

ITEM NO. M
13-158

**CITY COUNCIL OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS, IN COUNCIL,
ASSEMBLED YOUR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE to Whom
was Referred a POLICY SESSION to Receive Information and
Provide Direction Regarding the PROCESS of REVISING the
INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN STANDARDS/SUBDIVISION
MANUAL OF PRACTICE for the City of Peoria.**

A Policy Session was held on Tuesday, March 19, 2013, in the Council Chambers, Room 400, City Hall, 419 Fulton Street, Peoria, Illinois at 6:30 P.M., with Mayor Jim Ardis presiding.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed the following Council members were physically present: Akeson, Gulley, Irving, Riggerbach, Sandberg, Spain, Spears, Turner, Weaver, Mayor Ardis – 10.
Absent: Van Auken - 1.

Others present were: City Manager Patrick Urich, Interim Corporation Counsel Sonni Williams, Community Development Director Ross Black, Interim Director of Public Works Jeff Smith, Senior Urban Planner Josh Naven, AICP Senior Urban Planner Leah Allison, Civil Engineer II Jane Gerdes, Civil Engineer II Scott Reese, Civil Engineer II Steve Letsky, Chris Waible and Ray Lees of Dewberry Architects, Inc., City Clerk Beth Ball, Chief Deputy City Clerk Stefanie Rice, interested citizens and members of the media.

**INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN STANDARDS/SUBDIVISION MANUAL OF PRACTICE FOR
THE CITY OF PEORIA**

Mayor Jim Ardis opened the Policy Session at 6:30 P.M. to receive information and provide direction regarding the process of revising the Infrastructure Design Standards/Subdivision Manual of Practice for the City of Peoria.

Community Development Director Ross Black opened the public meeting by providing background into the City's Infrastructure Design Standards (IDS), which was developed from the Comprehensive Plan previously adopted by the City Council as the Official Strategic Plan for the community. He identified the following six critical success factors: infrastructure, transportation, sustainability, neighborhoods, taxes and fees. With regards to costs, he said the administration was taking the long-term approach over the lifecycle of the infrastructure and not just the initial cost associated with installation. He said the cost associated with public infrastructure would be broken down into the two following categories:

- 1) Early development carried by the developer or builder and passed on to the homebuyer, and
- 2) Long-term cost of maintenance carried exclusively by the taxpayers.

Director Black said a higher quality initial infrastructure would significantly reduce the financial responsibility passed on to taxpayers in the future. He said the increased cost per lot caused by higher quality infrastructure would create a higher value for the individual properties. He said Council should discuss costs and standards when deciding infrastructure development. He said the main goal was to improve the City's sustainable infrastructure while making Peoria a community of neighborhoods that were attractive to new and current residents.

Interim Director of Public Works Jeff Smith said the Infrastructure Design Standards were compiled to assist with the implementation of the City's Comprehensive Plan. He said a Steering Committee was formed to assist with the draft of these standards, and he acknowledged Council Member Akeson and Council Member Weaver for their participation on the Committee.

NARROWER STREETS

Interim Director of Public Works Jeff Smith reviewed the benefits, the current and proposed standards and the cost for narrower streets. He said the main benefit of narrowing the streets would be to promote traffic calming.

In response to Council Member Gulley, Interim Director Smith said the City would not regulate parking with narrower streets. He said parking on the street would not be a problem because there would be room for at least one car to get through as well as emergency vehicles. He said the narrower streets slowed traffic, and he said should problems occur, parking could be prohibited on one or both sides of the street.

Director Black responded to Council Member Sandberg and he said the proposed changes presented would not have an affect on the older parts of the City and existing subdivisions. He said the subdivision ordinance allowed waivers in order to deviate from the standards. However, he said it was Staff's objective to put in place specifications that would reduce the number of waivers sought.

