

## **STREETS, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS MEETING MINUTES**

July 20, 2020

Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio

**In Attendance:**      **Vermilion City Council:** *Steve Herron, President of Council; Monica Stark, Council at Large; Emily Skahen, Ward One; Frank Loucka, Ward Two; Steve Holovacs, Ward Three; Barb Brady, Ward Four; Brian Holmes, Ward Five; Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk*

**Administration:** *Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Police Chief, Chris Hartung; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director; Christ Stempowski, Fire Chief.*

**Call to Order:**      Steve Holovacs, Chairman, RESOLVED THAT this Streets, Buildings, & Grounds Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

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### **TOPIC ONE:      Riverside Drive (Easement Update)**

T. Valerius said they were not able to find any easements. He spoke with the property owner's brother and he stated that he knows of no easements on this property. The outfall is on a property. C. Howard said he received a quote for \$450 from a title company for them to do a search back to the residency when it was started in 1995. The title search will tell them if there is an easement or if there was ever an easement. This would be Council's decision to move forward with this. F. Loucka asked if the city could just request an easement from the property owner rather than searching for it. C. Howard said they can, but they were asked to look for an easement, but they cannot find record of anything, so they would need a title company to see if there is one. If not, they can look at options for rerouting. B. Holmes said if they can obtain the easement from the property owner, they could avoid paying for the title search. S. Herron said they need some declaration from somebody that is bonded and that would be a title company. He said they really need to do this before they make any transfer or even request the property owner to make a transfer. C. Howard said this would be the first step to verify there is no easement of record and then they can approach the property owner about acquiring an easement. S. Holovacs thought a title search would be the proper step and he did not believe the administration needed approval by council, but thought they were just informing council.

Debbie Wild of 1013 Riverside Drive asked the administration if they would get this title search. C. Howard said yes, they would get the title search.

### **TOPIC TWO:Project Updates**

T. Valerius updated council on the status of Vermilion Road as the guardrail will be installed on Wednesday and the top course of asphalt will be applied later this week or early next week depending on the weather, and pavement markings and berm will also be done next week. The road should be opened by the completion date of July 31.

C. Howard conveyed the pre-construction meeting for the Highbridge Road Reconstruction project will take place on Thursday. The completion date is still slated for October 31.

He said they are still working on acquiring seven temporary easements with regards to the Safe Routes to School project.

He stated the contractor is shooting for completion of the Haber Road Bridge Replacement by the end of the month and he believed they were ahead of schedule.

He said last week the OPWC did release the funds for Round 34, so this means money is available for Mapleview Drive Reconstruction Phase 1, so they will have a proposal for design services at the next council meeting. This project runs from Forestview to Hollyview Drive and this construction is slated for next spring.

M. Stark asked if the sidewalks being laid currently on Sanford up towards Hollyview are part of the replacement of existing sidewalks or is this part of the Safe Routes to School project. C. Howard said this is only for the Sanford Street Water Line Replacement project. If there was a sidewalk that was removed with this construction, this is being replaced. He clarified that if there are driveways that are going to be replaced with the Safe Routes to School project, they will leave them as stone right now that is compacted because they don't want to waste the money pouring them knowing they are going to get tore out in three months. M. Stark asked if the stretch across the road needs replaced soon because it is turning into deep ruts. C. Howard said they will be replacing the asphalt as they are waiting to do this last.

B. Brady asked if there were any updates on the VOL sanitary. C. Howard said he will address this under Utilities.

### **TOPIC THREE: Future of the Existing Fire Station #1**

Mayor Forthofer said since they are about at the halfway point of construction of the new Fire Station #1, there has been questions about what is going to happen to the old fire station. He noted that he circulated to council a memo from the law director as far as what process they will have to follow in the distribution of Fire House #1. He said people have been inquiring what will be done with this property. There have been service organizations inquiring, but he thinks all those interests will need to be

brought together at the point when it's decided when the new fire house is ready to be occupied and they have a schedule for vacating the old fire house and what other intentions the city might have for it. Once this is determined, then it looks like they will be in an auction situation. According to the law director the indication is that it must be auctioned precisely.

