

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

MAY 10, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Knier called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Ken Halverson, Sam Hanson, Paul Knier, Kim Noding, and Paul Seefeld. Also present: City Administrator Hanna Klimmek, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Community Development Director Therese Haffner, City Planner Lucinda Spanier, City Engineer Layne Otteson, Police Chief John Kaczmarek, Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey, Streets/Parks/Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels, and Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dan Childs.

3. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Hanson, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

4. BUSINESS

4A. Humboldt Drive Parking Discussion

John Kaczmarek reviewed street parking along Humboldt Drive, Putnam Avenue and 198th Avenue west of CR 43. This section of road is a main thruway for businesses located on the south side of US Highway 10. Local businesses in this area hold events that require a large amount of parking availability. The confines of the geographical area restrict parking availability and in turn, has led to congested parking along Humboldt Drive; therefore, increasing the risk of accidents, restricted access to fire hydrants and to emergency response vehicles to include police, fire, and ambulance services. Kaczmarek reviewed the importance for patrons to park and cross safely while visiting an event or local business in this area. Limited travel or maneuvering of emergency vehicles could be detrimental to response times, capability of providing emergency services, and/or prohibit a necessary course of emergency action. Kaczmarek provided information on the Police Departments monitoring of parking and traffic flow along Humboldt Drive during an event held in March 2023. Officers witnessed and documented congested parking, various parking violations and safety hazards including vehicles parked on sidewalk and snowbank areas, vehicles being forced to travel over the center strip divider line into oncoming traffic lanes, and vehicles parked in front of or within ten feet of fire hydrants. Vehicles were issued citations for various parking violations and Lupulin Brewing assisted with posting their own signage in front of hydrants as well as signage informing customers of overflow parking availability at nearby businesses. Kaczmarek discussed

the upcoming Lupulin Brewing Anniversary Party event on May 20, noting the Police Department will be proposing posting temporary No Parking by Police Order signage along the south side of Humboldt Drive in an attempt to ensure parking does not take place on both sides of the roadway. Kaczmarek discussed moving forward, the Department would like assistance from the Engineering and Street Departments on implementing a strategy to eliminate parking issues by restriping, adding pavement, or formally signing this area to alleviate traffic, pedestrian, and emergency response vehicle hazards. Kaczmarek discussed that through preliminary discussions with the City Engineer and Streets Superintendent, staff believes the appropriate action would be to have legal curb side parking along the south side only. All north side parking on pavement or on the grass embankment would no longer be allowed. Permanent NO PARKING signs would be posted along the north side of the road. Legal parking along the south side of Humboldt Drive would allow patrons to park along the business side of the roadway and exit their vehicle onto an adjacent sidewalk. In addition, it would prevent patrons from crossing the road where there is no designated crosswalk, and no parking on the north side would alleviate obstruction to fire hydrants. This plan would also deter or prevent double sided parking along this area; therefore, emergency vehicles would have adequate room to respond to potential emergency situations.

Mayor Knier discussed overflow parking for events, asking if the two overflow lots fill up. Kaczmarek indicated these lots do typically get full. Layne Otteson noted concern with people parking on the sidewalk which has impeded pedestrian traffic coming from the overflow lots during large events.

Layne Otteson reviewed the four road segments that make up the frontage road corridor in this area from MN Hwy 25 to CR 43. Otteson also explained State Aid streets with parking on one side are required to be a minimum of 32-feet wide to be eligible for funding. Big Lake has other State Aid routes built to 32-feet wide with parking on one side such as Glenwood Avenue and Ormsbee Street, which are functioning well. Otteson suggested the City hold several open houses with adjacent property owners to discuss improvements that include restriping, parking and reconstruction. Several locations need to be looked at closely to determine parking restrictions such as safety and sight distances. Options included: 1) After the open houses are held, Staff would report back to Council with property owner feedback and a staff recommendation, 2) The City could also stripe for parking on one side where street width is 32-feet wide (Segments A, B and D) and continue to deal with issues along Segment C which is more narrow, or 3) The City could do nothing and continue to monitor for several years until reconstruction. Otteson stated staff recommends Council consider moving forward with Option 1 with reconstruction planned in 2024.

Council Member Halverson suggested we promote Lupulin to tar their empty lot at the corner, asking if anyone has approached them yet. Council Member Hanson responded it's not just Lupulin that is having parking problems with events, the issues come from all businesses along this street segment. Halverson commented because Lupulin has big events, people can't go to Anytime Fitness because the lot is full. Lupulin has a place for a parking lot, noting taxpayers shouldn't have to pay to do work on Humboldt Drive. TJK and Anytime Fitness aren't the ones flooding the parking lot, this is a Lupulin issue because the other businesses aren't flooding the parking lot onto the street, only one business at this property is filling the lot. Halverson also discussed all taxpayers would burden the expenditure of widening the road as the City takes on a portion of the expense which is funded through taxpayer dollars. Hanson discussed there is a great deal of overflow parking in the street area from other businesses in the area such as

Ember Coffee, McPete's and Lupulin, so improvements to the street would benefit all the businesses in the area. Klimmek noted McPete's has plenty of events throughout the summer so we do have this issue ongoing from multiple businesses.

