

City of Birmingham
AD HOC UNIMPROVED STREETS COMMITTEE

Birmingham City Hall Commission Room
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan
Wednesday, September 13, 2018

MINUTES

These are the minutes for the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Unimproved Streets Committee held on Wednesday, September 13, 2018. The meeting was called to order at 8 a.m. by Chairman Scott Moore.

1. **ROLLCALL**

Present: Chairman Scott Moore
Pierre Boutros
Jason Emerine
Michael Fenberg
Katie Schafer
Stuart Sherman
Janelle Whipple-Boyce

Absent: None

Administration: Aaron Filipski, Public Services Manager for DPS
Austin Fletcher, Asst. City Engineer
Mark Gerber, Finance Director
Tiffany Gunter, Asst. City Manager
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary
Joe Valentine, City Manager
Lauren Wood, Public Services Director

2. **APPROVAL OF AD HOC UNIMPROVED STREETS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF AUGUST 2, 2018**

Motion by Mr. Boutros to approve the Minutes of the Ad Hoc Unimproved Streets Committee of August 2, 2018 as presented.

Motion carried, 7-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Boutros, Emerine, Fenberg, Moore, Schafer, Sherman, Whipple-Boyce

Nays: None

Absent: None

Mr. Valentine gave a brief overview of what the Committee will be talking about this morning. First they will go over future demands for the unimproved streets based on the needs. Next the policy considerations available to the Committee will be highlighted. The characteristics of each type of street will be covered. Lastly they will focus on some of the areas based on prior conversations to see how deeply the Committee wants to go into each; for example the petition process or the cost allocation, along with other variables that may warrant further conversation.

3. STAFF PRESENTATION: UNIMPROVED STREETS - SURFACE AGE

Mr. Filipski presented a Surface Age Map of unimproved streets that shows where the future demand for road improvements is most likely to be in the short and long term. Street maintenance is to some degree cyclical and surface age is a significant factor in maintenance planning and resource allocation. Although surface age is important to consider, some aged streets may be in relatively good condition compared to others of similar age.

Mr. Valentine clarified that the map illustrates the maintenance cycle that the City currently operates under. As the Committee considers how they want to affect policy going forward, this is the baseline. For Ms. Whipple-Boyce, he explained the streets would not necessarily be improved; they may just be maintained.

Mr. Boutros said the Committee must consider whether they should continue to maintain the streets as they have in the past, or should they implement different policies. His thought was that it all depends on cost, and to him it is almost patching. The more patching that is done the more the cost will accrue.

Ms. Schafer noted that right now it seems the initiative to improve a street lies with the residents and the initiation to maintain a street lies with the City. The question is how to make this better.

Chairman Moore explained that petitions from residents are advisory only. Only the City Commission can initiate an improvement.

Mr. Valentine pointed out that the map is informational and offers a snapshot assessment of the maintenance cycle program that exists today.

Mr. Boutros recalled at the last meeting the Committee had discussion about whether to eliminate the petition process and leave it to the City Commissioners to decide whether to improve a street.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce thought it would be nice to see an overlay of the complete streets map and how it relates to this map. When streets are redone, there is an opportunity to be all inclusive and embrace the complete streets that have been adopted,

Mr. Valentine said complete streets is a philosophy and a guideline that is driving the improvements that helped to facilitate the Multi-Modal Plan, taking into account more specific details for mobility. Any time the streets are redone they are being evaluated in the context of the other plans to make sure the City is doing the best they can with the changes.

4. STAFF PRESENTATION: COMPARISON CHART - IMPROVED VS. UNIMPROVED STREETS

Mr. O'Meara noted the first section compares how a project to build a new unimproved street compares with continuing to maintain an unimproved street. The second section speaks to various factors on these streets.

The special assessment process for both improved and unimproved is explained. The City puts in 15% of the cost for both. The payback period is 10 years currently for an improved street. On a cape seal treatment residents are expected to pay back in the year that is done.

The maintenance frequency for improved streets is 20 years for asphalt and 40+ years for concrete. For unimproved streets it is 7 - 10 years for cape seal.

Mr. Fenberg noted that maintenance on improved streets is not charged back to the residents.

Chairman Moore asked to have a copy or the ordinances regarding Special Assessments for the next meeting. That is because the Committee will be looking at costs.

Ms. Schafer said it would be helpful to know the surface quality of streets, such as recently redone but not improved.

➤ Policy Considerations

Mr. Valentine explained this table was created to provide a summary of topics outlining general advantages and disadvantages to consider as the Committee begins to develop a strategy for decision making. Information and cost factors are provided relative to advantages and disadvantages of the pavement types.

He hoped to find out from this Committee what areas they want to focus on first and what additional information is needed to participate in those discussions.

Ms. Schafer asked for the definition of an improved road.

- *Road Paving Options*

Mr. O'Meara advised the three options for paving are cape seal, no curbs; asphalt with curbs; and concrete with curbs. He went on to describe the advantages and disadvantages of each, along with their cost per foot.

