



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Minutes

Neighborhood Revitalization Commission

Monday, March 29, 2021

6:00 PM

Video Conferencing via Lifesize

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Call to Order

This meeting was called to order at 6PM by Mayor Tim Kabat.

Roll Call

Present: 9 - Tim Kabat, Linda Lee, Ralph Geary, Jennifer A Trost, Will Kratt, Jim Bagniewski, Nora Garland, Larry Sleznikow, Christopher Woodard

Absent: 2 - Steve Nicolai, Janet Allen

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of the February 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

Motion made by Lee, seconded by Sleznikow, to approve the minutes from February 1, 2021. Motion passed by voice vote.

Agenda Items:

2. [21-0186](#) AN ORDINANCE to amend Section 44-117 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse regarding residential parking zones.

Attachments: [Ordinance](#)

[BPW Ltr 3.1.2021](#)

Sleznikow provided an overview of this initial conversations about this item with the Parking Utility Staff and Assistant Chief Abraham. It is a response to residents on 29th Street South who were affected by the trail access points for Granddad Bluff Trail, with concerns about safety, number of cars parked on the

street, and blocking of visual access to the street. Response is to address these resident's concerns and possibly address other areas of the City.

Trost asked what models were used in drafting the language and if this could be comfortably applied to the rest of the City. Sleznikow responded that he was not involved in the initial draft of the change to the ordinance and that it was brought on by the Parking Utility and Police Departments.

Greg Elsen, Parking Utility Coordinator provided a brief overview of the forming of the ordinance. The issues were based on 29th Street South, but can effect the entire City. Parking Utility looked to other municipalities for examples of similar ordinances.

Trost asked if this ordinance would work in concert with the Parking Benefit District in regards to parking permitting. She also expressed that it is important to know the context that this came out of. Since there is other issues that a permit system would be relevant for, Trost asked if this is the language that we want to use.

Lee asked if this ordinance could be piloted on 29th Street, rather than applying it to the whole City, where they may or may not have issues.

Kratt expressed that he would like to know more about what the complaints/problems were that brought the City to the point of an ordinance creation.

Sleznikow explained there were concerns about safety in regards to speeding, cars parked near the access point, significant slope of the street with concerns with winter weather and slippery conditions, location of driveways with incidences of not being able to see cars, cars blocking mailboxes, and athletes from the high schools and colleges will use the street for running and training. Most of the concerns were about safety.

Kratt replied that he uses the trails a lot and lives nearby. The issues could be solved fairly easily with marking where you can park/where you cannot. Going the route of a residential parking permit is the wrong way to go and it is an overreaction by the neighbors. He expressed his frequency of using the trails and how he did not see a great amount of cars parked there. This could have some fairly major consequences throughout the rest of the City, if moving forward with the ordinance.

Leah Burns, Recreation Coordinator, mentioned that there are no sidewalks on either side of the street, limiting where people can walk.

Bagniewski said that he spoke with neighbors and they said kids and bicycles come out and one accident could be one too many. He also expressed that there are dangers with pulling out of driveways there and that it is difficult to see right and left. His idea is that there would be allowance of parking on one side of the street and not the other. He agreed with Lee, in that it might be a good idea to pilot the ordinance for this targeted area. However, singling out certain areas in the City is a slippery slope.

Jack Zabrowski, Planner, explained that eliminating parking will not slow cars

down and it will have the opposite effect. If the main concerns are about safety in relation to cars driving on the road, eliminating the parking will not work. If the main concerns are about cars parked in front of houses, then the ordinance will work for that. The problem being addressed needs to be refined.

Chris Kahlow, Council Member, expressed concerns about the ramifications of a City-wide ordinance.

