

MEETING MINUTES
PUBLIC SERVICES COUNCIL COMMITTEE

Monday, February 28, 2022
City of West Des Moines Training Room

In Attendance:

Council Member – Matthew McKinney

Council Member – Kevin Trevillyan

Deputy City Manager – Jamie Letzring

Assistant City Attorney – Greta Truman

Finance Director – Tim Stiles

Community & Economic Development Director – Clyde

Evans

City Engineer – Brian Hemesath

Public Services Director – Bret Hodne

Principal Engineer – Ben McAlister

Principal Engineer – Nick Rentel

Parks & Recreation Director – Sally Ortgies

Guests in Attendance:

Item # 1

Dominic Dittman, MidAmerican Energy

Scot Enger, MidAmerican Energy

James Keislar, MidAmerican Energy

Charles Larsen, MidAmerican Energy

Meeting was called to order at 11:32 AM by City Engineer, Brian Hemesath.

1. MidAmerican Energy Gas Easements in New Subdivisions (BJM)

Issue Summary:

City Code 10-3-2C requires all utility cables to be placed in the side or rear yard of residential subdivisions unless specifically authorized by City Council. Plats requesting this deviation from code are identified in the final plat approval staff report. On a recent new subdivision, MidAmerican Energy submitted a utility permit application to install gas main in a public utility easement (PUE) located just outside the right-of-way on both sides of the street. Staff denied the permit because the PUE was only located in the front yards due to topography and preservation of existing trees limiting the ability to place electric and telecommunication utilities in the rear of the lot. Gas main installation in the PUE would have consumed most of the easement and significantly impacted the ability of other utility providers to serve the adjacent properties.

During the subsequent discussions with MidAmerican Energy it was indicated that many of the metro suburbs allow a dedicated 5' gas easement immediately outside the public right-of-way on both sides of public streets. MidAmerican stated that the easement allows for boring of gas mains and services without having to contend with other utilities in the corridor or have crossings under the pavement. MidAmerican believes boring is cheaper for the developer, and if installation within the right-of-way is required the gas main must be trenched at a higher cost.

Staff has concerns that placement of gas main on private property within an easement is too much of a burden. Many properties have irrigation systems, invisible fences, trees, landscaping, walls, etc. just

outside the right-of-way and do not expect a pipeline to be located behind the sidewalk. In addition, development is moving into rougher terrain so requests for front yard PUEs are becoming more common. A dedicated gas easement will push the front yard PUE further into the property, encumber significant portions of the front yard, and force above-ground features such as transformers and pedestals closer to the home.

Councilmember Matt McKinney asked if the utility company works with each landowner in instances where the gas main is outside of the right of way on a one-off basis.

Mr. McAlister responded they are established by platted easements. The plats are reviewed so the City is able to keep track of where utilities are located.

City Engineer Brian Hemesath noted the current width of public utility easements of 10' is not enough for a gas main and other utilities such as telecommunications and electric.

Mr. McAlister provided three different options for the installation of gas mains:

- Keep current City Code requiring gas lines be installed in the right of way and other utilities in the backyard
- Allow a dedicated gas easement with a reasonable width immediately outside of the right of way
- Allow a generalized public utility easement encompassing gas main and cable-based utilities

City Engineer Hemesath noted that the third option would only be in instances where topography doesn't allow utilities to be installed in the backyard.

Dominic Dittman, MidAmerican Energy commented that West Des Moines is one of the few cities where they are required to install gas mains within the right of way. He added that from an engineering perspective they have to do more boring around storm and sanitary sewers or water hydrants. The mains are not able to be trenched and installed in a straight line which adds more costs to developers. There are also handicap ramps that can be damaged in the process that adds additional costs.

Mr. McAlister stated the City stubs services from all utilities (sanitary, storm, water) as part of the subdivision and if the gas is running on the outside of the right of way there is a possibility that they may have to cross the gas line, noting that timing of construction is an enormous problem. When they install the gas mains the main line utilities are already in as well as the sidewalk that they must work around. He added that some of that can be worked out by developer coordinating with the utility companies.

City Engineer Hemesath explained that if a dedicated gas easement just outside of the right of way was allowed the City may need to change our current practice to extend all services outside that easement, so that plumbers making connections don't have to deal with gas main conflicts.

Councilmember McKinney mentioned Ankeny and other communities that have a dedicated gas main and asked what is best practice.

Mr. McAlister explained from Staff's perspective a pipeline belongs in the public right of way.

Councilmember Trevillyan summarized that it isn't impossible to install the gas mains in the right of way but can be more expensive and developers have commented to MidAmerican Energy about those added costs. He commented that this isn't the best solution for the City and future property owners to have 15-17' in their front yards that they cannot landscape, fence, or plant trees.

City Engineer Hemesath added that the City has been discussing trees in and along the right of way to create a canopy over the street, and with an easement that would make it difficult.

Councilmember Trevillyan stated the existing practice requiring pipelines to be installed in the right of way is best option.

Councilmember McKinney agreed that the current process is working and if any special situations occur the City should review and discuss on a case-by-case basis.

