

MINUTES
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
January 20, 2016
City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room

A Regular Meeting of the Transportation Commission was called to order by Commission Chairman, Andrew Celentano at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 20, 2016 in Council Chambers at Woodstock City Hall.

A roll call was taken.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Hudson, Mark Indyke, and Chairman Andrew Celentano. Jason Osborn arrived at 7:10 p.m.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Caron Wenzel

STAFF PRESENT: Public Works Director Jeff Van Landuyt and Executive Assistant Jane Howie

OTHERS PRESENT: Ms. Laura Byers, 818 N. Madison Street, Woodstock, IL.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Mark Indyke, second by Susan Hudson to accept the December 9, 2015 Special Meeting Minutes as presented. Ayes: Mark Indyke, Susan Hudson, Jason Osborn, Chairman Andrew Celentano. Nays: None. Absentees: Caron Wenzel. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

FLOOR DISCUSSION:

Public Comments: Chairman Celentano asked two members of the audience if they'd been to this sort of meeting before; they had not. A. Celentano provide a brief explanation of how the meeting is structured. The resident approached the podium; Ms. Laura Byers, 818 N. Madison Street stated she's an avid walker. However, she's forced to walk in the street during the winter months because very few sidewalks are shoveled. Many sidewalks are only partially shoveled and Ms. Byers is afraid she may fall and get injured. Ms. Byers wondered if the City can plow the rec path in Emricson Park or the sidewalk near Redeemer Lutheran Church for people to walk on during the winter months. She knows the Square is always plowed and suggested a plowed path from Redeemer to the Square or a shoveled path by the Rec Center toward Il Rt. 47. Ms. Byers believes there are a lot of people that walk, but they're afraid to walk in the winter because sidewalks aren't cleared of snow and ice. Ms. Byers knows there isn't an ordinance in Woodstock that requires residents to shovel their sidewalks.

M. Indyke thinks this is worthy of discussion. He too sees people walking in the street. He lives on Clay Street and many children walk to Clay Academy. M. Indyke asked if the city has the capability to shovel the rec path or other sidewalks in town. J. Van Landuyt indicated that it would be difficult for the City to meet the expectation of keeping a route clear time and time again. That if the City clears the sidewalk and then it refreezes or drifts over, the expectation would be that the City monitors and maintains a

surface which is free of snow & ice. There may also be a question of liability if the City removes the snow or ice one time but fails to keep it maintained after that. S. Hudson stated one time is better than none at all. If it refreezes, then in two days it melts again. J. Van Landuyt commented that if it refreezes and then it snows, there's a chance that somebody could fall and get injured. Susan Hudson commented that the Mayor indicated that the City has limited liability for those who fall. J. Van Landuyt responded that there have been instances in the City when a lawsuit follows an injury to someone within the public right-of-way.

S. Hudson asked how about having a sidewalk ordinance, like the grass ordinance. Jeff Van Landuyt asked, what do you do with people that don't follow the ordinance? Would you fine them? And then the city goes in and removes the snow? At times, this would result in the need for additional equipment and additional manpower. S. Hudson thinks you could fine them and then use the money from the fines to have a private company clear the sidewalk. Jeff Van Landuyt said it would take manpower to go around and find these people who are not shoveling their walks, and then a letter would need to be sent, follow-up, etc. It could be a situation where they've been on vacation for a week and they'd normally do it. There are a lot of things to consider, it's not clear cut. S. Hudson said it would have to be complaint oriented, just like tall grass. J. Van Landuyt said sidewalks are not like grass. A sidewalk with snow or ice on it can be a safety hazard. Chairman Celentano said that in Woodstock there's no ordinance that you must shovel your walkway. There was talk about creating an ordinance but it didn't go anywhere. A. Celentano said he fully appreciates the desire to not get injured. The issue in the city depends on folks being good neighbors and doing it most of the time; what about abandoned properties & empty lots. A. Celentano remembers a conversation he had with an attorney 5-6 years ago; if you touch it you may become liable for it. If it snowed and it sits there that's one thing. But if you come through and you shovel it, you touched what nature put there and you may be creating a hazard.

