

Roseville Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 27, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

1. Introduction / Roll Call

Chair Ficek called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. and at his request, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer Freihammer called the roll.

Present: Chair Bryant Ficek; and Members Michael Joyce, Jarrod Cicha, Nancy Misra, and Mike Collins

Absent: Member Edwin Hodder (Excused)

Staff Present: Public Works Director Marc Culver (virtual); City Engineer/Assistant Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer

2. Public Comments

None

3. Approval of August 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Comments and corrections to draft minutes had been submitted by PWETC commissioners prior to tonight's meeting and those revisions incorporated into the draft presented in meeting materials.

Motion

Member Joyce moved, Member Misra seconded, approval of the August 23, 2022 meeting minutes as presented.

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

Abstain: 2 (Joyce, Misra)

Motion carried.

4. Communication Items

Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer Jesse Freihammer provided a brief review and update on projects and maintenance activities listed in the staff report dated September 27, 2022.

5. City Roadway Speed Limits

Mr. Culver made a presentation on the City Roadway Speed Limits.

Chair Ficek did not think a recommendation to the City Council would be made at the meeting but he would like discussion tonight for staff to be able to gather information and answer questions for the next meeting and figure out how much public input would be needed.

Mr. Freihammer explained what was done in Falcon Heights was to model what St. Paul did. Roseville is really trying to get to that point because it borders so much of St. Paul. He also indicated a survey could be done as well. He thought one of the big things would be to put some information in the newsletter for residents to get information.

Mr. John Kysylyczyn, 3083 Victoria Street, indicated he has lived in Roseville for thirty-five years. He reviewed some of the streets in the City where speed limits are higher than in other areas and he noted those streets do not get a lot of traffic. He reviewed his background and explained he was at the meeting because he is generally opposed to the change in the speed limits because, from what he has seen, this has been more about politics versus science. He provided background on the 2019 bill where this was passed in the Legislature. He explained this was more a political process that brought this law forward, not one based upon science or sound public policy. He reviewed history of some of the complaints over time with local speeding. He stated the fact is that the crazies that are out there driving don't look at speed limit signs or stop signs or stop lights. There is no way to legislate for that group of people because those people will not drive the speed limit no matter what number is put on the sign. Another thing is if you talk to a Police Officer off the record, the main reason why they are not going to be writing speeding tickets for someone going 28 in a 25 is the cost of the speeding ticket. He explained the cost is so high because the County gets a cut, the court system gets a cut, the law library gets a cut and the State is still balancing a shortfall from the Pawlenty Administration on the backs of traffic citation tickets. There is still a surcharge that goes to the State. It is not teaching people a lesson, it is actually harming people, it is penalizing people far more than educating them. One concern he does have is when they create laws that you know a lot of people are going to break, what you are doing is giving a license to all law enforcement entities to stop people. A person needs probable cause to stop someone and question them. By passing laws making most people law breakers, the officials are giving law enforcement a license to really stop anyone they want to and that should be a serious concern that people have.

Chair Ficek thanked Mr. Kysylyczyn for his input.

Mr. Culver explained that, as a representative of the City Engineers Association of Minnesota, he actually testified against the 2019 bill that passed. The language that finally ended up in Statute was actually a combination of a couple of bills that had been introduced in the proper course of time through the process. There were several hearings about it over the House and Senate committees. The feedback he got when he was there from his own representative was that they were tired of listening to engineers asking them to let the engineers study it again. His testimony at the time was they should really give the engineers a chance to reconnect as a group, as an industry and with the special interest groups to talk about what the statutory stream of it should be, because the cities felt very strongly and counties feel the same way about the bill that talks about the counties setting the speed limits on their roads. This is not something that should be done piecemeal. This is not something that one county or city should have a different set of speed limits than the city or county next to them because it gets away from uniformity of the law which then there really is confusion out there and people do not know what the speed limit is if the person happens to not to see the sign, for whatever reason. That was their major concern and he was told in very blunt words that the Legislature is just tired of listening to the engineers and that the Legislatures were going to fix the problem and this was their way of fixing the problem. He appreciated Mr. Kysylyczyn coming down to discuss this.

Mr. Culver indicated that enforcement is going to be the biggest issue and how will the City enforce this and when will it be enforced. How will the City get the police officers to embrace some targeted enforcement in that and will clearly have to be a part of the whole picture if the City is going to make the speed limit actually effective.

Member Cicha thought it sounds like this is something the Commission should at least hear from the Police Chief about because as he understood it, the Police Department is against this and he would like to hear their reason why. He thought hearing from the Police Chief would help in making a recommendation.

Chair Ficek wondered if this would be a good opportunity to collaborate with the Police Department Commission on. He indicated he did not have any idea on what that might look like though.

Mr. Culver explained the only thing he will say regarding the Police Commission is that he is not exactly sure what their preveue is on that Commission and what their official task is.

Vice Chair Joyce asked if the 2021 speed study includes traffic flow, traffic timing, and other things come into play.

Mr. Freihammer explained the data the City collected, most of it was done in 2017 and it was updated in 2020, which was during COVID, and may be the reason why

some of the data in parenthesis may be a little higher in some cases. The majority of the data on the 85th percentile sheet was collected during normal operations.

Vice Chair Joyce thought there needed to be an accurate snap shot of what is going on now for traffic in the City, post COVID. Another thing is on City streets the carte blanche of one speed limit on all of them, just because the City owns them, he wondered if there were other examples of other cities, besides the County and State Aid roads, is there any thought about particular roads that the City owns that would be posted otherwise.

