

Mary Jo's Heye-lights

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Issue 02

Mary Jo Heye

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Let's Talk Sidewalks

There is no question that sidewalks not only help property values but they are also important for the health and safety of a community. This is the reason why I believe they need to be a priority for Sherwood.

There are grant programs to which the city can apply that can be used for sidewalks. Two of the programs available are known as Transportation Alternative Program grants: one is administered through the State Highway Department and another through Metroplan. The state program is available every year and Metroplan's available every two years, but they are both competitive grants. The programs are typically a 80/20 cost split with the city paying 20% of the cost. To apply for one of these grants, the city must submit a specific location and project.

My frustration is that the City Council has had NO input into the streets being targeted for grants. Without input, Green Valley Subdivision in the Gravel Ridge area has received the only grants three years in a row. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent on sidewalks in this one neighborhood. The only reason I was given was because this neighborhood was "promised attention as part of their annexation." Most of our city has been annexed and some areas have waited for sidewalks for years. It is not fair they be leaped frogged. I also brought up safety issues being ignored such as traffic counts. I specifically brought up the Indianhead Lakes neighborhood with narrow streets and traffic counts that were 10 times greater. This neighborhood has begged for sidewalks for a very long time.

Now, let me be clear, I do not begrudge any neighborhood of getting sidewalks. Good for them! However, year after year, My frustration is that **no input from City Council** went into these decisions nor was the process "fair" in determining which areas should receive priority.

It was clear that nothing was going to change. In October of 2018, I proposed legislation that would create a priority list for the city to follow in building new sidewalks or in applying for grants. All city council members could nominate streets from their wards. The streets would be ranked by the Street Committee using city council approved criteria. The scored list of projects would then be presented to the council for approval. This program was passed unanimously by the city council. While all 2019 sidewalk money went for the Green Valley project, new monies should be available in 2020 so the new priority list could be used.

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City Purchasing Questions

One of the duties that I take very seriously is being a good steward of the taxpayers' money. It is the Mayor's job to present the financials each month including the bills list and it is our job to review it for properness. According to the law, any expenditure over \$20,000 must be approved by the City Council (*reference ACA 14-55-204, 14-58-203, 14-55-305*) either through an ordinance allocating the expenditure or establishing the specific expense in the proposed annual budget. Further, any purchases for services or items over \$20,000 – *even cumulative* - must go through the state required bidding process unless City Council waives bidding (*reference ACA 14-58-303*).

This past month there was an item on the city's submitted list of bills showing an expense of \$21,350 to Low Voltage Systems, Inc. for replacement cameras and Camera System. While the city has had security cameras in parking lots, buildings, and inside buildings for years this was an interesting large expense. I could not find anything in the budget allowing for this expenditure. I checked the financial reports from previous months and, beginning in June, other larger expenditures for this company had occurred. In June, there was a \$1,951.65 payment to Low Voltage and, in July, another \$5,525.94 was spent with Low Voltage at City Hall. Altogether, over \$28,000 had been spent with this company with no apparent city council authorization.

My other concern is the capabilities of the cameras themselves. They record both video AND audio. Further, some new cameras are located in places already covered by security cameras. Sherwood resident Doris Anderson asked in a Freedom of Information request who can monitor these cameras. Only four people were listed and none of those four are in the Police Department. If these new cameras are needed, they should be monitored by the Police when there is suspected criminal activities.
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City Purchasing (Continued from previous column)

Primarily, I have a concern that people's private conversations can be overheard and recorded without any signage warning that this is a possibility. A prime example is at the entrance of City Hall. Two security cameras have long hung on the outer edge of the covered walk to provide video surveillance of the parking lot. Now, there is also a smaller camera under the covered walk over the entry door to the building. This is a frequent place for people to talk before or after Planning Commission or City Council meetings. These doors are locked most other times. Now, these conversations can be recorded. Why?

Another odd example of these cameras is at the Thornhill Pool. Why would people at the pool need to be overheard and/or recorded while enjoying time at the pool? Again, this area is already covered by the older cameras and right by the Police Station. Again, there is no signage warning people of the surveillance.

It is not unusual for a person to step outside to take a personal call or to have a private conversation out of earshot. How would they like to know those conversations were not private? I believe in safety and security. I believe in our Constitution. I do not believe in violating our legal or even our ethical right to privacy.

In summary, there are unexplained questions over appropriateness of the bidding process, allocation of funds, and true purpose of these cameras. These are questions that should be answered. Hopefully, there will be clarity in the future.

One a side note....***In order to hear this discussion, you must ask the City Clerk for the audio because the video cameras for the meeting were not running. I have been asked if this was intentional. I do not think so, I think it was a mistake. However, I hope that this does not occur again because this is the only way that a lot of people can see the City Council Meetings. They have fixed the sound system so the quality of the sound should be better in the recordings.***

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September City Council Meeting Synopsis

Mayor Young opened discussion on the August 2019 financials. I questioned the expense of Low Voltage (see the article) of \$23,150. I questioned the lack of the bid process as well as the legalities of lack of signage letting the public know that they under video/audio surveillance.

