

PUBLIC SAFETY & WELFARE COMMITTEE

December 6, 2023

5:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present	Also in Attendance	Citizens Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dana Davis, Chair• Brad Blanke• Steve Board• Eric Schmid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attorney Steven Chesebro• Chief Brower• Assistant City Engineer Andrew Beyer• Stacy Winkelman• Mason Becker• Kristine Butteris• Steph Juhl• Chief Teesch• Dan Bartz	Annette Bliefernicht Roger Bliefernicht Robin Kangas Melissa Lampe Bonnie Hartel Robin Kaufmann Linda Kauffeld Louse Genge Lisa Larsen Jon Holthaus Brian Konz Molly Kopplin Keith Campbell Ed Zagorski

2. RECEIVE COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public at this time.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Public Safety and Welfare minutes from November 2, 2023
Motion to approve by Board. Seconded by Schmid. Passed unanimously.
- B. Public Safety and Welfare minutes from November 16, 2023
Motion to approve by Blanke. Seconded by Schmid. Passed unanimously.

4. BUSINESS

A. Review and take possible action: Parking removal on west side of S. First Street between Wisconsin Street and Spring Street

- This item came back to committee after the ordinance was tabled by the Council until the accident data could be presented to the committee.
- Accident data: There has been one accident at this area within the past 5 years.
- There was a discussion regarding safety for Park and Rec staff as well as the public using the Park and Rec/Senior center. Vehicles parking in the two parking spaces block the view for drivers exiting the Senior Center. Kristine Butteris is concerned about safety for staff and the public.

MOTION: Schmid presented the motion to table until city staff can verify if the apron is marked properly in regard to the 4 ft. setback, paint lines (if necessary) as soon as possible and investigate crosswalk markings. Motion was seconded by Blanke. Motion failed 2 (Schmid, Blanke) to 2 (Board, Davis)

MOTION: Davis presented a motion to remove the 2 parking spaces on west side of S. First Street between Wisconsin Street and Spring Street. Motion was seconded by Board. Motion failed 2 (Board, Davis) to 2 (Schmid, Blanke)

MOTION: Davis presented a motion to limit parking in the 2 parking spaces on west side of S. First Street between Wisconsin Street and Spring Street between the hours of 8 and 5 p.m. Motion was seconded by Board. Motion failed 2 (Board, Davis) to 2 (Schmid, Blanke)

B. Review and take possible action: Parking removal on Cady Street Bridge

Board explained that vehicles parking on the north side of the Cady Street Bridge – particularly in the evenings – make it very difficult and dangerous for automobiles driving across the bridge. According to Beyer, pavement width on the bridge and approaches is generally 26 to 28 feet wide. Cady Street is categorized as a minor arterial roadway in this area. Wisconsin Department of Transportation standards for an urban arterial roadway state that a travel lane should be 12 feet wide. Parking lanes should be a minimum of 7 feet wide. According to Beyer, Cady St. is not wide enough to accommodate a parking lane.

MOTION: Blanke made a motion to eliminate parking on the Cady St. Bridge. Motion was seconded by Board and passed unanimously.

C. Review and take possible action: LED street light upgrade in alley between Labaree Street and Highland Avenue

Stacy Winkleman reported back to the committee that the LED street light upgrade in the alley between Labaree Street and Highland Avenue will cost \$300 and there is money in the budget to pay for the lights.

MOTION: Board made a motion to approve the LED street light upgrade in alley between Labaree Street and Highland at a cost of \$300. Motion seconded by Schmid and unanimously approved.

D. Review and take possible action: Purchase two radar speed signs for placement on Carriage Hill Drive

At the November Public Safety & Welfare Committee Meeting, City staff were tasked with seeking quotes for two solar powered radar speed signs for placement on Carriage Hill Drive and review potential funding sources. After reviewing quotes received on comparable signs, the lowest cost for each sign is \$3,168. In discussion with Street Division staff, \$8,900 is available in the 2023 budget due to savings on a lighting project.

Chief Brower says that police officers have found that speed signs are effective for roads that are designed in such a way that drivers don't know the speed limit. In those cases, a flashing speed sign can help reduce speeding. However, he has found that speed signs are less effective when they are placed on roads where drivers already know the speed limit. In this scenario, the speed sign can sometimes encourage speeders to drive even faster to watch the speed on the sign go up. Chief Browers is uncertain that a speed sign on Carriage Hill will be effective.

In past meetings, the committee was told that, if a speed study came back showing that 85% were driving above the 25 mph speed limit, the City would be required to raise the speed limit. Beyer confirmed that this is best practice, but not a requirement.

