

## **Missoula City Council Public Works Committee Minutes**

**June 15, 2022, 1:05 pm  
ZOOM Webinar**

**Members present:** Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra (chair), Daniel Carlino, John P. Contos, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Jennifer Savage, Sandra Vasecka

**Members absent:** Jordan Hess, Gwen Jones, Amber Sherrill, Heidi West

### **1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

#### **1.1 Roll Call**

#### **1.2 Approval of the Minutes**

##### **1.2.1 PW Committee Minutes from June 8, 2022**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

### **2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

#### **3.1 South-Sussex Bypass Right-of-Way and Public Utility Easement Vacation**

Brandt Dahlen Construction Project Coordinator Infrastructure & Mobility presenting,

This is a petition request from WGM Group on behalf of Casa Loma LLC to vacate public right-of-way and public utility easement on the 900 block of South Ave W. This South-Sussex Bypass was installed in 2005 to help improve the Brooks/South/Russell intersection. In addition, this vacation will provide a more usable rectangle area for development than two triangles. This vacation is an essential component of the development that is proposed for this section.

This section of Sussex is located on the State Urban Highway System as a result of the reconfiguration of that intersection in the past. In order to vacate the right-of-way, this street section needs to be removed from the Urban System.

The utilities in this parcel include an unneeded sewer main to be abandoned, a fire hydrant, and other private utilities such as Northwestern Energy and cable to be relocated in a new public utility easement.

Stephen McDaniel and Jeff Smith with WGM presenting,

The project location is the entire 900 Block of South Ave. This area is currently undeveloped and underutilized and is centrally located in midtown. The development will be a mixed-use development with 130 housing units, over twenty designated as affordable housing. Then 18,800 square feet will be mixed-use commercial space. Some of the improvements associated with this right-of-way vacation are a re-established grid

network, completing missing pieces of sidewalk, increase safety and traffic flow at the roundabout, reduced crossing distances at South and Stevens, better bus access, extended bicycle facilities to the north, and water main improvements on Stephens.

Ms. Becerra asked if there were any major concerns brought up in the neighborhood outreach. Mr. McDaniel said he met with several land owners adjacent to the development, and they were supportive of the project.

Mr. Carlino asked why we could not ask for a longer affordability time. Emily Harris-Shears said the period of affordability started at 30 years, and she said they advocated for 35 years. She explained that 35 years is a reasonable life expectancy for a building per the housing policy.

Mr. Nugent said he has a business on South Ave and working relations with the parties involved, but he has no financial interest therefore, there is no conflict. He asked if the developer was going to pay for the roundabout. Mr. McDaniel said they would pay for it initially and then will be reimbursed by Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds. The MRA approved up to 2.21 million dollars, including deconstruction, public right-of-way improvements, and utility relocates.

Mr. Nugent thought that the better use of TIF funds would have been to go towards more low-income housing rather than the roundabout and feels the Council should have been able to vote on that. Mr. Keene said the City saw other more comprehensive community benefits in the area with the roundabout. In addition, the TIF money is limited to public investments, and if the roundabout was funded with other sources, it would be a long time before it would be completed.

The Committee Members needed more time to discuss this issue, and so it will be moved to the Public Works Committee meeting next week.

**Moved by:** Sandra Vasecka

I move the City Council: Adopt a resolution calling for removal of Sussex Ave between South Avenue and Brooks Street from the Missoula Urban Area Highway System; and, Adopt a resolution of intention to vacate the South-Sussex Bypass right-of-way that cuts diagonally through Block 32 of Homevale Addition, and the Public Utility Easement that was created when the alley was vacated, as shown in Exhibit A, and subject to the conditions of approval and set a public hearing time July 18, 2022

### **3.2 Complete Streets and Neighborhood Traffic Management Program 2022 Project Updates**

Ben Weiss Bike and Pedestrian Manager presenting,

A few projects the City is working on have had some concerned feedback from citizens. According to the City's Complete Streets Policy, the City shall approach every transportation improvement and project phase as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users. An example is when streets need to be chip sealed, the striping of bike lanes, parking, and crosswalks is considered.

The Spruce/Alder Street Striping Plan Concept is to restripe Spruce with bike lanes. Adding bike lanes will require parking removal from one side of the street. Alder Street is one of the town's widest streets, so the City would like to convert the parking on Alder

from parallel to angle parking. The angle parking would add 15 parking spaces to the neighborhood and help relieve some of the lost spaces on Spruce. The City has done some public outreach and found that overall was grateful for the attention to the neighborhood. However, there were concerns regarding the angle parking on the residential street. Several citizens were on the call from the 400 and 500 blocks of Alder Street, expressing concern with the angle parking. They felt the angle parking would cause more congestion and safety hazards in the neighborhood. They were also very concerned about how fast the project was moving along. Ms. Savage commented that this area is very residential, and they don't want employees parking in front of their homes all day. The same blocks on Spruce are more commercial. She feels that the angle parking on the other blocks of Alder would be acceptable. She thinks that nine parking spaces would not make a difference.

Mr. Carlino asked what the next steps were in this process. Mr. Weiss replied that the street milling and paving will still move ahead. In late July or early August, the street division will chip seal the street after the chip seal is when the street would need to be stripped. Mr. Weiss feels that we have more time to talk with Ward Representatives and citizens to devise a compromise for the parking.

Lolo Street Chip Seal and Restriping Project. The original plan was to use an Edge Lane Road with a striped bike lane and shared road. So if two cars were coming toward each other, they would move into the bike lane when safe to pass. The City did receive feedback about safety concerns and confusion about how this would work. The City has decided not to follow through with this plan, collect more data, and determine what to do in the future.

Normans Lane and Simons Drive have received complaints about high speeds, and they both have high crash rates. The proposal is to implement speed humps which are broader and gentler than speed bumps. The broader speed hump reduces the jarring of hitting the speed bumps and encourages people to drive slower. A citizen called in and said that people were driving fast and that the speed humps might help.

Informational Item

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**