

DRAFT MINUTES
JOINT MEETING OF
PUBLIC WAYS COMMITTEE
AND STORMWATER COMMISSION
August 10, 2016, 5:00 P.M., City Council Chambers

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Dave Williams, presiding
Bruce Darlington, Patty Haskins

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: James Sickels, Chris Randles,
Tom Stugmyer

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Stormwater Engineer Josh Wolf,
City Engineer Tom Tucker,
Asst. Public Service Director Harry Stark

Mr. Williams welcomed everyone to the joint meeting of the **Public Ways Committee and Stormwater Commission of August 10, 2016.**

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Haskins made a motion to approve the joint meeting minutes of the **May 11, 2016** meeting as presented. **Mr. Darlington** seconded. All were in favor. **Minutes for the Joint meeting of Public Ways and Stormwater Commission of May 11, 2016 WERE APPROVED.**

Mr. Williams introduced members of both the Ways Committee and Stormwater Commission.

II. ORCHARD CREEK STUDY

Mr. Wolf stated that the area to be discussed was west of High Street, south of West Street and north of College Street. The corridor was along Orchard Street from Simcox, with Tolbert in the middle and Euclid at the north. In looking at the watershed, the main reason, since the area was developed in 1930, for all the runoff was residential development, not commercial development, as was thought. There were a lot of misconceptions about the recent commercial development in the last 15-20 years causing it, but that really had nothing to do with it.

Current conditions showed that there were 19 properties affected by the current flooding situation and hundred-year flood situation. Mr. Wolf had four boards and those areas were highlighted in blue.

The first option was to pipe all the flow. The second was to purchase all the houses and just leave it 'as is.' The third option was to take out the culverts in the houses directly along Orchard Street and widen the channel to about 30' bottom width and allow the flow to go through. That was how the flood condition would shrink. The fourth alternate was to go a bit farther than 'C,' with its concern about cutting off the streets from the west.

They would not have access to High Street and it became a connectivity issue, and also maybe a safety or services issue. Option 'D' would allow them to add a parallel street on the other side of the stream that would mimic Orchard Street. People could come down from West Street and not be trapped. They would be sent back out to West Street, but not be trapped in a turnaround situation.

Alternative A was the pipe theory. All the homes would remain. Orchard Street would be torn up and a pipe would be put down. It was the most costly option at \$3 million. That didn't necessarily include affected utilities.

The 'pros' were that it reduced the flooding and they would not be dealing with the owners to accomplish the project. But there could be a potential storm event that could cause clogging in that pipe, and some of the homes would still flood.

Alternative B was a straight property acquisition. The City would purchase all the properties and not really do anything to the culverts at the three streets and leave them as they were, turning the valley into parkland and restoring it to the floodplain. With 19 homes, using rough auditor appraised values, that was about a \$2 million option.

There were a lot of pros to that option, but the main drawback was the cost. It was a long process to acquire properties, with negotiations and whatnot. In meeting with property owners, Mr. Wolf didn't think there would be many holdouts for that option, but there always could be that.

Alternative C would remove the present culverts that were in place and the houses that fronted Orchard Street directly to the west, widen the stream from its current location all the way over to Orchard Street and let it flow through. It would reduce the number of properties needing to be purchased to about seven, and then the area of the culverts would be demolished. There would be a couple of hundred thousand, in terms of grading. It was probably the most cost effective solution. The main negative was that the streets coming directly from the west would end up in a dead end situation, similar to Marlow, directly south of the project area. City services could be affected.

Alternative D stems from the public need with the residents. It was something for those who weren't necessarily against Alternative C, in terms of limiting the area and taking out the culverts, but were concerned about city services, if their street became a dead end. Several of the 19 homeowners who attended the meeting, many of the houses highlighted in alternative B, would remain. They were concerned that with a dead end street, a lot of people would be turning around in their driveways. They liked the idea of a parallel road, similar to what was across the stream. It would still be open, but if someone came down Euclid, for instance, they would have to go all the way down to Simcox and back out to West Street. It would probably be better for trash services, fire and safety. He was sure they would be more in favor of those options. With that alternative, at some point, they could still look at making some of that area into parkland and having a footbridge across the stream. That, at least, would create connectivity back to High Street by a walking or bike path of some sort.

When they first talked about it, six months ago, their short-term objectives were for the property owners to be advised to purchase flood insurance. That was done. They were given information at the meeting and sent information in the mail. He didn't know how many had taken it out. They then submitted that original study to FEMA for a letter of map revision to make it a floodplain. They worked out the positive and negative scenarios and chose not to submit it to them. Each owner was able to get it on their own, so if they wanted to protect themselves with that insurance, they had that ability. If they did a map revision, that would force it upon them.