Mr. Bliefernicht spoke regarding his concerns for speeding on Carriage Hill. He says that he would like a long-term solution, not a quick fix. He would like traffic calming methods to be added to the street to keep Carriage Hill at a residential speed limit. Mrs. Bliefernicht also spoke saying she didn't think a speed sign would solve the problem.

Davis said that after discussing this Carriage Hill speeding problem for at least 3 committee meetings, it is clear that the Carriage Hill speeding issue is complex. In order to solve this very difficult problem, Davis suggested that the city needs a systematic plan that should begin with a speed study. A speed study will provide data and information necessary to begin putting together a plan that will provide a long-term solution.

MOTION: Blanke made a motion to do a speed study to get the necessary data and information. Motion seconded by Davis and passed unanimously.

NOTE: The Committee asked the Engineering Dept. to present the findings of the December/January speed study at the Public Safety and Welfare meeting in February if possible.

E. Review and discuss: South Water Street closing

- Davis discusses items in the packet:
 - Memo describing the events beginning with the PSW meeting on August 2 where the staff asked the committee to describe their appetite regarding the closing of S. Water St. permanently, seasonally or for extended periods of time. At that meeting the PSW committee indicated that they did not have an appetite for closing S. Water St. for extended periods of time.
 - Transcript from the August 2 PSW that gives evidence to the items discussed and the committee indicating they were not in favor of closing S. Water St. for extended periods of time.
 - Document from 2020. Interview with the then Executive Director of the RDA which includes the following question and answer.
 - ***"Is Water Street being closed? Water Street will not be permanently closed. Traffic will still move in both directions. When a festival, event with the Library, or other activity is held, the street can be temporarily closed if needed. The design calls for a curb-less street, which means the sidewalk and road will be on the same level."***
 - The City should recognize that communication in 2020 indicating that S. Water St. would only be closed for temporary events has framed current public expectations. It was not surprising then that some in the public pushed back against the closing of S. Water St. on November 13.
 - If the City has determined that S. Water St. needs to be closed longer than for temporary events, the City must first reframe public expectations which will

required data, information, listening and compromise. There are no short-cuts to reframing public expectations and it will take work and time.

- Schmid – Mr. Schmid opposes the idea that, just because millions of dollars have been put into the Town Square and Library, there is now an assumption that the road should be closed permanently.
- Blanke – The public was blindsided when the road was closed on November 13. He heard from people from that area and they aren't even in his district. "Temporary" is not well-defined. Water and Main is the only intersection with traffic control. He is opposed to closing S. Water St. permanently. Even for temporary closures, the residents in the area need some sort of relief for help getting out of those areas.
- Board – We need a better understanding of what is happening here. There were decisions made about the park in the past that are impacting how we use it today. We have new information today. It would be good to do a traffic study on S. Water St. and S. Washington St. to see what the traffic patterns are. He did not think we should have removed the tree and Santa House and opened up S. Water St. early. He thinks it should have stayed closed through the holidays. It would be wise to do a traffic study. Maybe it would be wise to put additional traffic control.
- Schmid – We are going to reconstruct Main St. We need additional data. We need to know how much it would cost to put in another traffic light at a different intersection.
- Board – We need to collect data and information. It is too early to make any decisions about closing S. Water St.
- Blanke – We (the City) created this issue. We need to be careful about changing public expectations. There needs to be consistency. The people need to know that they can trust the Council.

At this point, the Staff were given the opportunity to speak.

- Butteris – There was no ill-intent in closing S. Water St. for 8 weeks. They were under impression that this was what was expected of the Town Square. She is also concerned about safety at the Water Park. Butteris does not necessarily believe that closing S. Water St. permanently is the right option. They need some options that are less cumbersome for opening and closing the street.
- Teesch – Park and Rec asked them if it would be OK to close the park and he said that it would be OK from the Fire dept. perspective. He believes the area is not safe and the curb less design is confusing for children.
- Becker – He has observed one instance in the summer where a child ran from the Water park and almost ran into the street with an oncoming vehicle. Mom ran out to grab the child. He hopes that the committee considers child safety. He is not advocating for closing S. Water St. permanently. The Town Square has been a great economic development tool and he hopes whatever steps will be taken to encourage that. He would like us to consider removable barriers that are more attractive.
- Bartz – He didn't see the November 13, 2023 8 week closing as anything more than a temporary closing. He said S. Water Street is a "plaza". He is against permanently closing the street. He would like a special ordinance like Riverfest. Attorney Chesebro reminded him that the majority of the Riverfest ordinance was repealed last year.

- Brower – S. Water St. is a main way to get to that side of the city. The Police Department would not relish closing that street. However – he believes they can work around a temporary closing.

