Rutland City Council
September 26, 2023

A Public Information Hearing and special City Council meeting was held on the proposed construction of sidewalks along First Street between Front Street and Gay/Arthur Street on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Mayor Mahrer, Council Members Anderson, Erickson, Lysne and McLaen present. City Auditor and the City Engineer were also present.

Members of the public present: Scott Haan, Calvin Jacobson, Mitch Mahrer, Hal Nelson, Richard Pherson, Brad Siemieniewski, and Brad Wyum.

The Mayor summarized the project on Main Street from the Rutland General Store to the insurance building on the east side and from Weber Ag to Arthur Street on the west side. The State of ND DOT/Transportation Alternatives Project (TAP) funding grant to the City would be $250,000 and the City/local cost would be about $100,000, or 40% of the project.

City Engineer Mike Bassingthwaite discussed the project noting that finding grant money or funds for sidewalks is very difficult. The TAP funding includes federal funds that is an 80/20 split and there are other hoops that are required before getting the project out for bid. The Federal funding will require archaeological and cultural/historic buildings reviews as well as specific testing and recordkeeping requirements. The project proposal/grant request was expanded to include the one block, both east and west to get the funding. A connected corridor was needed with both sides of the street and includes new curbs and gutters. ADA requires a four-foot-wide consistent path; the path could be jogged. Otter Tail Power may need to move/relocate their streetlights. They typically move them at their own cost.

Bassingthwaite said that if the City only did the east side, the cost would be about $50-60,000.

Jacobson asked about the fire hydrants and building entry access. Bassingthwaite said the issue for building entry access is on the building, not the sidewalk project. The sidewalk can be done to maintain a flush entrance to the Senior Citizens building.

The Mayor said the biggest issue is determining how to pay for the project. Erickson said the project could include a special assessment of the adjacent property owners or a city-wide assessment.

Bassingthwaite said this would be a 2025 summer construction project if done through the TAP grant process. The project estimate is, hopefully, on the high side as concrete costs have been high and continued to increase. For the grant funding to be received, both sides of the street need to be done.

Jacobson said the assessments should be citywide as the Main Street benefits the entire community. He asked about the cost if the City did the project on its own, without the TAP grant.

Mitch Mahrer said the project should not remove good concrete from the store. Bassingthwaite said that the ADA sidewalk/corner slope requirements have changed so the sidewalk/corner would need to be cut back from the corner by the store. Anderson said the store installed the sidewalk in 2007.

Jacobson left the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Bassingthwaite said the west side of the street is longer and would probably be about a $70,000 project. He discussed concrete costs and possible suppliers. Bassingthwaite was informed of several concrete suppliers including one in Lisbon and another in Britton.

Anderson said both sides should be done at once. If the project is done in stages, there would most likely be new council members who may not want to continue and finish the project.

Mitch Mahrer said the sewer relining project was done in three stages. Anderson said that entire project was approved and it was done in stages.

Mayor Mahrer said the east side needs to be done, and the west side would be easier.

Siemieniewski asked if residents would be taxed for the project. Erickson said the 2010 Street specials could continue at about the same level to fund the project. The cost of the project was discussed.

The City Auditor reported that the 1994 Street Savings account balance is at $23,790.23 and there is also the Municipal Infrastructure Fund (MIF), also called the Prairie Pothole funding that could be used for the project. That is about $30,000 and there may be another allocation. (Clarification: The MIF can be used for curbs and gutters). The State may allocate additional funds to MIF as oil revenues are received.

Wyum stated he would be in favor of doing both sides of the street as it keeps the community looking good. The west side may not be used every day, but both should be done. He would like to see more cost analysis and information for the project. Siemieniewski concurred.

Bassingthwaite said the initial first-year expenditure by the City would be around $20-25,000 for studies. The sidewalk project in 2025 would be possibly a two-week project. It would be bid out in 2024 and once bids are received the City can accept or reject based on the bids.

Erickson asked about the depth of digging and reinforcing the concrete, which could be two feet deep. Bassingthwaite said the project cost estimates do not include significant dirt work. Erickson said it could be 18” to two feet to get to sufficient stable ground. Bassingthwaite said plastic grade square reinforcement could be used.

Bassingthwaite suggested consulting with the City Attorney on special assessments as that would need to be done before the project begins. GARVEE bonds on the federal side can’t be voted out. The City might also be able to get a 2% Bank of ND loan with a GARVEE bond for the streets and sidewalks.

Further discussion was postponed to the regular Council meeting on Monday, October 2, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

ATTEST:

Deborah Banish, City Auditor

Michael Mahrer, Mayor