The other conclusion was that grant applications could be submitted for the preferred alternative, which was the purpose of the meeting – to state their preferred alternative.

Long-term, the City could consider the use of public funds to mitigate the area. The City could choose to leave the area as it was, or proceed with culvert replacements as bid at College and Baldwin, knowing that it would probably not protect everyone. That was a mix of what was discussed at the previous meetings.

The engineering and administrative staff recommendations were to notify the residents of insurance available, which they had done; also to notify residents that a study was performed and hold a public meeting, which they had done. Other alternatives could be developed, and they had done that, based on residents' comments. Mr. Wolf felt that if Alternative B were not possible, the residents would be in favor of Alternative D versus the others. They were to the point of exploring grant options for the area before moving forward.

Mr. Wolf opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. Darlington asked for the source of the appraisals for the houses. Mr. Wolf said the amounts were based on the auditor's website. They could be appraised differently. It was based on like sales. In Mr. Darlington's experience, it was always somewhat lower than market value. Mr. Wolf said there was now a lot of public information out on the area, so he wasn't sure how that had affected the values.

Ms. Haskins asked Mr. Wolf if there was one of the two that he thought would lend itself best for grant opportunities. Mr. Wolf said it depended on the type of grant. Floodplain restoration would lend itself more to Alternative B, with some sort of incorporations of environmental areas such as park space, making it usable green space. Then, it was not unheard of that the other two alternatives could go along those lines. Alternative A would probably have zero grant opportunities, because they were just moving the water, not adding any green space. Ms. Haskins asked the projected cost difference between B and D. Mr. Wolf said D might be a little cheaper, because it was only 11 homes, versus 19. The difference of those eight homes would probably more than pay for the additional revenue. Ms. Haskins clarified that that was approximately \$1.9 million. Mr. Wolf said that if they were looking at \$100,000 per house, plus the demos... about half a million

cheaper, Ms. Haskins concluded. Mr. Wolf said there would be enough room between there and more green space could be created in between the area.

Ms. Haskins asked him if he felt, as an engineer, that it would solve the problem and what effect it would have on houses to the south. Mr. Wolf said the scenarios did not negatively impact the areas downstream. He pointed out Baldwin, where they just put the new culvert in. With the new culvert, those homes were still protected. If they took out the culverts and widened the channel, it would let the water out. He indicated areas on the drawing, saying they would remain unchanged. It would help some of the homes on the south side of Franks, closest to the stream corridor. Most of the water coming in from the Franks area was actually coming from between the Euclid and Franks houses. It was near the SR-261/Akron Road intersection. That water all ended up coming down and adding to it. There was a definite change in the watershed. The people on Euclid, Tolbert and Simcox were getting a lot more water than the people on Franks.

Mr. Williams asked which alternative had the best chance of being fully funded by a grant. Mr. Wolf wouldn't say that any would be fully funded. He hesitated to say, but for most grants, the City would be on the hook for 50%, unless it was a FEMA grant, where they came in and took over. But it was not a FEMA floodplain.

Mr. Darlington had a thought. When he was a kid, on their farm, they had what they called a low water bridge. Normally, water wouldn't flow over it, but when there was a big rain, it would flow over. But it was always passable. He wasn't sure whether it was possible to do something like that. They'd have to change the grade on the approaching streets, but they could just make that as part of the street and when it flooded, it would be impassable, but other times it would be. Mr. Wolf understood what he was saying. In some scenarios, a couple of the streets almost acted that way now. It only took a five-year storm to flood some of those streets. He knew what Mr. Darlington meant. If C were an option, instead of calling them stub streets, they could be taken down to a grade. That would take some creative engineering, not that it was impossible. It could work. It would be more of a play off Alternative C. They might not have to have those turnarounds. It would just dip down. He just didn't know how much the safety forces would be in favor of those. Mr. Hiscock might have a different opinion on people intentionally driving through water. Mr. Darlington said he just brought it up because even though he didn't live there, it bothered him that it was going to block him from getting from West Street to High Street.

Ms. Haskins asked Mr. Wolf, as an engineer, which plan he would recommend. Mr. Wolf said he would choose Alternative B or D. Ms. Haskins noted that he was not pinning down one. Mr. Wolf said he would love to do Alternative B and reclaim all the floodplain as the best way to prevent flooding. There would be nothing that could flood. Even though in a hundred-year situation, Alternative D took care of the situation, there was always something man could do to cause a problem and cause water to go to the wrong place. Ms. Haskins noted that that was a half million dollars more, but if it didn't fix the problem... Mr. Wolf said that in an engineering sense, it would fix the problem. It would take a five hundred or thousand year storm for something to happen somewhere

else to slightly affect one of the houses. The only thing he'd learned in his 15-20 years dealing with it was that they couldn't make any promises on stormwater. It would come back to bite them every time. Ms. Haskins felt the worst mistake they could make would be to spend \$1.5 million and then it didn't work. Mr. Wolf said that was why they stopped after Baldwin and after partially designing Simcox. They could install it, but they feared that people around it would think they were protected forever, when they were not. That's why a different approach had to be taken.