M. Stark said from the get go from designing the new fire station, Council was told in the very first conversations that they were going to keep this current building because the fire department had use for it, and they would be able to afford to keep the building with their budget. She asked the fire chief if he agreed to keeping or selling the building. Mayor Forthofer said they need to determine where they are once, they move into the new building. M. Stark asked why they are looking at this if they do not know if they are going to sell it and thinking they might need it. Mayor Forthofer said they want to be prepared for all the eventualities when the time comes. He said he gets calls every other week from people who say they would like to use this building, and they want to decide what the best interests of the city are at that time. He is not sure what economic positions they may be in at this time. It might be that they may need to sell it for revenue. He said they might end up in a different world from when they started this process, so this is the process if they choose to sell it. M. Stark asked the Chief if he agrees with selling this property. Chief Stempowski said the fire department could always use the building, but they would have to entertain this once they move to the new facility and see what the actual needs of the building would be. He said they are in the process of vacating current station #3 on Devon Drive, as they will turn it over to the Service Director and the Service Department for whatever use they need it for. Originally, the thought was that the fire department would transition to the Ohio Street building as Station #3 and use it for a multitude of needs. There has been a lot of inquiries to the mayor and the opinion from the law director is the result. Mayor Forthofer believed it would be a full council discussion since it's a city property and if council feels it's something they can practically hang onto or it's something they want to move on with and get revenue. Stark said her thoughts is that it seems like this should come from the fire department since it is their budget and their building. Mayor Forthofer said no as it is city property. M. Stark said even though it is a fire department it is still city property. Mayor Forthofer said like any city property it is up to Council to decide how the city property should be disposed of. M. Stark said they could get into a huge discussion about this because Council had nothing to do with the parks building they are selling and demolishing. This was not brought to Council at all, and they got to make this decision, so her thoughts are that the fire department would be able to make the decision on their buildings. Mayor Forthofer said from his understanding City Council has some input on what happens to the Fire Department and he is just preparing Council with what the law director says is the procedure for disposing it, if this is what Council wants to do. He said it is not his decision.

Chief Stempowski conveyed the scheduled completion date of the new fire station is December and they have not been served an eviction notice, so he doesn't see the fire department being out of this building in December as there will be a transition period, so between now and then there can be discussion on what's going to happen with this building.

B. Brady said Council just approved the sale of the house across from the museum, and it seems that the law director is saying the sale of the fire station will be a big process, but it wasn't for the sale she mentioned as they just voted to put it up for sale. T. Valerius said this went up for bid and there were more than two bidders. S. Herron said in that situation they did follow the law as it was up to Council and it was a relatively simple process. He said this is a unique building with unique attributes, so it will not be simple. He is curious about the issue brought up with the old parks building, but this is pretty much his experience when working with municipalities that it is up to the legislative body. An administration cannot just dispose of property. S. Holovacs said they have some time to make decisions and asked the mayor to keep council updated so they can take action as they get closer. B. Holmes recalled there were maintenance issues with the building on Ohio Street. Chief Stempowski said those issues have all been addressed.

Dale Zellers of 1042 Jackson Street said he is from the Lions Club and the Fire Station totally interests them as it would be ideal for them. They have a nice piece of property by Lucy Idol and it is behind the police station's picnic area. The area is available if they got the fire station and this would be a terrific place for the Fire Department to practice and they could put up a fire tower, have picnics, store stuff, maintenance, and it has a big garage. It is a nice facility with a kitchen and bathrooms, and they have approximately eight acres with a field in the back. He said this is something he would like considered by the city.

Rodney Johnston, President of the Vermilion Fire Company Corporate Social Club said he has been the President for 20 years and they are interested in having the Fire Station on Ohio Street as their headquarters too. This is where they hold their pancake breakfast and all their events. They have a proposal written up and a power point when the city wants to see it. They feel this station should be kept as a fire station and not run as a fire station, but they also adapted in their proposal to where the fire department could use it at any time. They would do the upkeep and they do put money back into the community, and they would not have to pay for rentals for their different functions. In the 20 years he has been the President of the Social Club, they have given out about \$75,000 in scholarships and they have also done other things to give back to the community, so they would be interested in this too for their headquarters.

S. Holovacs adjourned the meeting after no further business came before the committee.

*Next meeting: August 10, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m. at the Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio.*

*Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk*

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