Mr. Freihammer explained St. Paul did a study and does have an overall 20mph speed limit; however, on collectors or as otherwise posted St. Paul does have these posted at different speed limits. That could be an option for the City.

Vice Chair Joyce explained he did like the point that Mr. Culver made about the uniformity in the region to make it seamless through each town a person drives through. He thought the reason for uniformity makes a really good reason for taking a look at it.

Member Misra thought since COVID, a lot of lifestyles have been affected and what she has noticed is that people are out walking around a lot more now and people are out with families more as well. There seems to be more pedestrian and bicycle traffic and she thought those are things that Roseville has tried to promote. She thought the speed limit issue seems to be related to that. If the City is seeing a shift in lifestyles and how people are living in Roseville, then it seems to her that looking at something like a speed limit change is completely appropriate. She thought taking a look at it is a good idea. She asked, as the City blankets itself with a standard speed limit, how does that affect the other streets that the City does not control. She thought that would change the traffic patterns on the County and State controlled streets. She thought that Roseville is unique in a sense that there are many streets not governed by the City which could affect a lot of traffic. She would like to know if the speed limit is decreased on streets that are controlled by the City how will that will affect traffic on a number of streets that are still residential but that Roseville does not have control over. She also wondered if there are ways that Roseville can exercise control over those streets because she thought context is everything and in Roseville those are residential streets with driveways.

Member Misra explained she would like the Commission to also look at neighboring cities that have changed their overall standards that have bordering streets to Roseville to take a look at those speed limits and be considerate of the neighboring cities. She also thought it was important to look at the policing of the streets but also understood that a lot of people are abusing the speed limits and by reducing the speed limit the City would be indicating to the residents and commuters to slow it down all over the place. This is more of a general indicator that may bring down speed across the board.

Member Collins indicated he had opinions that he wanted to keep to himself at this time.

Chair Ficek noted he is an engineer by trade but he is balancing that with maybe there is a cultural change that is needed. He explained that he has talked to Mr. Culver previously about streets and the engineers designing them for cars and the change now is to try to design the roads for pedestrians and bicycles and trying to determine which will dictate the rules for the road. In terms of questions he has of what he would like to see, it would be interesting to see some of the things the City has rolled out and how decisions were made and what were some of the aspects looked at and what were the results. He also agreed he would like to hear from the Police Chief and the education processes that can be there, not only for a roll out but is there a way, if they were to go with a lower speed limit, are there programs that can get the residents involved where they can actually start to understand what the actual speed is when standing out in the front yard. He would also like to find out from other cities that decided not to go to uniform city speed limits and find out the reasons why. Generally, he thought there is agreement to continue to look at this and gather more information before making a recommendation. He thought the public needed to be involved but not immediately, he thought the public should be included at a later stage.

6. Civic Campus Master Plan Pre-Design Project Update

Mr. Culver updated the Commission on the Civic Campus Master Plan Pre-Design Project.

Member Collins indicated there were a couple of things he noticed such as the salt positioning and dry storage area was facing west and usually when it snows the winds blows from that way and will direct the snow into that area. He wondered if that is the best location for these.

Mr. Culver explained the largest issue the City has with that is staff does not want to put those uses on the west side because it would be immediately adjacent to the residents there with a lot more noise and would impact that area. He was also not sure if it would fit along the north end. There was also a plan to have a secondary access to the maintenance facility on the north side. He thought out of necessity and how the site works that is where it ended up. Some valid points were brought up to maybe put some sort of screen or curtain in front of those bins to keep them covered during some of the rain and storm events.

Member Misra thanked Mr. Culver for the presentation and wondered if there has been any discussion about how to incorporate some of the renewable principals. If there is the possibility of solar on top of a part of this future facility.

Mr. Culver explained at one of the presentations to the City Council that staff actually had that conversation with them. There was discussion about sustainability and what level of sustainability does the City want to design with these buildings

because that will obviously impact the costs. Based on that conversation with the Council the next presentation is tentatively scheduled for October 10th where staff will present final updated cost estimates and such. The cost estimates will assume a B3 benchmarking level for sustainability but does include a certain amount of increased insulation and building wrap materials and he believed it does have some initial requirements or goals for renewable energy as well. He did think the Council was very interested in doing that and making sure the building is sustainable and really well designed. The solar panels on the current maintenance facility will be moved to the new maintenance facility.

Vice Chair Joyce asked if there is any electric vehicle provisions in this new design.

Mr. Culver said the level of design detail has not been obtained yet but there will be that in the future.

Chair Ficek thanked Mr. Culver for the presentation.

7. Items for Next Meeting

Discussion ensued regarding the November PWETC agenda:

- Proposed utility rate discussion
- No Mow May discussion

Chair Ficek noted on October 8th the fire station is having an open house and October 15th is the tree planting event. He thanked Mr. Culver for everything he has done in the City and wished him luck.

Mr. Culver thanked the Commission for their service to the City as well as all of the past Commission members he has had the pleasure to work with. He explained it has been a wonderful honor of his to have served as the Public Works Director for the past seven years and nine years with the City. He noted he has an amazing staff and a great City Engineer that will do a great job of filling in for him. He indicated it was a really tough decision to make and bittersweet because he loves the City and his job and will miss everyone.

8. Adjourn

Motion

Member Cicha moved, Member Joyce seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 8:31 p.m.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion carried.