The Personnel Committee was renamed the Human Resource Committee.

Human Resources Director presented the salary study performed by an independent, third-party human resource company out of Fayetteville that called for adjustments in some City Employee salaries. The salaries that are above market rate have to be frozen until they get back into a market range. The City Council approved upward adjustments by ordinance for those city employees whose salaries were below the market rate. I asked about the Police salaries. Sherwood's human resource director stated that police department salaries were found to be within the market range, therefore, there was no need for any upward adjustments.

An official rezoning was passed for 124 Heritage Lane from C-2 to C-3. It was determined to be a compatible zoning for the surrounding area and there was no objections expressed. It was announced that this will be for a Holiday Inn Express.

The City Council approved an ordinance detaching some land while acquiring other from Jacksonville. The purpose of this is to clean up boundary lines for the two cities.

It approved an ordinance authorizing Cinergy (a business owned by Tom and Marina Brooks) to perform the sidewalk repair on Willow Glen Circle.

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Meeting Synopsis

(Continued from Previous Column)

It also approved an ordinance authorizing a city employee to be hired as Master of Ceremonies for Sherwood Fest. Mayor Young stated that this would not be the normal course of business going forward. She stated that this was due to an unusual circumstance.

Bob Franks was re-appointed to serve on the Sherwood Public Facilities Board.

The City Council authorized the expenditure of the street improvements for the Kohl's extension. Bids were opened on September 10th and work should start soon on that project.

What's New?

New to Sherwood

Rocky's Pub 117 Country Club Rd. Ste. A
392-6150

Coming to Sherwood

Circle K on North Hills/Country Club and
Maryland/107

**Pho 68 Vietnamese & Chinese
Cuisine** 4011 E. Kiehl Ave.

Have you tried...

Chang Thai & Asian Cuisine 9830
Highway 10

New Neighbors?

If you have a new neighbor, I would love to welcome them with a note. I would appreciate you forwarding names and addresses

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Let's Talk About Sidewalks (Continued from Page 1)

Seven streets were nominated: Indianhead Dr., Shoshoni Dr., Mohave Rd., Deerfield Dr., and Oneida St. from Ward 2, and Coolhurst Rd., and Pembroke Dr. in Ward 3. They were rated by the Street Committee which includes City Council Member Kevin Lilly, City Council Member Beverly Williams, City Council Member Tim McMinn, Walt Barnhart, and Kyle Blakely. The scoring sheets for each street are included as an appendix to this newsletter. On the charts, the columns marked A, B, C, D, E are the scores of the individual raters. The Grading Key is also included to explain each of the categories. The streets were ranked, first to last, by score, as Coolhurst, Pembroke, Mohave, Indianhead, Shoshoni, Deerfield, and Oneida. (For scoring see the charts below.)

While this process is an improvement, I have three problems with the way this program was executed: first, what was included in the criteria is poorly structured; second, other important factors were not included; and third, the criteria was still improperly applied to the submitted streets. The first two issues regard a poorly built grading system, though I do not know who was responsible. Regarding the first issue, the criteria were never submitted to the city council for approval. Though the criteria were to be data driven, some of the criteria were strangely structured. For example, hospitals were listed as a pedestrian generator - odd when most users arrive by car. Also, the scoring weight given to each category is also highly arguable. Because "Missing Links" gets its points tripled, a short sidewalk project on a low volume road to nowhere could score higher than placing a complete block of sidewalk on a narrow major street.

Secondly, two major safety factors were not included in the criteria. Neither street width or traffic counts is considered in the scoring criteria. Both of these are major considerations when cars and people have to use the same road. Third, given the objective nature of the scoring, the judges' scores in each category should be fairly similar. Yet the scores show the objective criteria were not used by the graders to score these submittals. The scores are too far apart. If the graders didn't have the right data to properly grade the sidewalks, that is a shortfall of the city staff. (See all the scores on the included score sheets.) Folks, we can do better.

Hopefully, the 2020 budget can include enough money to get all these projects done. If you live on one of these streets and feel strongly about sidewalks. I would suggest that you contact the Chairman of the Street Committee, Kevin Lilly by his email (on the front page.) You can also email me at maryjoheye@gmail.com and I will pass it along. Also, if you believe that sidewalks should be a budget priority, then you need to let the Mayor and the members on the Budget Committee know. The members of the Budget Committee include Tim McMinn, Charlie Harmon, Kevin Lilly, and Beverly Williams. As I mentioned in the first newsletter, your voice matters! Send emails. Your representatives can better represent you when they know your opinions.

Sherwood Vision 2040 Meeting

October 14, 2019

6 pm

Sherwood Council Chambers

This is the public presentation of this document and the last opportunity for public input. Please attend if you can. Remember, this is your city!

