

City Of Birmingham

AD HOC UNIMPROVED STREET STUDY COMMITTEE

Held Remotely Via Zoom And Telephone Access
November 19, 2020

Minutes of the Ad Hoc Unimproved Street Study Committee meeting held Thursday, November 19, 2020. Chairman Scott Moore called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1) Rollcall

Present: Chairman Scott Moore (location: Birmingham, Michigan)
Pierre Boutros (location: Birmingham, Michigan)
Jason Emerine (location: Birmingham, Michigan)
Michael Fenberg (location: Birmingham, Michigan)
Katie Schafer (location: Birmingham, Michigan)
Stuart Sherman (location: Birmingham, Michigan)
Janelle Whipple-Boyce (location: Birmingham, Michigan)

Absent: None.

Administration: Joe Valentine, City Manager
Eric Brunk, IT Manager
Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist
Mark Gerber, Finance Director
Lauren Wood, Director of Public Services

2) Approval Of November 12, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mr. Boutros

Seconded by Mr. Fenberg to approve the Minutes of the Ad Hoc Unimproved Streets Study Committee of November 12, 2020 as submitted.

Motion carried, 6-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Sherman, Whipple-Boyce, Boutros, Fenberg, Moore, Schafer

Nays: None

Abstain: Emerine

3) Review Of Input From November 12, 2020 Meeting

City Manager Valentine reviewed the discussion items as included in his November 17, 2020 memorandum which can be found in the evening's agenda packet.

There was consensus that the proposed language in item one of the memorandum should be added to the Committee's final report.

Motion by Mr. Fenberg

Seconded by Mr. Boutros to add the proposed language on property taxes and Headlee impacts from CM Valentine's November 17, 2020 memorandum into the final AHUSSC report.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Fenberg, Boutros, Emerine, Sherman, Whipple-Boyce, Moore, Schafer

Nays: None

Ms. Whipple-Boyce said the proposed language in item two of the memorandum resolved the concern she had regarding non-standard road requests.

Motion by Mr. Sherman

Seconded by Ms. Whipple-Boyce to add the proposed language from CM Valentine's November 17, 2020 memorandum to page 26 of the final AHUSSC report, and to make the recommended changes from CM Valentine's November 17, 2020 memorandum to page 69 of the final AHUSSC report.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Sherman, Whipple-Boyce, Fenberg, Boutros, Emerine, Moore, Schafer

Nays: None

There was consensus that the proposed language in item three of the memorandum should be added to the Committee's final report.

Motion by Mr. Sherman

Seconded by Mr. Fenberg to add the proposed language from CM Valentine's November 17, 2020 memorandum to page 17 of the final AHUSSC report.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Sherman, Fenberg, Whipple-Boyce, Boutros, Emerine, Moore, Schafer

Nays: None

4) Communications On Draft

Included in agenda packet, with the exception of one email from Robert Stark, resident of Chesterfield Ave, that was forwarded to the AHUSSC members prior to the evening's meeting.

Mr. Stark's email requested that the City not require residents to curb and gutter their roads during the improvement process unless 75% or more of a street's residents desire that particular improvement.

Chairman Moore noted that the AHUSSC's approach to curbs and gutters is addressed in the final report. He said that if the City Commission desired further elaboration on the topic he would be happy to provide a review of the relevant deliberations and policies dating from the mid-1990s forward.

Chairman Moore stated that two emails from residents were also forwarded to him by Commissioner Baller. One email was from a resident saying that if the City could amortize the road improvement costs over longer than 10 years the costs would likely be less burdensome to homeowners. The second email was from Sue Elsholz on Norfolk St. who said she prefers an unimproved road to a cement one. She said the main drawback of an unimproved road is that the residents have to pay for leaf cleanup when residents of improved roads do not. She expressed doubt that there was no way for the City to collect leaves from a curbless road.

It was discussed that a ten year amortization of the road improvements cost is the maximum by ordinance.

Chairman Moore noted that a payback term of more than ten years would slow down the City's ability to reinvest in infrastructure.

FD Gerber confirmed that most assessments to residents for improved roads are paid off within two or three years. He stated that residents also might look into private loans which could be used to pay off the City's assessment if they were looking for longer terms or lower payments.

Mr. Fenberg said that from personal experience the two most likely options for private loans that would cover the assessment costs would be a home equity loan or remortgage.

In reply to Chairman Moore, CM Valentine confirmed the City would not officially recommend potential avenues for private loans because the City cannot act as a financial advisor or be construed to be giving financial advice.

Chairman Moore stated the Birmingham Foundation also has resources to assist Birmingham residents with their payments if cost is a barrier.

In regards to leaf pickup on curbless roads, Chairman Moore stated Beverly Hills, MI had somewhat recently contracted a third party to attempt it and that it went so poorly that they were unable to finish.

DPS Director Wood confirmed that to be the case. She explained that curbs are necessary for safety reasons because without curbs stones and other debris can harm operators, passerby, or the equipment.

Chairman Moore thanked the residents for writing in.

5) Public Comment

None.

6) Committee Comments

Chairman Moore commended the members of the AHUSSC on their Committee work, their talents, and their civic-mindedness. He said that if he were not to sit on another City board or committee in the future he would be "going out like Sandy Koufax" having served with the members of the AHUSSC.

Chairman Moore stated that the Committee in its report endeavored to be responsible stewards of the residents' tax dollars.

Dr. Schafer agreed, adding that the Committee also endeavored to write policy that would further promote positive relationships between neighbors in the community.

7) Submission of the AHUSSC Report to the City Commission

Motion by Mr. Fenberg

Seconded by Mr. Boutros to approve the Ad Hoc Unimproved Streets Study Committee report and to recommend its approval to the City Commission.

Mr. Boutros thanked Chairman Moore for his leadership of, and investment in, the AHUSSC. He also extended thanks to the AHUSSC members, staff, and everyone else involved in making the report possible.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Fenberg, Boutros, Sherman, Whipple-Boyce, Emerine, Moore, Schafer

Nays: None

8) Adjourn

Motion by Mr. Boutros

Seconded by Ms. Whipple-Boyce to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Boutros, Whipple-Boyce, Sherman, Emerine, Fenberg, Moore, Schafer

Nays: None

Ad Hoc Unimproved Street Study Committee
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City Manager Joe Valentine