

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 2018 – 6:30 P.M.
MUNICIPAL SERVICES TRAINING ROOM
MINUTES

I. ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Tack called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M. Aldermen Melanie Rummel and Michelle Moreno were in attendance.

Staff in attendance included Michael Thomas, Director of Public Works; Dan Martin, Superintendent of Public Works; Robert Kiely, City Manager; Chuck Myers, Superintendent of Parks & Forestry; Karl Walldorf, Chief of Police; Supervisor of Engineering, Brian Joyce and Jim Lockefer, Management Analyst.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 8, 2018 PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Alderman Rummel explained that the spelling of Uihlein needed to be corrected throughout the meeting minutes. She explained that the correct spelling is Uihlein not "Uline". She explained that the word "time" was also missing at one location in the minutes. Chairman Tack moved to approve the April 11, 2018 Public Works Committee meeting minutes as corrected. Alderman Moreno seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

III. REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL REVISIONS TO THE CITY CODE REGARDING GAS-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS – CHUCK MYERS

Superintendent of Parks & Forestry Chuck Myers reviewed a presentation on leaf blower use in the City and the related noise ordinance. Superintendent Myers explained the current City code related to lawn maintenance equipment includes leaf blowers. He explained that the hours of operation of lawn maintenance equipment is outlined in the code. He then reviewed a timeline of when City Council had reviewed and discussed leaf blowers. He noted that in 2001, City Council revised the ordinance by combining the hours of operation for gasoline powered leaf blowers with those of lawn maintenance equipment in an effort to address the confusion that had been occurring with two different sets of operating hours. He explained that in 2002, a draft Ordinance was brought before City Council that would have banned leaf blowers. After a discussion by City Council, there was a consensus that the Council could not support the draft ordinance. He explained that in 2015, City Council was given a presentation by City Staff on lawn maintenance equipment hours of operation and noise generated from leaf blowers with no action taken.

Alderman Rummel inquired about a more recent City Council presentation on this topic. Superintendent Myers confirmed that he did present to the City Council on the topic in January. The presentation did not occur until approximately 10:30 P.M. that night. Alderman Rummel requested that the January discussion be added to the timeline.

Superintendent Myers reviewed nearby City and Village regulations. He explained that many communities have no regulations on lawn maintenance equipment hours of operation or have partial bans that prohibit the use of leaf blowers over summer months. The partial bans typically allow leaf blower use for spring and fall cleanups. He explained that Lake Bluff is similar to Lake Forest in

having restricted operating hours. Superintendent Myers explained that time to time the City does receive complaints about the noise generated from leaf blowers. He explained that City maintenance operations involve the use of blowers at parks. On rare occasions he will receive complaints about the noise generated from City Staff operations. He explained that most of the complaints received are in regards to neighbor use or the neighbor's private landscape contractor use.

Superintendent Myers reviewed possible actions that the Public Works Committee could potentially recommend to the City Council. He explained the options staff has which includes: no action, education/training initiatives, regulation of the decibel levels, revising the City Code for the hours and / or days of operation for blowers, and a partial year ban for blowers.

Superintendent Myers explained that the City could provide guidelines for residents and landscapers on the City code and the hours of operation. He explained that the City could utilize the existing landscape license certification process to educate the landscapers. He explained that around 400 landscaping firms are currently certified to work in Lake Forest.

Superintendent Myers explained that regulating decibel levels would involve identifying a decibel level that leaf blowers would be required to operate at or below. He explained that a decibel level that is typically acceptable is 65 to 70 dBA. He explained that if the Public Works Committee would recommend pursuing this option, a code revision would be required. He explained that this change would be very challenging and difficult to enforce. Chairman Tack inquired about the percentage of landscapers currently operating at the 65 to 70 dBA level. Superintendent Myers explained that he did not have an exact statistic. He explained that he did believe that more and more landscapers are using leaf blowers that would register in that decibel level range. He explained that new leaf blower technology tends to operate at a lower decibel level than older equipment. He explained that most of the newer battery powered blowers operate in the 65 – 70 decibel level range. He explained that when discussing the noise produced from leaf blowers, pitch is another factor for consideration. A leaf blower maybe in the 65 – 70 decibel level range but it may have a high pitch that people find irritating.

