

WALKER PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
Monday January 9, 2006
Walker Fire-Hall Meeting Room
Request to Establish a One-Way Alley

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Walhof

- Mayor Walhof called the Public Hearing to order at 6:30 p.m.
- Council members present: Mohr, Bresley, Bruns, Fjelstul, Walhof
- Council members absent: None
- Others present during portions of the Public Hearing included:

Terri Bjorklund, Administrator
Will Hoyt, Landecker & Assoc.
Derek Anderson, Landecker & Assoc.
Cindy Wannarka, Director L.L. Chamber
Willard Arends, Park Board
Steve Michel, Chase Development
Bob Mallory, Shingobee Twp.
Tim Erdle, Thifty White, V.P.
Tony Sauer
Mike Bergmann, Thifty White
Rod Osterloh, Thifty White

Sylvia Bakker, City Employee
John Valen, City Attorney
Wayne Tennis, Police Officer
Joe Sherman, Marine & Power Sports Show
Jared Olson, Leisure Opportunity, LLC
Terry Hanson, (Norson) Chase Dev.
Shirley Mallory, Shingobee Twp.
Robert Narveson, Thifty White CEO
Jon Stewart
Kathy Bergmann, Thifty White
Judy Osterloh, Thifty White

Mayor Walhof opened the Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m., and stated the Council would receive comments and concerns pertaining to the request to establish a one-way Street going east-bound, from Minnesota Avenue to the alley, between Minnesota Avenue and Michigan, and east to 6th street. We have a letter here from Thifty White Drug addressed to Terri Bjorklund, City Hall, Walker, Mn.

We are requesting that the Alley between Minnesota and Michigan Avenues & West of 6th Street be established as a one-way alley Eastbound and a drive-up window be allowed for drug store use. It is signed Sincerely, Tim Erdle, Vice President Store Operations.

Mayor Walhof then turned the Public Hearing over to Tim Erdle. Tim Erdle explained that Thrifty White was looking at a piece of property on the corner of 371, also known as Minnesota Avenue, and we consider it was a very viable part of our sources, and a very vital piece that the citizens, and the prescription customers at the store want for the community. So that is why we have sent in the request, before the City from the standpoint of with the congested parking in the summertime it would be a great convenience for the elderly to the young, or the sick to be able to drive up to the pharmacy without getting out, or from the standpoint of the elderly to pick up there prescriptions and move on.

I'm Bob Narveson, President of Thrifty White, and I have been coming to the area for years, and am a good friend of Terry Storm whom we purchased the Store from, and one of the things we realized when we bought that store was the Store was awfully small, and we can't service the needs of our customers appropriately. We did purchase the lot

behind the Store for parking to try and elevate that. We have the opportunity to grow into a larger space, so therefore we are taking that opportunity to try and provide a better source to the community,. One of the things we did ask our customers, what do you expect and what would you like from our store, and at this point we have had over 400 customers sign, saying they would like us to explore the opportunity to try and put in a drive-thru. One of the things you think of when you here drive-thru, is like Hardee's or McDonald's. A typical drive-thru from a drug store would have like 25 to 30 cars a day. Stacking is maybe two. It's a situation where we don't allow people to sit and wait for their prescriptions to be filled. It's a drop off, and then you swing back thru and pick it up. One of the issues we have about that, given the restrictions on parking, and the issues within the community, that may be a way to elevate people looking for parking spots, where they would be able to come thru and drop off and pick up. I'd be more than happy to answer any questions, that's why I wanted to come this evening, I'm here for anything anybody needs.

Mayor Walhof asked if there were any questions from the audience.

Council member Fjelstul, asked "when you mentioned that the volume of route are insufficient, and that you would have 24, 25 cars in a day that would go through there, would it pose a problem if we continued to have it a two-way street, and people just understood they could come around the back side to the east, because to close down an alley in a town that's as small as this, with limited excess the way it is, for a minimal amount of traffic, I'd like to see us try to do something a little different, at least to begin with. I don't know what kind of problems that would pose to the bank, having access come in from that side."