Council Member Akeson said the Steering Committee acknowledged that narrower streets might not be applicable to all areas of the City. She suggested Staff come back with a series of standards that would be appropriate for the various locations of development. She said a recommendation had been made to section the City into transects – an urban center area that rolled out to a rural area. She recommended discussing the infrastructure design standards as a matter of transects.

In response to Council Member Spears, Interim Director Smith said if there was an annexation agreement previously in place, it would grandfather in the existing codes.

Council Member Sandberg suggested flexible standards to fit with the diverse needs of the City.

Mayor Ardis said it was his impression that these standards would be for the newly developed areas of the City. To summarize Council's discussions, he said they preferred to see different concepts and strategies for different areas of the City to fit that area's needs.

PAVEMENTS

Interim Director Smith reviewed the strategies for Peoria's pavements as follows:

1. Increase the design life from 20 years to 30 years.
2. Preventative maintenance.
3. Implement a pavement management system.
4. Additional funding sources.
5. Improve roadside drainage.
6. Include sustainable features

He reviewed the current and the proposed sustainable design of the streets.

Council Member Weaver said a number of road failures were due to a lack of inspection after installation to verify the asphalt laid was three inches thick.

Interim Director Smith continued with the proposed design of the streets

Discussions continued regarding the details of the composition of the streets and what type of gravel would be used and how to monitor the same. Several Council Members expressed their concern of the use of substandard materials.

Interim Director Smith said the streets were under warranty for a year after being installed. He said after the expiration of the warranty, then the City covered the cost of repairing the streets.

In response to Council Member Irving, Interim Director Smith said the developers hired consulting engineers to certify the installation of the streets. He said, should problems occur with the installation of the street, it would happen within the year following installation or after the initial construction. He said if the contractor was not made aware of any issues with the streets within the first year, then the street repairs became the responsibility of the City. He said the one-year warranty standard was a generally accepted best practice.

Discussions were held pertaining to the accountability of the developer and updates to the City's standards for installation of the streets.

Council Member Akesson said she spoke with Marvin Traylor of the Illinois Asphalt Pavement Association. She recommended that the City invite him to conduct a study session to educate Council and Staff on the construction of pavements. She also encouraged sending invitations to developers and stakeholders to attend in order to learn more about this issue.

INSPECTIONS AND TESTING

With regards to inspections and testing, Interim Director Smith said currently, the developer hired an engineering firm who would do the design of the construction. He said the developer would not conduct the certification. He said the Steering Committee proposed to have the City oversee inspections on the subdivisions in order to verify the City had an inspector working in the City's best interest to assure quality control.

Mayor Ardis expressed his concern about the inspection process and mentioned Council needed to understand the situation better.

City Manager Ulrich said the City would hire a firm to fulfill the inspection process.

Council Member Spears said he would like the firm to be insured, bonded and held liable for any potential incidences.

PAVEMENTS (Continued)

Returning to the issue of pavements, Mayor Ardis agreed with Council Member Akesson, and he said additional education was needed for the Council pertaining to the thickness proposals of the materials used on the pavements as well as the cost associated with them. He said Staff

should not use these discussions to draft a final document. He said Council would like to get their questions answered and then come back with more information prior to finalizing the IDS.

In response to Council Member Weaver, Council Member Akeson said Marvin Traylor had a reputation to maintain in his industry of civil engineers. She said the City should decide on the proposed longevity of the road, and she noted that 30 years was an unrealistic number. She said her concern was to make sure the City was doing what was beneficial for the developers and the taxpayers.

SIDEWALKS

Interim Director Smith said the installation of sidewalks, which were a part of the public infrastructure, was a matter of timing. He reviewed the current standards for sidewalks and noted these standards delayed the fulfillment of the Comprehensive Plan. He reviewed the proposed plan which would require connectivity of the sidewalks. He said the City needed to determine when sidewalks would be made accessible to the residents in subdivisions. He said currently sidewalks were installed at the homebuilder's cost; however, he said when the homebuilder installed the sidewalk, there would not be the opportunity for quality control that the City would have should the sidewalks be installed initially. He said the City's action plan was to require connectivity which would require the initial installation of sidewalks as part of the improvements. He said it would create an immediate connectivity and would allow for better quality control of the materials. He said sidewalks going in immediately would become the cost of the developer versus the cost of the homebuilder. However, he said installing sidewalks later would prevent damage during home construction. He said waiting until after construction would cause a lack of connectivity. He continued with further discussion of the implementation of sidewalks, and he remarked that installation of the sidewalks was a matter of timing and cost control.