Discussion about the Swing Arms that the committee approved. That would be a more permanent solution but will require \$25,000. The committee has already approved the purchase and installation of swing arms up to \$25,000. Will the swing arms be sufficient to stop traffic or will Streets Dept have to put concrete barriers in front of those Swing Arms?

MOTION: Board made a motion to ask Engineering to do a traffic study at S. Water St and S Washington beginning at Main St and going south 2 blocks and the intersection of Emmet and Church Street. Motion was seconded by Blanke and passed unanimously.

F. Review and take possible action: Special Event Ordinance draft

Event Cancellation

- Debate over who should have the authority to cancel the event if the mayor is absent
- Discussion of separation of powers.
- Police Chief expresses concern for putting the police chief in the role of both interpreting and enforcing the law.
- Strike wording after “pandemic”

Appeal of Application Denial/Modification

- Committee approved the rewrite to allow appeals to go to Council.

Enforcement - Amounts had been lowered. Wording changes.

Public Comment:

Molly Kopplin (online):

- Talked about creating “perverse incentives.” Concerned about events being canceled due to the threat of violence by outside persons. Likes the more clear definition of event cancellation.

Discussion on the proposed fee schedule:

- Note that most fees are tied to wages.
- Discussion about how Onalaska adds a 15% admin. fee to the total fee schedule-based charges.
- Board notes that admin fee could cover costs of clerk's office doing paperwork, mailing, etc.
- Schmid explained that the 15% is for the additional tasks that the city staff will do to assist with the special event that is above and beyond what was budgeted for the year. All of the behind the scenes work that is done prior and following the day of the event.
- Davis notes finance comm. will approve proposed charges, but may be good to make a recommendation.

Discussion about handout documents.

- Davis notes that most events generate very few extra charges...some people may have been on “no charge” year in reviewing data from past year.

- Noted that other fees such as park fees may still apply.
- Chief Brower notes that comm. may want to look at if “prep time” should be included in the hourly rate.
 - o Suggested that should go to the finance committee.

Robin Kaufman: Concerned about all planning and cost that goes into planning events for event organizers. Talked about how Jingle Bell on the Rock was only possible by Beltz Grant, otherwise would have lost much more money. Most events are free, serve the underserved in our community.

Melissa Lampe: Talks about relying on special events for operational funding. Have applied for and received dozens of SEPs. Concerned about creating unnecessary hardships for various organizations putting on events. Safe track record of putting on events shouldn't be put under additional scrutiny. Feels putting boards to background checks is unnecessary. Developing an emergency plan could be difficult for Main Street-wide events. Work w/ 50 vendors a year.

Kristine Butteris: Town Square alone will have 42 events (currently scheduled). More will be added. “Solely” listed under exemptions...wonder if there could be a “cost share” for partner orgs. E.g. Main Street.

- Steph Juhl: There can be two applications from two different orgs. For same event.
 - o Partnerships and shared responsibilities between orgs. “Co-hosting”
- Davis: Most events wouldn't be charged more, beyond the increased application fee.
 - o Park and Rec fees that are established would remain.
- Lampe: Would the whole board need to be background checked? Or just for each event involved with?
 - o Board: Ordinance draft looks like it would be.
 - o Davis: Maybe this can be written better.
- Davis: We'll clarify the wording...should be for whoever is on that specific event comm.
- Discussion on who is tasked to supervise minors.
 - o Question from public: How is the supervision of minors defined?
 - Atty. Chesebro clarifies.
 - Davis: It's on your organization to create allList of who is supervising, check against the national registry website.
 - o Noted that “background check” reference was removed.
- Molly Kopplin: Concerned about creating an extra level of bureaucracy. Suggests having an open forum with event organizers. Seems like something new is found/learned every meeting.
 - o Davis: Comm. sees value in events. Hope to improve the process. Encourages to reach out with questions.
- Karen Lanser: Under Extraordinary Services, point 4, “doesn't say when I will get the total of charges before event.”
 - o Davis: We want to make sure organizers are not billed last minute.
- Atty Chesebro: In subsection re: Personal Data, removed words applicant, officer, or board member, and replacing with “organizer”.
 - o Clarified definitions.
- Farmers Market is still covered under own ordinance/permit...has been ongoing for many decades.

- Lampe: Events occurring in City, but not on City-owned property, would SEP be needed?
 - o Would need to meet one of the “Special Event Permit” definitions.
- Davis: Suggest meeting one more time in January for one more reading/review in January.
- Motion to adjourn.

5. **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no additional business to come before the Committee, a motion was made by Blanke to adjourn and seconded by Board. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted - Dana Davis, Chairperson