

9/19/17

PUBLIC SAFETY & WELFARE COMMITTEE

September 06, 2017

The Committee met at 5:00 pm in room 0008 of the Municipal Building. Members present were; Alderpersons Kurt Larson, Emily McFarland, and Tim Raether, Mayor John David, Police Chief Tim Roets, City Engineer Jaynellen Holloway, City Civil Engineer Andrew Beyer, City Engineering Project Manager Jay Haberkorn, Street Superintendent Rick Schulz, Park & Rec Manager Cindi Braasch. Alderperson Ken Berg. City residents and interested persons in attendance included; Bill Feutz, Larry Falk, Lisa Falk, Kyle Zarnowski, Shia Zarnowski, Chris Hernet, Lisa Zuehlke, Becky Burg, Jeannine Anderson, Susan Willing, Trina Schneider, Jim Romlein, Amanda J. Groves, Tara J. Melton, Amy Litscher, Lori-Fort-Hoerig, Greg Hoffmann, Melody Hoffmann, Laurie Hoffmann, Kris Kerr, Diane Tuhy, Jamie Drefahl.

1. Request to Review Ordinance 410-45, Dangerous & Vicious Dogs – Review Breed Specific Language (Pit Bulls):

City resident Mr. Bill Feutz discussed an incident that occurred with his spouse last September 2016. She was bitten by a pit bull in her face, particularly severe around the nose and is still recovering from this attack. His concern is to try to prevent this on future occurrences with other residents. He stated that he is not against people owning pit bulls but believes that this dog was not leashed and properly restrained to prevent this incident. He urges dog owners and residents to work together to prevent these occurrences – in particular paying attention to the leash law and other proper dog restraint sections of the ordinance.

Chief Roets spoke about the enforcement of this ordinance since it was enacted about 4 years ago. His Officers and the Humane Officers take this ordinance seriously and have developed more effective practices with their methods. As an example, euthanasia is now recommended for dealing with dogs classified as dangerous versus moving this issue to another community. His Officers, the Humane Officers and the city Attorney's office have been prompt and consistent in dealing with these events. Chief stated that dog owners and non-dog owners need to respect and communicate with each other and involve the Police and Humane Officers with any issues that arise.

Alderperson McFarland stated that she is hesitant to make any changes to the current ordinance, believes that the ordinance is working to prevent/minimize incidents with dangerous and vicious dogs. Alderperson Larsen is not in favor of adding any specific breed considerations into the ordinance.

Resident Laurie Hoffman, a dog owner, shared that she has experienced other dogs in her neighborhood not on leashes when walking her dog and sometimes feels threatened in these cases – she encouraged the people in attendance to notify the police when met with these circumstances. Greg Hoffman spoke in support of the ordinance and commended the Police department with their work with this ordinance.

Resident Jim Romlein also favors the current ordinance. Appreciates that the Police department evaluates each situation on its own merits and proceeds fairly based on these decisions.

Action: The Committee supports the current ordinance as written. Urged residents to be aware of this ordinance and apply it in their situations as either dog owners or non-dog owners. No other current action is required.

Note: Majority of City residents and interested persons left the meeting at this point.

2. Review Request to place Pavement Markings on S. Concord Ave. from E. Main St. south to Richards Ave:

A city resident is requesting the City consider placing pavement marking on S. Concord Ave to address;

- a) Cars often parked on both sides, particularly from Western Ave to Main St, there is ample room for traffic to safely pass in both directions. Yet some drivers seem to require a wider than necessary safety margin on their right side and either crowd or take the center of the road. Believe that this could be alleviated by painting a double center line in this area.
- b) Northbound drivers who are turning left onto Main often first turn a bit to the right to more easily see cars coming from the east on Main St. this often blocks the possibility of drivers behind them from turning right, who could otherwise do so in absence of traffic from the west. Not sure if Concord Ave is wide enough at Main to accommodate a suggestion to mark a right turn only lane at the curb side and a left/straight-ahead lane in the center.