Sherwood Youth Basketball

2nd to 9th Grade

Sign up deadline October 14th

Applications available at Harmon Center

For more information call 835-6893



Sidewalk Program Grading Key

Missing Links:

Installing sidewalks to connect pedestrian areas to each other creates continuous walking systems; Existing sidewalk connectivity gaps.

300' or less = 5 pts; 600' = 4 pts, 900 = 3 Pts, 1,200' = 2 Pts, 1,500' or more = 1 pts.

Multiplier Factor: x3

Neighborhood priorities:

Local residents may have a sense of where the most desirable walking routes exist. Neighborhood groups or homeowners associations can provide a prioritized list of locations where they see a need for sidewalks. Agencies should be cautious about using this criterion, as it is not the most desirable to let neighborhood pressure override addressing a key safety concern. However, it may be useful to monitor requests from pedestrians with disabilities.

Multiplier Factor: x1

Other Pedstrian Generators:

Hospitals, community centers, libraries, sports arenas, shopping districts, recreational corridors, and other public places are natural pedestrians generators where sidewalks should be given priority.

1/8 mile = 5 pts, 1/4 mile = 4 pts, 1/2 mile = 3 Pts, 3/4 mile = 2 pts, 1 mile = 1 pts.

Multiplier Factor: x2

School Walking Zones:

School walking zones typically extend from residential areas to elementary schools. Children are especially vulnerable, making streets (especially arterials) in these zones prime candidates for sidewalk retrofitting.

1/8 mile = 5 pts, 1/4 mile = 4 pts, 1/2 mile = 3 Pts, 3/4 mile = 2 pts, 1 mile = 1 pts.

Multiplier Factor: x3

Speed:

There is a direct relationship between speed and the number and severity of crashes; high-speed facilities may rank higher if speed is a criterion

40 mph = 5 pts, 35 mph = 4 pts, 30 mph = 3 pts, 25 mph = 2 pts, 20 mph = 1 pts.

Multiplier Factor: x1

Street Classification:

Arterial streets should take precedence because they have higher pedestrian use (due to more commercial uses), have a greater need to separate pedestrians from motor vehicles (due to higher traffic volumes and speeds), and are the main links in a community.

Other Principle Arterial = 5 pts, Minor Arterial = 4 pts, Major Collector = 3 pts, Minor Collector = 2 pts, Local Street = 1 pts.

Multiplier Factor: x1

Transit Routes:

Transit riders need access to sidewalks to access transit stops. Arterials used by transit are prime candidates for sidewalk retrofitting.

1/8 mile = 5 pts, 1/4 mile = 4 pts, 1/2 mile = 3 Pts, 3/4 mile = 2 pts, 1 mile = 1 pts.

Multiplier Factor: x1

October Senior 2019 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	01 Scrapbook/Crop Beanbag Practice/Game Line Dance	02 Flu shots given by Baptist Wellness every Wed. in Oct. Bingo Beginner Bridge	03 <a>Show More Beanbag practice/game Eight Ball Pool Hand & Foot	04 Games (Bunco, Dominos, Tic, ect) Friday Night Music	05
06	07 <a>Show More Ceramics Bridge Pottuck	08 <a>Show More Scrapbook/Crop Beanbag Practice/Game Zumba	09 Flu shots given by Baptist Wellness every Wed. in Oct. Bingo Beginner Bridge	10 <a>Show More Beanbag practice/game Zumba Eight Ball Pool	11 Crossroads Cafe Games (Bunco, Dominos, Tic, ect) Friday Night Music	12
13	14 Ceramics Bridge Aerobics	15 <a>Show More Scrapbook/Crop Beanbag Practice/Game Zumba	16 Flu shots given by Baptist Wellness every Wed. in Oct. Bingo Beginner Bridge	17 <a>Show More Beanbag practice/game Zumba Eight Ball Pool	18 Medicare Part-D Games (Bunco, Dominos, Tic, ect) Friday Night Music	19
20	21 <a>Show More Ceramics Bridge Outlet Mall & Bass Pro Shop	22 <a>Show More Scrapbook/Crop Beanbag Practice/Game Zumba	23 Flu shots given by Baptist Wellness every Wed. in Oct. Bingo Beginner Bridge	24 <a>Show More Beanbag practice/game Zumba Eight Ball Pool	25 Games (Bunco, Dominos, Tic, ect) Friday Night Music	26
27	28 <a>Show More City Council Meeting AARP Driving Class AARP Driving Class	29 <a>Show More Scrapbook/Crop Beanbag Practice/Game Zumba	30 Flu shots given by Baptist Wellness every Wed. in Oct. Bingo Beginner Bridge	31 <a>Show More Beanbag practice/game Zumba Eight Ball Pool	01	02

Happy Halloween!

Watch out for little Ghosts & Goblins