J. Van Landuyt stated that the best thing that can happen when we get a complaint about a section of sidewalk that's not shoveled is to compose a letter to affected residents. A year or two ago we wrote letters to people along Il Rt. 47 and it helped. A lot of them shoveled. Most of the people don't realize it's being used, or being used by children in the school zone. The best scenario is that everybody would take care of their own property. If the city gets involved it would be an all or nothing, and it's not going to be easy to manage. One location here, one location there every time we get a snowfall. It's not going to be a high priority for the city as the city has limited equipment and manpower and at this time there are higher priorities which benefit all residents. And, whatever area the city didn't shovel, we'd get complaints from those residents. S. Hudson said that's why shoveling the path in the park would be a good solution and she thinks the equipment is there to do it. I think the important take away from this is that someone did come to the meeting. Someone took the time to come and express their concerns – it's a safety issue for people that want to get out and walk. J. Van Landuyt agreed. Laura Byers said she has to walk in the street and move aside when a car is coming, so it would be great to be able to walk on the rec path if it could be cleared. She believes the city has equipment to remove snow from the path.

J. Van Landuyt said the rec path at Emricson Park is not designed for a truck; it's designed for pedestrian traffic. If the city were to plow snow from the rec path with a truck, it would only be a matter of time that it would break apart and need repair or replacement.

J. Osborn said we don't have an ordinance forcing people to shovel the sidewalks in their neighborhoods. Residents start out the winter season doing a pretty good job, but then, by the 7th or 8th snow, nobody is getting out there. His neighbor fell down walking her dog, even after he had shoveled, on just a little patch of ice. Many people shovel as much as they can. When J. Osborn first moved to Woodstock, he thought it was unusual that there wasn't any sort of an ordinance requiring people to shovel their sidewalks. He said in Palatine they have a track vehicle that zips around clearing sidewalks. But, it also depends on the surface, whether it's the brick, asphalt or cement; they're all handled a bit differently. J. Osborn suggested the city do a bit of research to find out how other communities handle the shoveling of residential sidewalks. How different is Woodstock from Lakewood or Crystal Lake? What processes do they follow?

J. Van Landuyt asked Ms. Byers if she'd consider walking around the Square because these sidewalks are a priority and are always cleared. Laura Byers said she does walk around the Square. S. Hudson said she (Laura Byers) walks 5 miles a day. Laura Byers asked if the city can use the same equipment on the path as they do on the Square? J. Van Landuyt said that could be possible but we've had back to back snowfalls and the city doesn't have enough equipment or manpower to handle additional areas. Once we bring an expectation, we have to do it all the time. Chairman Celentano said, the City would have to buy more equipment and hire more workers. Chairman Celentano apologized to Laura Byers, believing she didn't get the answer she was hoping for. Laura Byers replied that she appreciates having the Commission listen to her concerns.

M. Indyke said he thinks J. Osborn's comments were very valuable; to investigate surrounding communities, find out if they have a shoveling Ordinances, find out what their priorities are, and then perhaps, make a recommendation to City Council saying that these communities are shoveling their sidewalk. S. Hudson suggested that the commission make a recommendation to the City Council for a sidewalk shoveling ordinance. Chairman Celentano added that Public Works already has a lot of responsibilities and that they don't have the manpower to add more tasks. J. Osborn said we encourage people to go sledding and participate in outdoor winter activities; ice skating, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing. J. Osborn added that there are crowds of people accessing the park. He wonders if Public Works could occasionally plow the rec path when they're not real busy. J. Van Landuyt said that there are back to back snowfalls many times throughout the season. Right now Public Works is down five employees because of a hiring freeze. If we do it one time, that's going to be the expectation. I'm not sure we can meet the expectation and, that's what I'm concerned about. We can't do it with a pickup truck, because the rec path is not designed for truck traffic. That kind of weight would break up the path's asphalt. J. Osborn said even if you can't do it, these are the things that are difficult to

entertain because you're under staffed at this point. S. Hudson said city should find resources to allow Public Works to plow / shovel the rec path and city sidewalks; like a good neighbor, to lead by example. J. Van Landuyt added that there are also rec paths at Merryman Fields, and if we clear paths at Emricson Park then people may want the same services at Merryman Fields. We set an expectation by doing that. We'd have to put in a 5 person force with 5 pieces of equipment to keep rec paths clear. You have to wonder if that's a viable option, if it's that cold out, are people going to walk outside or would it be a waste of time, energy and manpower?