Mr. Filipski clarified that cape seal is chip seal with a final slurry coat that adds a protective surface. Pulverization sometimes creates drainage problems.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce took issue with some of the advantages listed for cape seal, such as a rural appearance. She thought that is more of an opinion. Secondly she disagreed that "owners can add parking areas if desired" is an advantage. That option is subjective.

Mr. Sherman requested additional information on maintenance cost on a per foot basis in the first 50 years before a rebuild.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce asked that the amount of years that the different materials will last be added to the chart.

It was noted that the cost for concrete is getting higher and higher and more asphalt is being used such as on freeways and interstates.

- *Project initiation process considerations*

Mr. O'Meara described advantages and disadvantages of the petition process.

Ms. Schafer commented the City rarely initiates projects and there are very few newly improved streets because residents wishing to improve the street risk alienating themselves from other residents. It is a disadvantage that the City is not making a lot of forward progress under the petition process.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce added a disadvantage of the petition process is that there is no guarantee that a street will be redone even if a majority of property owners are in favor. She believes that it should not be up to the residents to make these tough decisions. It is the responsibility of the elected officials to initiate these decisions with the help of Engineering.

Ms. Schafer said the perspective of a resident is often very egocentric as to how they will be affected, but the City's job is to take a broader point of view and consider safety, drainage, safety, and cost.

Consensus was to begin the first sentence under Petition Process Disadvantages with "Potential long-term effects."

Mr. O'Meara went on to describe the advantages and disadvantages of Cost Allocation, Secondary Assessments, Corner Lot Assessments, and Payback Period.

Mr. Boutros noted the 10 year payment plan is a big advantage of Cost Allocation.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce said it is important historically to understand where policy **came from in the first place.**

5. STAFF PRESENTATION; COMPARISON CHART - POLICY, INITIATION PROCESS, AND FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

Mr. Gerber described City Millages. Road Millage is when the cost of road improvement is spread over many individuals resulting in lower cost to property owners who receive the benefit of the improvement. This needs a vote of the citizens. The question will be how to structure this so that it would have the best opportunity for passage.

Mr. Fenberg said an important consideration when contemplating a millage is that it assesses the cost based on the valuation of the property as opposed to the front footage.

Mr. Gerber said the other consideration is to fund projects in the current Operating Millage. That does not need vote passage and can be approved by the City Commission. Unfortunately the City is kind of near the millage cap which is shrinking every year due to Headlee. So it does not give the City room for other projects that may arise. Also, bond rating agencies look at millage capacity as a factor of a city's financial health. There probably is some opportunity there, but it depends on where the Committee wants to go in terms of cost allocation.

Road projects are projected five years in advance in the Budget. There are usually no extra funds available for new projects which are not in the five-year projection.

A bond issue can be done to raise money for those kinds of projects. There is the flexibility to either do it as a Special Assessment to repay the bond millage or as a part of debt levy. Mr. Fenberg said this way it could still be assessed to the owners on a per foot basis as opposed to going on the property value basis.

Grants unfortunately are not likely to be available for local road improvements. They are competitive and difficult to obtain.

Regrettably no Tax Increment Financing ("TIF") legislation exists that the City may employ to pay for local road improvements. TIF is more to encourage large scale growth in certain areas.

Chairman Moore said the Committee needs to have an open discussion as to placing priorities, and certainly taking the suggestions of staff. Then after the next meeting the group will have a clear path forward where everybody is on board. Then after that, start tightening up these meetings to every other week.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce asked to have more information on road millage and what it might mean for the average resident should it be approved. Mr. Gerber replied that recently there have been road millage initiatives all across the State.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Christina McKenna Walton, who lives on Lakeview, said she has been very interested in the improvement process. She noted the 50% requirement for petition signatures doesn't indicate 50% of what and that is an important point. On her block they have already achieved 67%. That didn't satisfy the City Commission. They wanted 50% of the entire street. She believes it is too much burden to put on the volunteer homeowners to collect that much of the entire street. Without a doubt it discourages the street improvement process. It is something the citizens should expect City staff to take on instead of shifting it to the neighborhood.

The Chairman recalled they touched on that at a previous meeting. Historically it has been an issue and it will be part of their discussion on priorities.

Additionally, Ms. McKenna said there are people on her street that would support street improvement if the asphalt option was available to them. They feel it would be more appropriate because of its softer appearance and also it would lower their investment.

Mr. Stuart noted there was a study done on water and sewer in 2007-2008 and it would be nice to have that information. For a while they were using that to target areas that needed new water and sewer lines. They were going to deal with that and replace the streets also. Mr. O'Meara said updating the list is a big job and they are doing that right now. But one drawback for this Committee is the sewer

list was only done on improved streets. So he doesn't have a similar list for all of the unimproved streets.

7. NEXT MEETING

Thursday, September 27, 2018 at 8 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:25 a.m.

City Engineer Paul O'Meara

Asst. City Manager Tiffany Gunter