It was explained that as they come thru the alley, from the drivers side, to be able to pick up the prescription, with other traffic entering, would create more congestion.

Council member Fjelstul wondered if it would pose a problem for the bank having to enter the parking lot to Centennial Bank thru the alley.

He stated, he didn't really see much traffic in that alley, and he just wondered if it was a congestion problem, or if we could just try it without doing anything and see what happens.

Mayor Walhof said he had saw your petition, for a drive-thru, in the drug store, and I read it, and I guess the way it was worded, I would have signed it, not knowing what it was all about.

Bob Narveson, said he had a copy along, and would read it. It said "We are exploring the option of adding a drive-thru pharmacy, please sign below if this is a service that you would utilize, or would like us to provide as a service."

Mayor Walhof, said he would say yes to that, I would like that service. But I could not sign your petition, because you are asking to use a City alley to do business. Now, what would, if we let you use that alley for a drive-thru, what do we say to like Village Square if they want to put a drive up window in the alley, or the Dry Cleaners, and I could go on and on and on, so we're going to grant you a drive-thru in the alley, so everybody else that comes in, do we have to give them a drive-thru too. That's my question.

Bob Narveson said he understood where he was coming from. It's a option we presented to our customers, as to whether it was a service they would utilize, and they felt that it was a benefit they would like to have put in place. Is it the perfect scenario? NO ! If we could have a free standing store, a 10,000 foot free standing store on a corner where we

could have a drive-thru coming around the back in Walker, we would probably have that. We have searched, and searched, and tried to find alternatives, and ways to do it, but we've always come up empty. When we took a look at this location, and worked with Rod, and worked with trying to make it happen, this was the only scenario we felt that we could make it work. We are kind of between a rock and a hard place that if we are going to provide a service, in my mind that's the only way I can see it click. But I do understand where you are coming from, I guess the only thing I can say in a community is it there best interest, and go from there.

Council member Fjelstul, said we don't have any other property owners here that would like to speak to the one way direction, or if we had received any comments, or anything. Administrator Bjorklund, answered no.

Council member Bresley, asked if the customers would be allowed to make both left and right turns as they come out of the alley?

Discussion was held pertaining to turning.

Bob Narveson, stated that if the council felt that would be beneficial to make that a one-way exit, turn one-way we could accommodate whatever.

After more discussion, Council member Bruns asked if that alley was wide enough if someone was parked, picking up their prescription, could another vehicle get along side it?

Yes, we measured it this morning, and I think it was 22', but you can get two vehicles parked side by side, coming through there.

Council member Fjelstul stated one of his questions he would have would be the enforcement of the one-way, if people would what to cut into Centennial Bank, you know it's just a few feet you would have to go down the wrong way to get into there, are we going to enforce the violation of people going the wrong-way one a one-way street. It's just a little issue in a small town. I think it's workable, to let it just plane let it be the way it is, and just let people drive into that left lane to pick up there prescription. I don't think we have that kind of traffic in that alley, but I could be wrong, it's just my personnel opinion.

Council member Bruns said he realized that they weren't there to say anything, but he could see Centennial Banks parking lot being used as a turn around. Discussion ensued around that for a few minutes.

Bob Naverson, said their intention would be to direct people the other way, but.

Council member Bruns said he was concerned about the hill in the winter-time. Getting up that alley hill in the winter-time.

Bob Naverson said, "we don't allow cars to get stacked up in the alley, and we do enforce that."

Council members Bruns also stated that his other concern was Brad's concern of other business owners come knocking on the door. Are we opening a can of worms? How can we say yes you can, but no you can't. I don't know.

Council member Fjelstul, stated well there can't be to many concerned about it, if nobody showed up.

Mayor Walhof, asked if there were any other questions?

If there are no other questions, we will close the Public Hearing, and take this up under Number 3 Economic Development at about 7:45 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT – Mayor Walhof

Mayor Walhof adjourned the Public Hearing at 6:48 p.m.

Bradley J. Walhof, Mayor

Attest: _____
Terri Bjorklund, Administrator