S. Hudson doesn't think it would be a waste of time because it would allow pedestrians a safe place to walk. Susan said it's like saying that certain streets are not important. We plow every street, so we should shovel every sidewalk.

J. Van Landuyt said the City keeps the Square cleared which provides an option of walking around the Square. If people call to say there's no place to walk, we tell them the Square is always clear. The Square is a priority for the City, there's re-freeze and we keep it clear as much as possible. It's just whether they want to walk there or not. We don't condone people walking in the street either; it's a problem everywhere. This year was bad because that first snowfall was such heavy snow and then it got cold and it all froze. If you didn't get it immediately, you could not get it the next day because it froze; and now it's been like that all winter. M. Indyke said he can't get to it in front of his house. He's already put down about 20 bags of salt and there's still ice out there. J. Van Landuyt said that if it takes 3 days for us to get out to the rec path and it freezes like that, and we've got expectations to keep the path clear, then we'd have to put salt down. There's a lot involved and there's not an easy solution, He understands what the problem is. We've got people calling our office all the time telling us about sidewalks that aren't shoveled. And the best thing we can do is to create awareness to the property owners. Most of them comply, but not all. S. Hudson reiterated that she'd still like the city to make resources available to Public Works so they could remove the snow at some point on the Emricson Park path because we have a goal of being pedestrian friendly. Chairman Celentano said the city would have to buy more machines & hire more people. S. Hudson pointed out there's one path that's a mile long path, that's all we're talking about, not all of the sidewalks in the City of Woodstock. Chairman Celentano asked if the city has a small tractor ... a gator that you could put a plow on there and just clean off a mile or two. J. Van Landuyt said, yes, we use it in the downtown. A. Celentano asked if this could be used for the path in Emricson Park. Jeff Van Landuyt said as long as we don't get back to back snowfalls. We've had winters where we've had snow every day and my guys are struggling to keep clean what has to be kept clean. S. Hudson asked if the city could hire a private person to do it.

J. Osborn said snow is an asset. It can be used for cross-country skiing, snow shoe activity there are a lot of healthy activities that you can do on snow. Snowmobile access is very important around here. Walking is one activity, but during those times, maybe it's important to emphasize what else we can do. In that park we have the Aquatic Center. Maybe the city could rent out snow shoes & cross country skis. Jason asked if they're doing anything at that facility during the winter months. The city could rent out cross county skis and snow shoes. Simply clearing the Square and saying OK walk there and

hopefully spend some money. The idea that we have to clear it everywhere, it's costly but people need to understand it has a seasonal use, too. Maybe the Rec Center would be interested in renting out equipment so people could use the park(s) and have fun in the snow. Or even have a snowman building contest.

Chairman Celentano added that maybe the Recreation Department Director would want to look at it from the recreation standpoint and get people involved. Jason added that access is a key to that. Susan said in the conservation areas they groom the trails for cross country skiing. A. Celentano suggested we forward this info to the Parks & Recreation Commission. They'd have to see what they can do and what facilities they may want to add.