Mr. Patrick said they'd had the public meeting with a lot of participation from the residents. They broke into groups and were privy to some good conversations. He asked Mr. Wolf to give a quick synopsis of the comments received and the overwhelming options.

Mr. Wolf said the residents overwhelmingly, especially the ones around the area colored in red around Orchard, wanted out. That was not why the committee and commission were there. They were not necessarily there to decide whether their investment was good or bad when they made the investment. That wasn't the City's to decide. But many of them felt that, morally, they couldn't sell their house to someone else. Mr. Wolf did appreciate those comments from those people, because it did make sense. Many of those in the room would have the same thought process. In terms of engineering, many of them liked B, for the simple fact that they could get out of there. Other than that, they liked C. They didn't like A and the possibility that there could be failure somewhere down the road, because it was a manmade structure. They understood their theory of going back to a natural stream, where the human element was taken out of it, and Mother Nature taking its course. They were not putting obstructions in the way that could potentially cause it. They liked that. The ones who were going to be remaining did not like the fact that they were going to be stuck, which was what Mr. Darlington was alluding to. When it was mentioned to them in the group discussion, they liked that. They understood they would have to exit/enter off West Street forever, but it would be better than people turning around in their driveway because they didn't know they could not get through.

Mr. Sickels asked if there was any thought, in Alternative D, to putting cul-de-sacs in instead of crossroads. Mr. Wolf said that Tom had actually talked about that. It depended on which was most advantageous for the property purchases. The parallel road would affect four more properties from the one alternative to the other, no matter how they looked at it. With a cul-de-sac option, there was a chance that they would affect a couple of more than would need to be affected – about six more properties. So that was the way Mr. Wolf tried to look at it. He tried to limit. He was also thinking of trash and safety. A little more connectivity would be a little more beneficial for them, especially the trash guys coming in. Otherwise, they were kind of stuck on every street. As City planning, when moving into new subdivisions, they, in some ways, discouraged cul-de-sacs that would be of that length. They would be 1,500' from West Street.

Mr. Sickels asked if they would still have to look at some sort of connectivity with Alternative B. Mr. Wolf said Alternative B would leave the roads in place as they were. It would be something similar to what Mr. Darlington was talking about, with the City posting signs about high water, similar to Seville Road. It was, basically, a localized

floodplain. A water storm would flood it. They would need to make the owners aware of that, not that they wouldn't be already. If they were to do some crossings across the stream, Safety might be against it, because some kid could drive down into it when it was four feet deep.

Ms. Haskins said that while Alternative B was attractive for grant opportunities, the cost was so much more than the others. She assumed they were being asked that night to pick a project, so that work could begin. Mr. Wolf said first off, he, Mr. Stark and Mr. Tucker needed to get hold of some grants to apply for. The real question would be what would make them look attractive to the people issuing the grants. That's really what it came down to. Either one of those could be steered toward floodplain restoration, because there were two scenarios. On the one, they were leaving the roadway networks in place, but restoring the flood zone, so the water did what it naturally did. In the other scenario, they were restoring the stream, where there were no obstructions whatsoever in the stream anymore. It depended which environmental group they were dealing with. Some of them liked a natural stream with no culverts. Many environmentalists didn't like culverts because they said water couldn't travel back and forth between them. That could be argued in many different ways.

He couldn't really give them a great handle on which one would be the best grant opportunity. Ms. Haskins asked if they could apply for grants for both of them. Mr. Wolf said they probably could. Mr. Stark might have an opinion on that. A lot of times, they had to pick one in order to submit for a particular grant. Mr. Wolf said it would be on their Public Ways agenda (that evening) when they got to it. The committee had to give them permission to apply for it. They give themselves the scenario where it would come back to the committee when they applied for it, anyway. It was one option or the other. One just particularly fit that grant option. Mr. Williams said that Mr. Wolf would have to do the research and let them know. Ms. Haskins said they couldn't commit to anything, obviously, until they knew if they had the money.

Mr. Williams wanted to take the presentation to Committee of the Whole, with that amount of dollars – up to a couple million dollars -- and let the rest of Council see. Ms. Haskins said it would be online. Mr. Williams said they'd done it with other projects in town. He would like to see a presentation to the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Patrick said he could schedule that in the next couple of months. He felt that everyone seemed to be on the same page that the first option could be taken off the table, and they were really down to two options.