Alderman Moreno inquired if the complaints were originating from denser areas and neighborhoods. Superintendent Myers explained that he personally does not receive enough complaints to conclude that they are originating in denser areas but that he did believe that more complaints most likely occur in denser areas. Chief of Police Karl Walldorf explained that historically the Police Department has received very few complaints on leaf blower operations.

Alderman Rummel explained that she had received a series of emails from a resident about the issue. She explained that he cited a New York Times article in one of his messages that reviewed the noise and air pollution generated from leaf blowers. She explained that the issue is also something that is a priority of the Mayor. She explained that because of this, the Committee should not recommend staying status quo. Alderman Rummel explained that she received numerous comments last spring from residents about the intrusiveness of the

noise produced by leaf blowers. She suggested that leaf blowers not be allowed to be utilized on Sundays and holidays.

Superintendent Myers reviewed options for potentially revising the City Code to adjust the hours of operation. He explained that one option could be to adjust the hours to Monday through Saturday 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. and on Sunday no leaf blower use be allowed. He reviewed another option of reducing the hours Monday through Friday to 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., Saturday to 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., and Sundays and Holidays to 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. He explained that he spoke to landscaping firms about adjusting the hours of operation and they were in agreement that they would much prefer an adjustment of operating hours in lieu of a ban. One landscaping firm in particular explained that the complaints they tend to receive are complaints for beginning prior to 9:00 A.M. That landscaper recommended having a start time that begins at 9:00 A.M. Superintendent Myers explained that he also spoke to a large landscaping firm that explained that they would be able to adapt to a partial ban because of already having to do so in nearby communities that have already enacted bans.

Alderman Rummel inquired about leaf blowers operating at half speed and being less noisy. Superintendent Myers explained that when he spoke to a representative of a large landscaping firm they did explain that this is something they educate their employees about. They are educating their employees to operate the leaf blower at full speed only when it is necessary to do so.

Superintendent Myers explained that the current City Code restricting the hours of operation is not just for leaf blowers but all landscaping equipment. If the Committee would like to separate leaf blowers from other lawn maintenance equipment that would also need to be revised in the code.

Alderman Moreno explained that in looking back on the five years that she has been an Alderman, she has never received a complaint from a resident in regards to leaf blowers being an issue. She explained that she believed that in more dense areas the noise would be much more of an issue. She explained that she believed adjusting the hours would be ok but that any change should be simple.

Superintendent Myers explained that he recalled receiving approximately three resident complaints at Forest Park over the past five years. He explained that starting this year, Forest Park will be maintained utilizing battery powered blowers by Mariani Landscaping. He explained that they will also be maintaining the medians on Route 60 utilizing the same equipment.

Alderman Rummel proposed the hours of 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Saturday and prohibiting the use of blowers on Sundays and holidays. She explained that these hours would only be for battery powered blowers or gas powered blowers at half power.

Superintendent Myers explained that Alderman Rummel's proposal would be considered a partial year ban similar to what Highland Park has in place. He

explained that Highland Park's partial ban is also in place for environmental purposes.

Alderman Rummel inquired about restricting gas blowers to half power. Superintendent Myers explained that a restriction like that would be very hard to enforce.

Director Thomas explained that the City Public Works and Parks & Forestry employees work from 6:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Under the current code they can begin operating leaf blowers and other lawn maintenance equipment at 7:00 A.M. If the code changes to 9:00 A.M. it would have an impact on City operations. He also explained that some residents maintain their own landscapes and may only be able to use Sundays as an opportunity to maintain their lawns.

Alderman Rummel inquired about how many residents maintain their own lawns. Superintendent Myers estimated that about 75% of residents utilize a private landscaping firm and 25% maintain their own lawns. Director Thomas explained that if both private landscaping firms and homeowners that maintain their own lawns becomes backed up because of rain or other reasons, they would each work on Sundays in order to catch up.