Otteson added when it comes to paying for a project like this, whether this is a parking issue or not, is irrelevant on how wide we would build segment C, noting we want to make it consistent from one end to the other. We would continue the 32-foot wide width from CR 43 to Hwy 25 unless Council directs differently, but he would not recommend different width areas on this stretch of street. Otteson noted he agrees parking should be on the south side, not the north side as all the businesses are located on the south side. All properties would get assessed for the road improvement from the middle of the road to the existing curb line. If there is existing curb that needs to be replaced, those costs will be put into the assessment and adjacent parcels will pay their share. Otteson also noted the MNDOT side cannot be assessed. Hanson concurred he doesn't want to burden taxpayers, but noted all four sections are already slated to be reconstructed in the next 5 years, which is why he likes the option to allow parking on the south side until reconstruction occurs. Otteson commented if segment C was wider it would work, but because of the curb line on the south side we would need to have parking on the north side because they can park off the pavement. We do want to fix this permanently, but for now, safety wise, parking has to stay on the north side until the road is widened. Halverson suggested Public Works plow 8 to 10 feet further back on the north side until the road improvements are done. Halverson stated he feels we should post the south side as a No Parking Tow Away zone. Otteson proposed doing construction next year, and for this year post temporary no parking signage on the south side. Halverson suggested we post permanent signage, noting if we don't do something significant, emergency vehicles won't be able to pass through the area. Otteson discussed this street area is a State Aid Route so parking requirements would require a resolution, restriping, as well as State approval.

Council Member Noding discussed staff's recommendation for reconstruction, asking which area would be widened. Otteson responded widening would only be needed in segment C, with restriping throughout. Noding asking for clarification on the recommended timeline for the improvements. Otteson reviewed pavement conditions from one end to the other, recommending the City build the substandard section, sealcoat, and restripe the rest of it. Otteson recommended segment C be done next year as it is a 35-year old road.

Council Member Seefeld discussed if we are going to reconstruct next year, can we do temporary signage this year. Halverson discussed concerns with people removing the temporary signage. If we install permanent No Parking Tow Away zone signage, it would be Clear for all businesses in this area. Otteson noted if we install signage this year, we would need to restripe this year, which would require sandblasting the current stripes and then paint new striping. These types of improvements would need approval from MNDOT. Seefeld discussed costs associated with signage and new striping, suggesting if we are going to construct next year, we should consider that any work done this year, would be redone next year. Halverson discussed reusing the permanent signage so all we would be out is the striping expense. Otteson noted he has recommended holding open houses as part of this to get feedback from adjacent property owners on how many upcoming events they have planned. If there are going to be events every weekend this summer, we should look at putting some signs in the length of the road. Kaczmarek discussed concern with temporary signage put up by business owners, as violations could

potentially not be enforceable. Seefeld discussed if we choose to put up permanent parking signage, staff has indicated the State would need to review. Halverson asked if it will hurt to ask the question, suggesting we table the item for two weeks to allow the State to provide comment. Otteson commented the State might come back with a full No Parking response. Klimmek asked if Council is open to staff holding open houses first to get feedback from the businesses in the area, noting we do want to engage the business community in the discussion. Otteson asked Council if they are prepared to deal with a No Parking requirement by the State. Hanson stated concern there is a chance we would be hurting the businesses in this area. Otteson reiterated staff's recommendation to move forward with Option 1, which is to hold open houses with area businesses and come back to Council with a staff recommendation based on comments from area businesses.

Council directed Staff to move forward with Option 1 as recommended by staff.

5. OTHER

Council Member Halverson discussed the need for the City Council to participate in a road tour so they have a better understanding of the condition of City streets.

Mayor Knier discussed he doesn't necessarily need to do a road tour, commenting he trusts staff's comments on road conditions, but he is open to doing a road tour if that is the wish of the Council. Norm Michels discussed the purpose of a road tour wouldn't be to look at every road, just areas of concern, noting a tour would most likely take less than an hour to conduct. Knier stated we still need to have the money to fix it. Hanna Klimmek discussed there seems to be general support from Council to offer road tours, and this can be further planned at an upcoming Management Team meeting.

Council Member Seefeld discussed the No Mow May campaign, commenting that staff has provided feedback that we kind of do this already, and he is in favor of keeping our current process in place as it would cost money for us to officially enact this. Halverson commented there is a new study that has come out saying not mowing in May could be worse, noting the study urges to stop doing the No Mow May campaign.

6. ADJOURN

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adjourn at 5:49 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Noding, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
City Clerk

05.24.23
Date Approved by Council