

Auburn Council Approves Street Improvement Plans; Surveying, Engineering Projects Don't Advance

Written by Nemaha County Herald
Thursday, 24 January 2013 14:03 -

During the Jan. 14 meeting, Auburn City Council unanimously approved the city's annual One and Six Year Plan for Street Improvements. Evan Wickersham, the City Street Superintendent with JEO Consulting Group, Inc., reviewed the plan for January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2018.

Wickersham said the One Year Plan consisted of replacing the P Street bridge, improving S Street from Central Avenue to 8th Street, repairing the intersection at 22nd and N streets, and using a camera to examine a portion of storm sewer in the vicinity of 9th Street from E to I streets to see how much repair and/or replacement is required. It was noted during the public hearing on the Street Improvement Plan that just because an item is listed as in either the One Year or Six Year time frame, that doesn't mean that the work will follow that time frame or even happen.

The Six Year Plan includes those listed in the One Year document, plus hard-surfacing of P Street between 6th and 10th streets, two drainage improvement projects in the general vicinity of J Street and continuing toward N Street from the 1400 to 900 blocks, reconstruction of Courthouse Avenue and the utilities located under and near it, paving 9th Street between O and P streets, paving U Street between 18th and 19th streets, and paving 19th Street from Q Street to the County Road.

The council unanimously approved plans and authorized the engineer to receive bids on the P Street bridge replacement project, provided County Attorney Angelo Ligouri is able to successfully obtain necessary easements from affected property owners.

Appointments/Reappointments

The Mayor recommended and the council approved the reappointment of Dean Coulter and Doug Jones on the Board of Adjustment, and the appointment of Chuck Knipe to the Board of Public Works Board. Knipe's appointment fills a vacancy left as Kudrna chose to not reappoint Mark Kubik for another term. Doug Glenn's term has also expired, but the council has yet to approve a replacement as the Mayor has indicated his intention is to apparently not reappoint Glenn.

These were the last action items on the evening, although there were three other proposals for the governing board's consideration.

Council members also voted unanimously to authorize water liens and sewer liens against real estate on delinquent accounts with the Auburn Board of Public Works. The liens approved against the 11 properties ranged from \$31.32 to \$55.25 for water and \$45.30 to \$127.74 for sewer.

Proposals Failing to Advance

One proposal would have authorized JEO Consulting Group to survey right of way for 19th Street west of Auburn. This step would establish right of way for any future 19th Street extension. The entire area west of the currently developed property is inside the city's limits and would allow for another route for traffic/emergency personnel to gain access. This project is included on the One and Six Year Plan.

Mayor Scott Kudrna suggested "being a council of action, not necessarily waiting until easements had been obtained."

Councilman Larry Holtzman said having an extended 19th Street would open up the area west of the present residential area towards to county road for potential development.

T.O. Davison, one of the property owners in the area which would be impacted by the 19th

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Street extension asked the council and mayor, "What about contacting the property owners involved?"

Councilwoman Katy Billings said, "We [city] need to talk to people earlier and keep them informed on what is being considered."

City Attorney Ligouri read a letter from attorney Allen Fankhauser on behalf of Dennis Wheeler stating that Mr. Wheeler is not interested in his property being surveyed.

There was no motion made to accept or deny the 19th Street surveying proposal.

Another proposal called for JEO Consulting Group to provide engineering services for S Street paving and drainage improvements from Highway 136 on north to the existing concrete paving in Glenrock Addition. The work by JEO would be necessary to get the project ready to bid out should the city council pursue it. Mayor Kudrna explained that this project was included in the City's One and Six Year Street Improvement Plan.

Wickersham said pursuing engineering services at this time would be prudent if the decision was made to proceed as contractor(s) should be in the city next year to complete an extensive Highway 136 reconstruction project through Auburn.

Property owner Larry Draper told Kudrna and the council he didn't appreciate the matter being brought up for discussion again such a brief time after the council had been informed that none of the impacted landowners were in favor of the paving and related expenses.

Mayor Kudrna said the potential paving couldn't be accomplished through Gap Paving and getting the council to agree to use some of the State Transportation Monies which the city receives yearly for street improvement projects would likely be the only way such a project could be funded.

No one from the audience spoke favorably of the proposal to obtain engineering services for S Street paving and drainage, and the matter also concluded without any motion being made. Consideration of approval of a survey to extend S Street south to the city corporate limits drew limited discussion because the survey work had only been received for review just prior to the meeting. Originally, it was mentioned last fall that the city has not designated a street right of way for the abandoned railroad property on south S Street. This new survey is intended to clear up the matter. The subject was tabled until next month's meeting.