City Engineer Hemesath stated Staff will bring them to the subcommittee for review with final plat approval.

Direction: Committee members were not supportive of making any changes to City Code. The committee recommends gas mains be installed in the right of way and review special situations on a case-by-case basis.

2. Digital Enterprise Interstate 35 Crossings Work Hours (BJM)

Issue Summary:

The Digital Enterprise Interstate 35 Crossings project includes interstate crossings on Westown Pkwy and Mills Civic Pkwy. The Iowa DOT will not allow vaults within the interstate right-of-way so the bores are designed to be continuous. A typical installation involves directional boring across the interstate and pulling continuous conduit back through the bore hole. Contractors have indicated that due to the length and depth of the bores it may be difficult to stop and restart the pulling operation should work hours dictate a shutdown. Because both locations are in commercial areas on busy roads it may be beneficial for the City to allow night work to facilitate completion of these difficult bores.

Direction: Committee members were supportive of allowing flexibility of hours if the contractors have any issues with the pulling operation.

3. Weekend Work Requests

Contractors are requesting permission from the PSCC to work weekends on the following project:

- 2022 Street Reconstruction
- Stagecoach Drive, South Jordan Creek Parkway to South 78th Street

Direction: The committee approved contractors to work on the 2022 Street Reconstruction project from 8am – 5pm on Saturdays only. The committee also approved contractors to work weekends on the Stagecoach Drive, South Jordan Creek Parkway to South 78th Street project 8am – 5pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

4. Review of Items for Council Meeting (March 7, 2022)

ENGINEERING COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS:

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution – Ordering Construction - Rebid

- **2021 Stormwater Intake Repair Program**
(0510-039-2021) I+S Group, Inc. 660.000.000.5250.490 *Stormwater Revenue*

Resolution – Ordering Construction

- **South 64th Street & Mills Civic Parkway Intersection Improvements**
(0510-053-2021) Snyder & Associates, Inc. 500.000.000.5250.490 *General Obligation Bonds*

Resolution – Ordering Construction

- **52nd Street & EP True Parkway Pedestrian Beacon**
(0510-055-2021) SEH, Inc. 500.000.000.5250.490 *General Obligation Bonds*

Resolution – Ordering Construction

- **Digital Enterprise Segment 4-3**
(0510-023-2021) Olsson, Inc. 670.000.000.5250.490 *General Obligation Bonds*

Resolution – Approving Construction Plans

- **Jordan Ridge S 81st St Culvert**

Resolution – Approving Sidewalk & Streetlight Agreement with Microsoft Corporation

- **Grand Avenue, South 88th Street to Grand Prairie Parkway**
(0510-009-2021)

Resolution – Approving Conduit Network License Agreement with Iowa Network Services, Inc. d/b/a Aureon Network Services

- **Grand Avenue, South 88th Street to Grand Prairie Parkway**
(0510-009-2021)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Resolution – Awarding Contract – Reject All Bids

- **South Service Area Trunk Sewer Western Extension, Segments 3 & 8**
(0510-033-2015)

Resolution – Awarding Contract

- **2021 Pavement Markings & On-Street Bike Markings Program**
(0510-036-2021) Quality Striping, Inc. 500.000.000.5250.490 *Road Use Tax*

Resolution – Awarding Contract

- **2021 Channel Repair Program**
(0510-040-2021) Dirty 30 Excavating & Trucking, LLC 660.000.000.5250.490 *Stormwater Revenue*

Resolution – Awarding Contract

- **2022 PCC Patching Program**
(0510-002-2022) Shekar Engineering, PLC 500.000.000.5250.490 *Road Use Tax*

Resolution – Awarding Contract

- **Digital Enterprise Interstate 35 Crossings**
(0510-076-2021) Kramer Service Group 670.000.000.5250.490 *American Rescue Plan Act Grant Funds or General Obligation Bonds*

Resolution – Awarding Contract

- **Digital Enterprise Segment 3 Phase 3 Conduit Deployment**
(0510-066-2020) Communication Data Link 670.000.000.5250.490 *General Obligation Bonds*

PUBLIC SERVICES COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS:

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Renewal Contract Agreement

- **Swimming Pool Pump Maintenance & Repair Services**

Approval of Renewal Contract Agreement

- **City Parks System Custodial Services (Reliable Maintenance Company)**

PARKS & RECREATION COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS:

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution – Ordering Construction

- **Holiday Park Youth Baseball Field 3 & 4 Improvements Phase 7**

Resolution – Ordering Construction

- **Park Parking Lot and Sidewalk Improvements, American Legion Park and Meadowview Park**

Resolution – Accepting Work

- **2021 Court Renovation Project**

PUBLIC HEARING

Resolution – Awarding Contract

- **Raccoon River Park Boat Locker Expansion**

5. **Staff Updates:**

None

6. **Other Matters:**

None

The meeting adjourned at 12:17 pm. The next Public Services Council Committee meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2022.

A recording was made. Respectfully submitted by Juanita Greer, Secretary.