In response to Council Member Irving, Interim Director Smith said the developer would not pay for the sidewalks, but rather the builder would pay because the cost of the sidewalk would be included in the value of the lot.

Interim Direct Smith responded to Council Member Riggerbach regarding multiuse trails and he said for the arterial streets, a policy was recently implemented saying, instead of a sidewalk on both sides of the street, a combination multiuse trail, bike and pedestrian path would be installed on one side.

Council Member Riggerbach recommended establishing higher standards pertaining to multiuse trails which included landscaping. He recommended changing Peoria's requirements for sidewalk installation from "2 years **after** 80% occupancy" to "2 years **or** 80% occupancy." He said he was hesitant to have sidewalks in place prior to construction.

STORMWATER

Interim Director Smith said stormwater management would be the implementation of the Tri-County Regional Planning Corporation Stormwater Plan. He said the City's current standards would not meet the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, but these standards had a lower initial cost, were consistent with local peers, and required less land for development. He said the new proposed standards required more land and would cost more.

In response to Council Member Weaver, Civil Engineer II Jane Gerdes said Staff compared two similar pieces of ground, and she said with the proposed plan more land would be required. She said it was difficult to assess a cost per lot due to the different topographies of the parcels. She said to compare two similar parcels, the developers would lose approximately 3-4 lots.

In response to Council Member Akeson, Jane Gerdes said the City had a program in place since the mid 80's to assist residents with drainage problems on private properties. She said the City would allot approximately \$200,000 to \$700,000 per year to mitigate the issues of poor drainage and erosion. She said it was difficult to conduct a cost benefit analysis with the proposed standard, but she said there were definite costs associated with ignoring stormwater management.

STREETLIGHTS

Interim Director Smith said streetlights promoted safety, and the Comprehensive Plan included street and alley lighting. He reviewed the implementation of the lights and the approximate cost per lot to do so. He said streetlighting promoted traffic and pedestrian safety. He said it was the proposal to implement pedestrian-scaled lighting within the parkway.

In response to Council Member Irving pertaining to yard lights versus streetlights, Interim Director Smith said yard lights would be a cost to the builder.

In response to Council Member Sandberg, it was stated the cost would be on a sliding scale from low density residential to the high density urban.

Council Member Sandberg recommended letting the market determine the need for the type of streetlighting.

Council Member Spain agreed with Council Member Sandberg that streetlighting should be driven by the marketplace, and he said the City currently had a policy which allowed for market-driven streetlighting. He said the current process allowed for Council and citizens to make a request for streetlighting; however, the process was very time consuming and drawn out. He also concurred with Council Member Sandberg that Staff needed to be aware of each neighborhood's individuality.

STORMWATER (Continued)

In response to Council Member Spears, Director Black said there were fees assessed for recreation and education and that there were currently examples of the same within the City of Peoria, as well as other communities where retention areas were turned into community amenities. He said there was a fee of \$56 per lot established as a recreation fee.

STREETLIGHTS (Continued)

Director Black said in response to Council Member Irving, that one of the issues with yard lights was when the lights failed over time, property owners generally did not maintain them.

STORMWATER (Continued)

In response to Council Member Irving, Interim Director Smith provided information on various types of retention ponds, the pros and cons, and the different usage for each.