TRANSMITTALS: (No discussion or action requested) None.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jason Osborn said he reviewed a couple of articles. The first one is related to the mini bus program. President Obama just announced a 4-billion dollar initiative to work with the auto manufacturers in Silicon Valley for driver-less cars. And the statement from the USDOT said they are positioning themselves on the full driver-less car in terms of the potential benefits for safety and system management, truly believing that the robots will drive better than people. He thought he read this announcement in the New York Times. The last big initiative like this was the electric car but it was around 9 billion dollars, and instead of making engines more efficient they became more powerful for about eight years; now they're more efficient. He came across a village in Greece; they just got a driverless minivan that drives around their little town going 15 MPH. He believes Greece doesn't have the same liability issues as the USA. They have this little vehicle cruising around their town giving people rides. The fact that this little village in Greece is doing it and President Obama is offering this sizable amount of money. If the City of Woodstock had something like this we'd have to discuss parking as well as locations for pick-up and drop-off. These things are on the cusp of planning, but Jason thinks there are ordinances we should think of and focus on. There might be a time in the future that Woodstock might have to talk about these types of vehicles being allowed; such as having a dedicated trail that would go to the county fairgrounds, carrying people slowly and quietly around with nobody really noticing. A lot of municipalities may be interested in having a few of these. It's an interesting read; it's interesting to think about where this could be in 10-15 years. And whether or not a community like Woodstock would buy one for \$40,000; the software would be running it. Jason said he'll continue to look into this a bit more.

Chairman Celentano had a number of things to go over. He was at a McHenry County Transportation Committee meeting a couple of weeks ago and they said something very interesting about bridges. Do we have bridges in Woodstock? J. Van Landuyt answered yes. A. Celentano asked if they are all in good repair. J. Van Landuyt again answered yes; that the bridges that are owned by the City of Woodstock are in good repair.

J. Van Landuyt said the City has jurisdiction over one bridge on Melody Lane. A. Celentano said MCDOT reported there are some roads that need to be repaired, but the municipality can't get machinery over the bridge to repair the road. In order to get the equipment out there to fix the road, you have to first fix the bridge, which would cost a couple million dollars.

There's a Pavement Report, included in the packet. It states what would be necessary to bring all streets in Woodstock up to 100%, we are now at 49%, which is not good. S. Hudson said it was also in the newspaper. Chairman Celentano said in order to fix everything today it would cost 69 million dollars. It would probably take 10 years or more, and by the time they're done with that in 10-15 years, you're back to starting all over again. There's a task force made up of about 6 municipalities who are going to explore pavement issues, intergovernmental agreements, and new technology in an effort to determine what to do with the roads now. There is something called municipal partnering initiative whereby 35 municipalities, mostly in Lake and Cook County, get together and collectively bid public works projects. There are 28 municipalities jointly purchasing road salt and there are 3 municipalities contracting street sweeping services. They save a considerable amount of money along the road; \$300,000 one year and \$500,000 another year and they're looking to expand into McHenry County. This has been going on for several years now and apparently it's working in many communities. Working together they're saving money for themselves and each other. M. Indyke said it's a co-op; the city does it with electric. Chairman Celentano believes this task force could grow into something great. It started with 6 municipalities and now there are 8 or 9 at the table. It's really interesting what's going on and these initiatives are working for other municipalities, so why not us? M. Indyke asked what it takes to get involved. J. Van Landuyt said there's no fee to join. A. Celentano said there was a gentleman who gave a whole presentation about what they're doing. M. Indyke asked again what would it take for us to participate? Chairman Celentano said he doesn't know. J. Van Landuyt explained that right now they're talking about putting one together in McHenry County. The gentleman from Cary, their City Engineer, was trying to get McHenry County municipalities to join, to have our own co-op, per se. The fewer number of times a contractor has to mobilize their equipment, the more cost savings is realized. For example, if Woodstock wanted to be a lead agency on sidewalk replacement contract, Woodstock would take on the job of creating bid documents, receiving the bids; the whole process. J. Van Landuyt doesn't see a downside to the City of Woodstock and we'll be talking more about this at the Task Force meetings. Chairman Celentano thought one of the easiest to discuss was hydrant painting. This co-op accepts a bid from one painting contractor who then serviced nine communities and they all pay a reduced cost which they were able to obtain because of the larger volume of work. This cost is typically less than the cost which would be charged if each municipality bid their project out individually.

