



CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Baxter City Hall, 13190 Memorywood Drive, Baxter, MN

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Olson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Darrel Olson and Council Members Connie Lyscio, Zach Tabatt, and Mark Cross were present. Council Member Jeff Phillips was absent.

Assistant City Administrator Kelly Steele and Public Works Director Trevor Walter were present.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Assessment Hearing on Proposed Assessment for the 2024 South Forestview Area Improvements Project, Municipal Project No. 4138

Neil Heinonen, SEH, consulting engineer presented the assessment hearing for the 2024 South Forestview Area Improvements.

The project street segments include Forestview Drive south of River Vista Drive, Maryland Road, River Vista Drive, River Vista Court, Medford Road, Riverwood Road, and Parkview Circle.

The original project feasibility study was completed in 2005. The project will provide municipal sewer and water service to a neighborhood currently being serviced septic systems and wells. The deteriorated street surfaces will be improved. Non-motorized connectivity/complete streets within the city will be improved.

Mr. Heinonen summarized the existing street conditions and the proposed street improvements. A bituminous paved trailhead and parking area is proposed on the south end of Forestview Drive. A gravel trail alignment is planned through the wooded city parcel from the trailhead north to Maryland Road. The trail will be used as a temporary access route for local traffic during construction.

Mr. Heinonen summarized the proposed sanitary sewer and water improvements. Hydrants will be installed throughout the project for fire protection and flushing. Due to the topography two sanitary lift stations will be installed.

After opening bids, the total project cost is \$8,296,650.16.

All properties will be assessed on a per equivalent residential unit (ERU). The city's policy for assessments in sewer and water extension areas is a fix rate tied to inflation. Each ERU with a house is also charged a sewer availability charge and a water availability charge. Properties with existing wells and septic systems will have five years to connect to the new municipal services. The city will pay for all trail and lighting expenses.

Assessments will be collected annually with property taxes beginning in 2025 over a 15-year term. The interest rate is currently estimated at 7% but will be determined at the time of the bond sale. Deferred assessments will apply to underdeveloped or underdeveloped parcels. There are assessment deferments for residential homestead parcels that meet hardship criteria.

The final road assessment are:
\$7,408 per ERU for road
\$5,556 per ERU for sanitary sewer
\$600 sewer availability charge
\$5,556 per ERU for water
\$600 water availability charge.

The total assessment for a single ERU with a home is \$19,720. The total assessment for single ERU without a home is \$18,520.

Approximately 31% of the project costs are assessed and the remaining 69% is paid with other sources.

The council will consider adopting the assessment rolls on March 19, 2024. A neighborhood meeting is scheduled for March 28, 2024. Construction will take place this year.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Olson opened the public hearing at 6:26 p.m.

Judith Anderson, 6501 Parkview Circle, questioned why the trail and lighting expenses have doubled from last year. The neighborhood has not been asked if they want a trail. Ms. Anderson does not support the trail. In the past, residents voted down street lights. Ms. Anderson asked if the street lights can be removed from the project.

Mr. Heinonen explained a trail segment has been added to the project and some additional trees. The unit lighting pricing is different and a couple of street lights have been added. Street lights will be located in their current location and along intersections and sharp corners.

Amy Dirkes, 6587 Riverwood Road, explained she and her husband support the project, however, are disappointed in the process. The Dirkes attended both informational meetings and have voiced concerns about erosion occurring on their property. Ms. Dirkes explained they were told their concerns would be addressed but they have received no communication since. Ms. Dirkes reviewed the proposed project plans and learned a flexmat will be installed for erosion. Ms. Dirkes explained she is disappointed with the proposal and suggested the city consider a concrete gutter valley.

Mr. Heinonen and Public Works Director Walter explained the erosion issue has been discussed internally but they have not communicated with the Dirkes. Once the contractor is selected, the erosion issues will be reviewed.

Darin Dirkes, 6587 Riverwood Road, inquired what the assessments were for the properties on the north project. Mr. Dirkes inquired if the project savings can be used to reduce assessments and if the proposed assessments could be reduced to the amount paid by the north project.

Public Works Director Walter explained the city is picking up a higher percentage of project costs on the south project than they did on the north project.

Ray Griffin, 11766 River Vista Drive, inquired if the new LED streetlights will be downward focus, will mailboxes be moved, and will delivery companies still be able to deliver to homes. Mr. Griffin inquired if the assessment repayment will change if a property is given to a relative.

Public Works Director Walter explained written objections to the special assessments have been received from Ethan Youso, 11931 River Vista Drive; Michael and Sonja Eidenshink, 11716 River Vista Drive; and Jon Schloemer, 11679 River Vista Drive.

Various questions were asked from meeting attendees sitting in the audience.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Olson closed the public hearing at 7:22 p.m.

NEXT STEPS

Mayor Olson summarized the 429-assessment process.

ADJOURN

MOTION by Council Member Lyscio, seconded by Council Member Tabatt to adjourn at 7:22 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Approved by:

Respectfully submitted,

Darrel Olson
Mayor

Kelly Steele
Assistant City Administrator