Mayor Kabat added that residential parking permit concepts have been in discussion for decades. He explained that areas in the City where there is a lot of demand for on-street spaces, residents at times are not able to park in front of their homes. This was the main objective of implementing a residential parking permit system. This is the wrong solution for what the neighbors are trying to achieve. A petition was raised and approved at the Board of Public Works, to install no parking signs in specific areas on the east side of 29th Street, targeting where the trail connects to the street. These signs will be going up in a relatively near term. This is one way to address the actual access-point itself. Mayor Kabat urged that a lot more thought and discussion needs to be given to this type of an ordinance. There needs to be standards and criteria.

Trost asked about adding sidewalks as a solution. Mayor Kabat agreed that could be a potential solution.

Sleznikow asked what the time frame would be for temporary measures and if it is a potential budget item to try implementing this year. He iterated that temporary measures are a possibility, but is unaware of what it would cost.

Mayor Kabat explained that a temporary measure of no parking signs on the east side of the street near the access point. He also explained that Council Members can ask Engineering staff to do a more detailed review and analysis of that area and if there are more measures that can be done temporarily and long term.

Burns offered for the Park Department to take a closer look at this effort, work with the Engineering Department, consult neighbors, and see if there are some other solutions or improvements that can be made.

Motion made by Kratt, seconded by Lee, to recommend to not adopt the ordinance as written. Motion passed by voice vote unanimously.

3. [21-0456](#)

Update/Discussion on the Ordinance to Eliminate Off-Street Parking Requirements.

Attachments: [Memorandum to NRC-Feedback](#)
[Draft 115-393 Off-street Parking Elimination 3-1-21.pdf](#)
[Draft NRC Narrative- Elimination of Off-Street Parking Req.pdf](#)

Tim Acklin- Senior Planner, presented feedback he received on this item. Overall, no one has really had an issue with eliminating commercial off-street parking requirement. The concerns in focus has been more on the 1:1 ratio for multi-family parking. Concerns outlined in the memo.

Sleznikow thanked Acklin for all the work he has done on this, especially his

due diligence.

Geary expressed that an ordinance applies to the entire city, when neighborhoods each have individual characteristics and needs. The north side had concerns that they would like some input before the project proceeds and there should be a mechanism in the ordinance where they are notified because certain projects like this may not be desirable, especially in heavy residential areas.

More collection on feedback will be conducted before the next meeting in April.

Kratt agreed with Geary. However, he cautioned on the quantitative data portion of it because it is moving forward with the assumption of the status quo, which is parking is free. We have to look more at what we want our city to be, as opposed to what the data is going to tell us.

Acklin expressed it will be very important talking to other example cities and what worked and did not work for them. He gave an estimated timeline of 1 to 3 months.

Trost added they have been thinking for a long time about way to de-prioritize cars, parking and the idea that streets are for cars. People can still put parking in, they are just not going to require a certain amount in. This is a very well considered policy that is consistent with other things that are in conversation over the years.

Garland expressed that her neighborhood would like to hear some flexible solutions and allowing for neighborhood input.

4. [21-0455](#)

Retrofitting of Trees into Existing Infrastructure presentation.

Attachments: [Memo](#)
[Presentation](#)

Willow Pecha - Intern with the Planning Department, presented different ways trees can be planted in a city with limited space or sufficient tree growth.

Sleznikow thanked Willow for all the work she put into the presentation. He expressed that the loss of trees on a street change the character of the street to an extent. The various ways trees can be brought to the more urban areas in the community is worthwhile.

Geary said that there has been several trees on Rose Street that had to be removed due to snow plows and salt on the roads. He asked if there is any plan to combat that and replace those trees.

Mayor Kabat explained, the built environment is very hard on trees and tree mortality. There have been efforts to reduce this negative effect. The trees on Rose Street will not be replaced, but there will be planters put in place there. The Engineering Department is actively looking for creative ways to improve the environment of the existing tree canopy in the downtown.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Sleznikow, seconded by Garland. Meeting adjourned at 7:25PM.

Notice is further given that members of other governmental bodies may be present at the above scheduled meeting to gather information about a subject over which they have decision-making responsibility.

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