Discussion on a) that a center lane was previously marked on Concord Ave from Main Street south approximately 150 feet. City Engineering and Street Department discussed costs of marking the stretch on Concord from Main Street to Richards Ave. Chief Roets suggested marking the original 150 feet on this stretch and he and City Engineer Holloway agreed that this should be the first step and then evaluate this action on the intended solution?

Item b) was discussed, City Engineering Project Manager Jay Haberkorn explained that there is not enough width to the street to allow a right turn and left/straight turn lanes to be provided. This could be reviewed with a future reconstruction of the intersection.

Aldersperson Larsen made a motion to mark a double yellow line on Concord Ave from Main Street to a point approximately 150 feet to the south and then follow up for effectiveness of this action, seconded by Aldersperson McFarland and the motion carried unanimously.

Action: City Engineering and Street Department will request costs of these lane markings on the 2018 budget and have epoxy paint applied when this activity occurs next year. No action will occur on item b).

3. Request to Review Vandalism on Rotary Island Picnic Tables at Riverside Park:

A city resident is requesting that the City address vandalism on Rotary Island picnic tables. The resident provided photos of vulgar language and symbols placed on picnic tables. This damage occurred just before or during Riverfest and remained here during the festival.

Park & recreation Manager Cindi Braasch and Street Superintendent Rick Schulz stated that their employees constantly battle these vandalism incidents and all of the picnic tables used at Riverfest were painted before the event. Chief Roets agreed with the constant vigilance required to address vandalism. Security cameras exist at the park in the pavilion and parking lot areas, not located everywhere.

All Departments stated that they will continue to pursue, prevent and minimize these incidents as possible and they all share the same concerns with the resident who reported this incident. All Alderspersons present acknowledge the difficulty in completely eliminating these incidents.

Action: All Departments will continue to monitor vandalism occurrences and continue to review their departmental policies to address.

4. Request to Review Speeding on Boughton Street east of 16 Frontage Road:

City Civil Engineer Andrew Beyer received a request from a city resident in regards to addressing speeding vehicles on Boughton Street heading east out of town. Engineer Beyer conveyed this information to Chief Roets and the Police Department took actions to address this request.

Chief Roets reported that the Police Department spent a minimum of 5 hours of radar time in this area and had 10 traffic stops. Citations were issued as appropriate for these stops. Decided to follow up with the resident who brought this matter forward and continue to monitor this area.

9/19/17

Action: Engineer Beyer will contact the resident for a follow up on the action taken and encourage them to provide future feedback with their concern in this area.

5. Review & Discuss the top five Traffic Vehicle Crash Locations in Watertown:

Chief Roets presented a summary report prepared from the Traffic Crash reporting tool now used by the department. The top locations reported include Church Street / Main Street, Main Street / Corner Street, Church Street / Milwaukee Street, Main Street / Water Street and 4 locations tied for 5th most reported crashes.

Chief Roets has shared this data with the City Engineering department for their review of this data. Committee discussion occurred on the information provided with some possible common causes such as parking involvement occurring at the Main Street / Corner Street location.

Action: This data will be shared and discussed between the Police and Engineering Departments along with other applicable departments as determined to look at any actionable items. Follow up will occur with the Public Safety and Welfare Committee on an approximate 6 month basis to review updated information and any actions taken as a result of this information.

6. Review Proposed Roadway Locations for permanent Speed Board Indicators:

Chief Roets provided survey information from his officers in regards to their recommendations for placement of permanent speed board indicators. These radar feedback signs will display speed information to vehicles approaching the location where placed. Agreed among the committee that these are generally effective to discourage speeding in areas where present. Top recommendations include; vehicles entering the city on South Church Street, Milford Street, South Concord Avenue and Summit Avenue.

Committee discussion agreed to pursue obtaining these signs over several years by including in budget requests.

Action: Street Superintendent Schultz will include two signs in the 2018 budget request. Will review the effectiveness of these signs when placed and decide on additional requests in subsequent years' budgets.

As no other business was scheduled for the commission, motion made by Alderperson Larson to adjourn, seconded by Alderperson McFarland. Meeting adjourned at 6:02PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Raether, Chairman