Chairman Tack explained that he also had not received many complaints in regards to leaf blower noise being an issue. He explained that he believed that any change made should be simple. The change should then be monitored and reviewed after the next landscaping season. He explained that he would be in favor of changing the hours from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Saturday. He explained that he would also be OK with prohibiting use on Sundays. He explained that an exemption should also be provided to the City for City maintenance operations. He explained that in his six year experience as an Alderman, he has never received a noise complaint about City leaf blowers operating in a park.

Alderman Rummel inquired if Chairman Tack would exempt fall from the Sunday ban. He explained that he would.

Chairman Tack explained that he believed any change should be simple and easy to enforce. He explained that he believed that the electric blowers were just as loud as the gas powered blowers.

Alderman Rummel inquired about phasing the requirement for no emission blowers into the City code. Superintendent Myers explained that the City has already begun to do so through its own operations by purchasing some battery powered equipment. Alderman Rummel explained that it could be outlined in the code that after two years all leaf blowers would be required to be electric. Chairman Tack explained that he believed that the technology to support electric blowers is still expensive. He believed that any change at this point should be kept simple and then re-examined after a year.

Superintendent Myers inquired if leaf blowers should be separate from powered landscaping equipment. Chairman Tack explained that it should be left as is and combined together. Superintendent Myers explained that if powered

landscaping equipment was left together, homeowners would not be able mow their grass on Sundays. Chairman Tack explained that he would be ok in prohibiting the use of equipment on Sundays.

Alderman Moreno explained that because of her experience in not receiving complaints on this issue that she would like to make any changes simple.

Alderman Tack inquired if the Committee should recommend limiting the hours or if the status quo should remain the same. Alderman Moreno explained that she felt the hours should be limited. Alderman Rummel explained that she would be in favor of changing the hours from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Saturday. She explained that powered lawn maintenance equipment should be prohibited on Sundays and holidays with the exclusion of Sundays in the fall.

Alderman Rummel motioned to recommend a Code revision to the City Council to change the hours of gas powered lawn maintenance equipment to 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Saturday and prohibit the use of lawn gas powered lawn maintenance equipment on Sundays and holidays with the exclusion of Sundays in the fall. Alderman Moreno seconded the motion; which carried unanimously.

IV. REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL THE PURCHASE OF A REPLACEMENT VEHICLE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – MICHAEL THOMAS

Director Thomas explained that there currently are FY18 dollars budgeted to purchase a replacement vehicle for Community Development.

Alderman Rummel inquired who in Community Development would be utilizing the vehicle. Director Thomas explained that the vehicle would be utilized by Building Inspectors.

Director Thomas explained that traditionally the Police Department uses their Chevy police vehicles for 100,000 miles. The vehicles then move to Community Development to be used by the Building Inspectors. The vehicle is used by Community Development for approximately three years or to 120,000 to 125,000 miles. At that point, the vehicle will tend to begin to experience engine and transmission issues and at that time, the vehicle is sold.

Director Thomas explained that back when the City's Sustainability Plan had been finalized, City staff discussed potentially breaking the tradition of Community Development using older Police vehicles and instead looking to replace them with a more environmentally friendly option. Around this same time, the Police Department discussed and purchased an electric Community Service Officer vehicle (which it currently has in use).

Director Thomas then reviewed a data sheet that contained a number of options the Committee could look to pursue. He explained that the first option would be at no additional cost to the City. He explained that the Police Department has three Ford Explorers that will be coming offline. One of these Explorers could be shifted to the Community Development Department for their

use. A second option is a Chevy Impala that could be purchased through the State bidding program. He explained that purchasing an Impala would cost \$22,500. He explained that a third option could be purchasing a Toyota Prius. According to the National Joint Purchasing Alliance (NJPA) that the City is a member of, a Toyota Prius would cost approximately \$23,000. A fourth option could be to go completely electric with a Chevy Volt. That would cost \$34,700 again through NJPA. The issue with this option is that only \$24,000 has been budgeted for the replacement vehicle.

Chairman Tack explained that he felt the Community Development Department should look to use one of the existing Ford Explorer vehicles at no cost. He explained that electric vehicle technology is still progressing and has not yet arrived.

Alderman Rummel explained that she did not want to go over the budgeted amount and therefore would eliminate the Chevy Volt as a potential option. She explained that if the City were to look to purchase a vehicle using the available funds, she would recommend the Toyota Prius. She explained that she is also not opposed to using one of the existing Ford Explorers at no cost.