Transmittal of newspaper article about Woodstock man getting hit on Rte 47 – discuss alternate ways of getting across Rte. 47, it's a big problem and the road doesn't belong to the City of Woodstock.

J. Van Landuyt explained that if the City were approved for a crosswalk on IL Rt. 47, it must bear the entire cost of it and it must be done to IDOT's specifications. So, it probably wouldn't be a crosswalk with two signs. Because of the kind of road it is it might have signals, pedestrian timers, and probably some lighting. J. Osborn stated they tend to ask more out of you than they do for themselves. J. Van Landuyt said they're going to take advantage of the city doing an improvement. It's their jurisdiction. J. Van Landuyt said the last time Senator Althoff was here, they talked about IDOT. They said we'd be happy to entertain it, but the city would have to design it and build it according to their specs. S. Hudson asked if the IL Rt. 47 plan includes a crosswalk at Jewel. Chairman Celentano said it doesn't, but at the next meeting he'll suggest that certain parts of Rte. 47 should have pedestrian lights that a pedestrian can control by pushing a button. Then, when the light turns red the pedestrian can walk across the street safely. The traffic on IL Rt. 47 is going to slow down because of the roundabouts, if the roundabouts go in. That may make it a little easier for folks to get across. If you've got to put a light in, then you've got to have a place that they can cross. When you get a chance, look through these three documents that J. Van Landuyt printed out and we'll go over this at the next meeting. The City Council asked that we look over these documents and make recommendations along IL Rt. 47 before anyone else gets hurt. M. Indyke said visibility and weather is a factor. S. Hudson asked if the IL Rt. 47 plan includes any crosswalks and wonders if there's any legal liability for the State of Illinois if people get injured trying to cross IL Rt. 47. M. Indyke doesn't think one can sue the State of Illinois. J. Osborn said there wasn't much around when IL Rt. 47 was designed; no apartments, no clinic, not even Farm & Fleet, so they probably weren't concerned about pedestrians. The area was more rural back then. But, with recent road construction, and construction in the future, will the state plan for crosswalks at intersections on IL Rt. 47?

Chairman Celentano isn't sure what they're doing at US Rt. 14 & IL Rt. 47. He had a brief conversation with IDOT. A. Celentano suggested that they prepare areas where a bus could pull over on IL Rt. 47. M. Indyke said these areas already exist on Rte. 47. If you drive from Woodstock to Crystal Lake there are these indentations in a couple of areas. Chairman Celentano said those areas allow a vehicle to drive around a person that is going to make a left hand turn; you can go around him on the right. That's not for a bus. Chairman Celentano said it's on U.S. Rt. 14, there's two of them on the way to Crystal Lake, there's a little jog out on the right hand side, near the Lutheran Church. Chairman Celentano stated that on Rte. 47 they should provide for buses. IDOT said they don't want to do this.

If all goes well, our student group will focus on transportation, the Parks & Recreation Commission will focus on Parks & Rec. Chairman Celentano will be talking with Woodstock North High School because they have an engineering program starting there. He'd like to give them this type of project. Once you start researching crosswalks, it's one of those universal problems, like pavement. When A. Celentano researched pavement issues on the internet he found information from Norway, Sweden, South Africa, everyone has the same problems.

S. Hudson wonders if the police have any statistics on pedestrian incidents on Rte.47 as it would be good to include this type of information with any recommendation that we have

for City Council. J. Osborn mentioned pedi-cyclists, too. They call them out separately on the reports. Chairman Celentano requested that J. Van Landuyt get some information from the Police Department.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Discuss possible locations for crosswalks on Rte. 47.

Jason Osborn and Caron Wenzel will continue to research the mini-bus.

Discuss upcoming projects for D-200 students.

Research pedestrian / pedi-cyclist accident that have occurred on Rte. 47.

DISCUSSION:

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by M. Indyke, second by S. Hudson, to adjourn the meeting of the Transportation Commission. Ayes: J. Osborne, A. Celentano. Nays: None. Absentees: C. Wenzel. Abstentions: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Howie
Executive Assistant