TREE POLICY PROGRAM

Interim Director Smith referenced two handouts previously distributed entitled "Under the Canopy" and "Emerald Ash Borers." He said this program was intended to satisfy the Council Agenda item for a Tree Policy. He reported that urban forests had safety benefits of separating the cars from the pedestrians, and he said they promoted traffic calming. He listed several benefits noting that trees combated the greenhouse effect, cleansed the air, conserved energy and detained storm water. He said trees also provided an aesthetic and economic effect as they increased the property values. He said the City currently did not have an inventory of its trees, but Staff estimated approximately \$20,000 that the City would be responsible for along streets, alleys and public property. He said the general maintenance program would have components such as tree trimming for the younger trees and safety pruning in the large trees as well as clearance trimming. He said the City did not have a planting program. He added due to budget cuts, the City no longer had a forestry department. He said the proposed program called for a tree inventory. He said Staff released a Request for Proposal for a full GIS-based tree inventory service that would be brought to Council next week. He stated Staff recommended implementing a pruning program, clearance trimming, safety trimming, tree and stump removal and planting programs. He said an inventory would identify opportunities for tree planting. He provided a report on the Emerald Ash Borers and the effect they have on Ash Trees and recommended a prevention program. He reviewed parkways and street trees as well as diagrams that recommended the hardier, larger trees and locations of where those trees should be planted. He said there was no initial cost to developers. He said the City would have some maintenance costs and he provided an estimate on the cost per lot. He recommended planting trees towards the end of the development process. He said tree planting would increase property values, calm traffic, create a nice pedestrian environment, and provide a savings in heating and cooling costs.

In response to Council Member Irving, Interim Director Smith said tree trimming was generally prompted because of safety and clearance concerns. He said the City currently did not have certified arborists on staff.

Council Member Akeson and Council Member Riggerbach each expressed the importance of implementing a tree policy to improve the aesthetics of the City.

Interim Director Smith said, in response to Council Member Riggerbach, that the utility companies did not see any issues with planting trees and them affecting the utility.

CONCLUSION

Interim Director Smith said assessments had been completed, and he reviewed the Peer Community Comparison chart provided to all Council. He reviewed the incremental initial cost of the proposed standards noting the overall cost for the proposed standards was estimated to be approximately \$4,867.00 or approximately \$25 per month over a 30-year mortgage. He said the issues presented were differences between upfront costs, life-cycle and quality of place. He said Staff and the Steering Committee would review the street width and pavement thickness and present the same to Council. He encouraged Council to contact him with any questions or concerns. He said Staff was working to complete the subdivision design manual over the next few months as well as the subdivision ordinance.

Mayor Ardis said there had been a lot of positive constructive feedback on the proposals presented. He said it was important to understand the overall cost impact and that the City should not set the goals too low.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Kolbus, a Peoria resident and developer who owned three active subdivisions within the City limits of Peoria recommended Council consider the following three things:

1. Fix the problems that the old ordinances do not;
2. Keep the City of Peoria competitive in terms of residential and commercial development; and,
3. Cost to the City to enforce these ordinances and the cost to maintain these public improvements that a private developer pays for and builds and of which the City eventually takes ownership.

He said the goal of this project was to improve the infrastructure while making Peoria a desirable place and competitive City for development. He said the Steering Committee did not include a private developer, engineer or contractor, which caused some adversity. He recommended Council to ask Staff to create a new Steering Committee that included public citizens, developers, engineers, road contractors, as well as a few Council Members to oversee the Committee.

Jason Reed, a Peoria resident, concurred with Council Member Spain's comments that streetlights were neighborhood driven, and he said he agreed with Council Member Akeson's comments pertaining to the importance of street trees. He said Peoria should not feel a need to compete with other communities. He said the City of Peoria needed to stand on its own ideas.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Spain moved to close the Policy Session; seconded by Council Member Riggerbach.

Motion was approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Akeson, Gulley, Irving, Riggerbach, Sandberg, Spain, Spears, Turner, Weaver,
Mayor Ardis – 10.

Nays: None.

The Policy Session adjourned at 8:54 P.M.



Beth Ball, MMC, City Clerk
City of Peoria, Illinois