2nd Street, and then we would also provide some parallel parking spaces, I think add 23 additional parallel parking spaces on the south side of Railroad Avenue.

More questions were answered for the Public concerning option number 5.

The general consensus of the Public after a show of hands, is they don't want to see 3rd Street opened up and losing the little picnic area by the Diary Queen.

Audio recording on file at Walker City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT – Mayor Walhof

Mayor Walhof adjourned the Public Hearing at 7:17 p.m.

Bradley Walhof, Mayor

Attest: _____
Terri Bjorklund, Administrator