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July 29, 2020

Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Public Works Committee was held on Tuesday, July 29, 2020, via Zoom conference hosted by FATV, at 5:00 PM.

Committee Members Present: Councilors Marissa Fleming (chair), Paul Beauchemin, Andrew Couture, Bernard Schultz, and Andrew Van Hazinga.
Commissioner Nicolas Bosonetto
Superintendent Gary Withington

Committee Members Absent: none

Other Participants: None

- 1) **Minutes** from June 30, 2020 meeting were approved.
- 2) DPW Updates: Commissioner Bosonetto gave the Committee a brief update on DPW activities over the past month.
- 3) Action was taken as follows on NEW petitions:

162-20. Councilor Paul Beauchemin to repair the sidewalk at the corner of Pratt Street and Daniels Street, near the Red Dog Roofing Company. There is a big hole, the sidewalk is caving in, and the wall there could be compromised. (REFERRED from City Council 7/7/20)

Discussion: Councilor Beauchemin reported that the sidewalk has collapsed due to the loss of subbase material through the retaining wall. Commissioner Bosonetto has inspected the sidewalk and agrees that the sidewalk needs to be removed, the material behind the retaining wall backfilled and new sidewalk with ADA compliant ramp installed. Estimated price is \$2,500. Commissioner Bosonetto also warned the committee that DPW's budget for sidewalk repairs is only \$10,000 per year. Chair Fleming asked if this repair could be made a priority. Commissioner Bosonetto replied that the sidewalk crew is currently completing a couple of project and this repair would be placed on the list. Councilor Beauchemin questioned why the DPW only has a \$10,000 yearly budget for sidewalk repairs and stated that sidewalk maintenance is critical to many constituents, especially the elderly, who rely on walking. Chair Fleming agreed on the need for sidewalk repairs and also commented on the increasing construction costs. Councilor Van Hazinga agreed that sidewalk repair needs to be a priority and suggested seeking more

grant funds. Councilor Schultz also agreed on the vital importance of sidewalk maintenance and the need to preserve DPW staff during budget cuts. Councilor Couture pointed out that the public needs to be informed regarding budget cuts and their impacts on services. Finally, Chair Fleming requested that cautionary barriers be set up around the broken sidewalk.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be GRANTED.

163-20. Councillor Paul Beauchemin to repair sidewalk at 37 Chester Street. This is a hazard causing people to trip on the roots of a tree. (REFERRED from City Council 7/7/20)

Discussion: Councilor Beauchemin clarified that the tree and stump are no longer there, but there is a 3 or 4 inch lip in the sidewalk. Commissioner Bosonetto stated that the asphalt sidewalk can be fixed.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be GRANTED.

174-20. Councillors Paul Beauchemin and Marcus DiNatale, on behalf of Mr. Juan Torres at 348 Daniels Street, to install a berm around the perimeter of the property where required to prevent further erosion. (REFERRED from City Council 7/21/20)

Discussion: Councilor Beauchemin reported that he inspected the property with Superintendent Withington and the problem is on the Newtonville side of the property. Superintendent Withington stated this is an easy fix. Commissioner Bosonetto reported to the committee that all berm, apron and pothole repairs come out of the same budget line item and there is only \$125,000 per year for all asphalt repairs.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be GRANTED.

175-20. Councilor Amy Green, to petition the City to have the berm at 182 Belmont Street repaired to prevent further water damage at the property. (REFERRED from City Council 7/21/20)

Discussion: Commissioner Bosonetto inspected the property and estimates a 75-foot berm would correct the drainage issue.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be GRANTED.

176-20. Councilor Paul Beauchemin, to petition the City to add an apron at 39 Edward Street. (REFERRED from City Council 7/21/20)

Discussion: Councilor Beauchemin reported that there is a large hole in front of the driveway. Superintendent Withington estimated 1-ton of mix should fix the problem.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be GRANTED.

177-20. Councilor Paul Beauchemin, to petition the City to add a berm in front of 78 St. Joseph Ave., in order to address water and sand issues faced by residents in the winter. Berm should be placed from the start of the sidewalk to the berm on Daniels St. (REFERRED from City Council 7/21/20)

Discussion: Councilor Beauchemin reported that water is coming down the sidewalk and forming icing issues during the winter in front of the home's steps. Commissioner Bosonetto inspected the site and recommends only a small berm on Daniels Street. There is also a roof drain that comes out onto the street which is not allowed by code. Chair Fleming commented there are other similar drainage issues throughout the city. Councilor Schultz recommended the petition be held until further examination of the problem.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be HELD.

4) Previously HELD petitions for review:

102-20. Councilor Paul Beauchemin to request Unitil to apply new asphalt around poles 12 to 26 on Franklin Road up to Oak Hill Rd. In City Council 4/21/20 petition was amended to replace "poles 12 to 26" with "poles 15 to 26" and refer as amended by unanimous roll call vote. (REFERRED from City Council on 04/21/2020) (HELD during June 2020 meeting)

130-20. Councilor Paul Beauchemin to petition that Unitil repair the sidewalks where new poles have been added for the area of Woodland and Pratt Street and Pratt Road (Poles 5, 6, 7, 8 and 23) with asphalt or cement, as well as the poles at Beech Street and Pratt Road. (REFERRED from City Council on 05/19/2020) (HELD during June 2020 meeting)

144-20. Councilor Beauchemin to petition that Unitil repair the sidewalks in front of pole number 27 on Pratt Road. The guidewire has raised the sidewalk in this area. (REFERRED from City Council on 06/2/2020) (HELD during June 2020 meeting)

149-20. Councilor Paul Beauchemin to request Unitil repair the sidewalk at Pole #11 on Plymouth Street. The sidewalk is washing out. (REFERRED from City Council on 06/16/2020) (HELD during June 2020 meeting)

Discussion: Councilor Beauchemin received a letter from UNITIL outlining their repair actions for the utility poles in petitions 102-20, 130-20, 144-20, and 149-20. Councilor Beauchemin is satisfied with UNITIL's response and motioned that these four petitions be withdrawn.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 5-0 that the petitions be WITHDRAWN.

129-20. Councilor Paul Beauchemin to accept Beech Street Lane as a Street within the City of Fitchburg. (REFERRED from City Council on 05/19/20 to Property Committee, Planning Board, and Public Works) (HELD during June 2020 meeting)

Discussion: The Planning Board recommended against accepting Beech Street Lane and the City Council also gave this petition leave to withdraw during their July 7, 2020 meeting.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 4-1 that the petitions be WITHDRAWN.

046-20. Councilors Marisa Fleming and Marcus DiNatale to declare Ethier Street a Public Way. (REFERRED from City Council on 2/4/2020 to Property Committee, Planning Board, and Public Works Committee) (Held during February and June DPW Committee Meeting)

Discussion: Petition was continued.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be HELD.

5) Any Other Business: No other business was addressed.

NICOLAS BOSONETTO, COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS

Name and title of person submitting minutes