Alderman Moreno explained that she would be in favor of using an existing Explorer at no cost.

Chairman Tack motioned to recommend the first option of transitioning a Ford Explorer to the Community Development Department. Alderman Moreno seconded the motion; which carried unanimously.

V. REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF THE F.Y. '19 ASPHALT RESURFACING AND PAVEMENT PATCHING BIDS – BRIAN JOYCE

Supervisor of Engineering Brian Joyce explained that the Public Works Committee reviewed the list of streets where patching and resurfacing would be occurring over the summer months. Since the last meeting the programs have been placed out to bid. He explained that the contracting firm, Peter Baker & Son Co., submitted the low bid for the resurfacing program and the contracting firm, Chicagoland Paving, for patching. He explained that if approval of the bid is recommended by the Committee tonight, the recommendation will be presented to City Council for approval.

He explained that both programs and solicitation for bids are coordinated through MPI. He explained that the resurfacing program received two bids and the patching program received four bids. Both low bids were favorable to the City and came in below the City's estimate. This allows additional areas to be added to both programs.

Alderman Moreno inquired if the programs will be expanded to include additional areas of work to meet the allocated budgeted amount. Supervisor of

Engineering Brian Joyce explained that additional work is added to utilize all the allocated program dollars.

Alderman Rummel motioned to recommend approval of the FY19 asphalt resurfacing and pavement patching bids to Peter Baker & Son Co. and Chicagoland Paving to City Council. Alderman Moreno seconded the motion; which carried unanimously

VI. OTHER

Chairman Tack inquired if there was any conversation related to the privately owned overhead electric infrastructure ComEd issue scheduled for tonight's agenda. Director Thomas explained that there was no agenda item on the topic for tonight's meeting. He explained that Assistant to the City Manager Mike Strong sent the Committee an email update to say ComEd needs additional time to develop their materials for when they review the topic with the ICC. Alderman Moreno inquired if there were any concerns with Jim Dudek departing from ComEd. Director Thomas explained that City Staff has already met with Mr. Dudek's current replacement who holds the exact same position with other nearby communities. He explained that this employee will now also serve Lake Forest as Mr. Dudek did, for the time being. He explained that this employee has years of experience similar to Mr. Dudek.

On a separate topic, Director Thomas explained that the City's Forestry Section removed trees along the north beach access road ravine. He explained that the removal of these trees were a part of the engineering plans for repair of the ravine and road. The removal of the trees will help other vegetation on the ravine banks grow. He explained that the engineering firm, AECOM, is also still working on the project design with the Army Corps of Engineers to obtain the necessary permit to finalize design. He explained that once the Army Corps of Engineers agrees with the preliminary design, AECOM will then finalize the design. It is the goal that project work begins immediately after Labor Day.

Alderman Rummel inquired about the cost estimate of the project. Director Thomas explained that the current cost estimate is \$835,000. Director Thomas explained that a grant for \$25,000 was obtained from the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission for the North Beach Access Road's Ravine Project (NBAR hereafter).

Chairman Tack inquired about the recycling program cost issue that had been previously discussed by the Public Works Committee at a prior meeting. He asked if City staff intends to propose a new recycling fee to help generate revenue for the program. Director Thomas explained that since the Committee last reviewed the issue, the price had initially lowered, however the price has since returned to the costly expense. He explained that no proposal for a recycling fee has been developed by City staff. He explained that staff can examine a fee over the summer months while the budget for the next fiscal year is developed.

Alderman Moreno inquired if we knew if recycling processors in the area were looking beyond China as the final destination for recycling to be processed. Director Thomas explained that they look at all market worldwide.

Alderman Rummel inquired if the Lake County SMC grant was the grant that was originally obtained for the McCormick Ravine. Director Thomas confirmed the grant was originally obtained for the McCormick ravine but that it has transferred to the NBAR.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comment.

VIII. NEXT MEETING - TBD

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Rummel moved to adjourn the meeting of the Public Works Committee at 7:28 P.M. Alderman Moreno seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Lockfeer Jr.
Management Analyst