Mr. Wolf asked for feedback from Stormwater Commission members since they would not likely be at a Committee of the Whole presentation.

Mr. Sickels said he preferred B or D. He knew B was more expensive, but he was thinking of the future cost to the City for maintaining more linear feet of roadway. They should probably have that discussion. For him, that was the difference between the two plans. Mr. Wolf noted that it would not be public right of way. They had to also look at

what might now be a park. If it were just straight green space, it was pretty easy to maintain.

Mr. Sickels said he remembered from the group discussions that a lot of the residents mentioned that the D option was better for them, at the time. Based on that, he would prefer D a bit more than B. He agreed that A was off the table.

Ms. Haskins said the only problem she could see with B was that if they got a holdout, it would only take one or two. Mr. Wolf also didn't know how that might affect some of the grants. It might be all or nothing, in terms of securing a grant for the area. They couldn't really make it a park if someone was still living in the center of it. As the grants possibilities came up, they'd have to look at the particulars and go from there.

Mr. Sickels asked if, in the D scenario, there was a way to raise the roads a little bit more and protect the people along there. Mr. Wolf referred to the drawing and pointed some owners that already were. That road wouldn't have to change whatsoever. If the new road were constructed, it would be totally part of the thought process. In some ways, it would almost act as a levee on the west side of the study area. Mr. Patrick asked if it would have to be graded that way and if there would have to be any type of retaining wall structures. Mr. Wolf didn't believe so. They would just have to maintain the water down the roadways. He was thinking about it as he spoke. The road could be pushed a bit further to the west – up the hill, up the grade a little bit. It would create more space in between the roadways for the floodplain. Those thoughts were very preliminary.

Mr. Tucker thought there might be another step needed. He was hearing mostly that they had eliminated option A. They didn't really like that option anyway, but, for the last 22 years, he had always asked why they couldn't put in a bigger pipe. When they calculated what was needed, it was a 22' wide by 4' high pipe. The cost of that was firm; they could calculate that cost. The appraisal value of land had a lot of variables. As for construction costs, they didn't have enough preliminary engineering to put a good cost. So, maybe they could eliminate A. Environmentally, B was the one they probably could get more grants for, so the overall cost to the City might be less. There were a couple of questions there. The difference between C and D was construction value for the road they'd be putting in. As Mr. Wolf said, the road on the east side really just needed to be paved again and some ditches fine-tuned. If they could have a little bit of time to get a proposal for more preliminary engineering and estimating to fine tune those costs – not final engineering. They needed more than they had. Right now, it was very general - \$2 million, a million and a half. Those were very rough estimates.

Ms. Haskins asked if they were eliminating C. Mr. Wolf said that eliminating might not be the right term. If they looked at the costs for D, they already knew the costs for C. They were either adding four more houses and a road, so it would be easy to go backwards to C. They had to do C to get to D. Ms. Haskins saw what they were saying. Mr. Tucker said that maybe that would satisfy the committee for now. He hated to elongate it, but they were working on those questions anyway for when it got to Committee of the Whole. He apologized that they didn't have those answers, but, again,

it was another step of engineering. He would call it phase one. They would try to estimate the line, grade and typical section of that roadway and what the cost would be. They might talk to an appraiser who did houses, instead of just an engineer throwing out an auditor's number at it. There would be a cost for engineering for someone to help them do that, and he didn't know if that was available now.

Mr. Stugmyer said that when considering C and D, D would help the property values more, with the streets going through. Mr. Wolf said that connectivity back to West Street would probably help. It wouldn't hurt, Mr. Stugmyer agreed.

Mr. Tucker said they had three big questions. One was the cost of construction. One was the cost of the appropriations and the third was: what were the grant opportunities. They could take some time and talk to the 319 people or the trail people.

Mr. Patrick thought Mr. Sickels' comments were good about looking at the future costs of that roadway; the cul-de-sac idea; and how many houses. It Maybe that wouldn't work into their planning, but he thought cul de sacs were desirable for some folks and might play into some greater values, as well. He appreciated all the good comments.

To wrap it up, Mr. Wolf thought Mr. Williams and Mr. Patrick could get together on time and date for Committee of the Whole. He and Mr. Tucker would start to look into more detailed information on Plans B and D, so that when they had a date for Committee of the Whole, they would have more information for the presentation at that time.

Mr. Williams and Mr. Darlington were both agreeable with that. There were no other comments.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Darlington made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Haskins seconded. All were in favor.
MEETING ADJOURNED at 5:37 P.M.

Chairperson

Date approved