

BAXTER CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
March 15, 2018

Call Meeting to Order

Vice Mayor Todd Holman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Vice Mayor Todd Holman and Council Members Steve Barrows and Mark Cross were present. Mayor Darrel Olson and Council Member Quinn Nystrom were absent.

City Administrator Bradley Chapulis, Assistant City Administrator Kelly Steele, and Public Works Director Trevor Walter.

Vice Mayor Holman thanked those in attendance and explained the consulting engineer will present a power point presentation with information about the improvement project. At the end of the presentation there will be an opportunity for public input.

Chris Sonmor, consulting engineer with WSB, provided the history of the project and explained the proposed improvements to each street. Mr. Sonmor summarized the assessment procedure and project funding. The Utilities Commission will be reviewing the project's plans on March 21 and the Council will consider ordering the project and authorizing bids on April 3. The assessment hearing will be held in June. The construction period will be July through September.

Vice Mayor Holman asked the Council if they had any questions and explained the consulting engineers would be available after the hearing if anyone in the audience has detailed questions.

MOTION by Council Member Cross, seconded by Council Member Barrows to open the public hearing at 6:43 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Mike Hammer, 4907 Circle Pines Road. Mr. Hammer stated several of his neighbors are also in attendance. Mr. Hammer compared the project to the City conducting surgery on the road when only a band aide is needed. Circle Pines is currently rated a six. If the City would have been more proactive with pavement management, the road would have been rated an eight. The City has now picked up the pace of maintenance. Mr. Hammer cited several city streets and their maintenance history and rating. Mr. Hammer explained Circle Pines Road only receives light traffic from the people living in the neighborhood. The heaviest traffic results from garbage trucks. The City has been good with crack filling. The City is assessing property owners for a mill and overlay when a seal coat would bring up the roadway rating. Mr. Hammer explained the assessment would not improve his property value, but a seal coat would. Mr. Hammer is willing to pay for a seal coating. Mr. Hammer explained the purpose of the franchise fee is to perform basic maintenance. Mr. Hammer further explained he thinks the proper improvement is a seal coat and then to reevaluate the street in seven years.

Vice Mayor Holman asked those in attendance to raise their hand if they live on Circle Pines Road and agree with Mr. Hammer's assessment. Approximately 13 people raised their

hand. Vice Mayor Holman also stated he does not want to squelch their opportunity to speak.

David Pueringer, owns a property on the corner of Cedar Scenic and Circle Pines Road. Mr. Pueringer explained the roads are in good condition. The City has never completed a mill and overlay on Cedar Scenic Road. The franchise fee should be used for street maintenance and the property owners should not be billed.

Beth Kidrowski, 3672 Cedar Scenic Road. Ms. Kidrowski read the following: I am writing to you in regards to improvement No. 4418, specifically the reconstruction of Cedar Scenic Road. We own 900 out of the 1,000 feet of planned reconstruction area. We feel it is extremely unfair and unnecessary that the amount assessed for this project is over \$33,400. We alone are expected to be assessed for \$14,400 of the project, alongside of our neighbor Mr. Bircher who will be responsible for \$19,000 of it.

We feel that it is absolutely not necessary to reconstruct this portion of the road and do not feel it would be of benefit to Baxter residents. We were informed by the project director that the plan is to reconstruct this portion of the road so that the road can be elevated. We have seen zero flooding in this area to warrant an elevation, and therefore reconstruction, of this area. Secondly, the low point of the road of the assessed area currently has speed bumps, which necessitates drivers to slow down in this area. As of right now, drivers already speed down this road, which presents as a safety hazard. If the road was reconstructed, these speed bumps would be removed and drivers would therefore only increase their speeds. We have a growing boy and we would be even more so concerned about his safety in the front yard if driver's speeds were to be increased. Lastly, this portion of the road is primarily used by Cass County residents as a through road. This reconstruction would not benefit Baxter City residents in any way.

Cedar Scenic Road had an overlay completed a few years ago to the point at which the reconstruction will start. The 1,000 feet of reconstruction continues to be in the same shape it was at the time the overlay was completed. We are asking why the assessment was not completed at that time. Why is it occurring now?

In regard to the price of the project, we feel that assessed cost is outrageous. We are raising our 7-month-old son, and the approval of this project would put us in a financial crisis. Because of the significant cost of the project, we are considering moving out of the community.

Ms. Kidrowski read the following letter from Thomas Bercher due to Mr. Bercher being unable to attend the meeting: I am writing in regard to the Improvement No. 4418, specifically the reconstruction of Cedar Scenic Rd. I own one side of 1000 ft. of the reconstruction area and Mr. Kidrowski owns most of the other side. I feel it is very unfair that the two of us will be assessed over \$33,400 for the reconstruction. Cedar Scenic had an overlay a few years ago to the point where the reconstruction will start. Why wasn't the reconstruction completed at that time? The 1000 ft. was in the same shape now as it was then. There was no assessment then why now?

I feel there is no benefit to the Baxter taxpayers in doing this project. 90 % of the traffic that uses this part of Cedar Scenic Rd. comes from Cass County. It will only increase the speed of the cars using it. The speed bumps that will be removed at the low point of the road help to slow the traffic now. After the overlay was completed the speed increased. If completed now it will increase more. I have yet to see a patrol car on this part of Cedar Scenic Road. Ms. Kidrowski explained her neighbor was unable to attend due to him being out of state.

Vice Mayor Holman explained the City received emails from the Kidrowski's and Mr. Tom Bercher. The City has also received a letter, on behalf of Mr. Bercher's legal representation Mr. James Gammello, stating his opposition to the Cedar Scenic Road project. The City has also received a letter from Steve and Jane Johnson on the Wedgewood Road project.

Quin Kidrowski, 3672 Cedar Scenic Road. Mr. Kidrowski inquired why the roadway is going from 22' to 40' for 1,000 feet and then back to 22'. Public Works Director Walter explained the long-range goal is to make a trail connection from Oakwood out to the East Gull Lake trail on County Road 77. Of the \$400,000 project cost for Cedar Scenic only 2% is being assessed. Unfortunately, the Kidrowski's have a large amount of frontage on Cedar Scenic Road. The project is being assessed against three property owners. The property owners are not being assessed for their wetland frontage. The road is proposed to be raised two feet to prevent the road from breaking up due to the high-water table. Public Works Director Walter explained maintenance has been performed on the roadway in the past but was stopped because the pavement was not holding up. When the recession happened, the projects stopped. Now the projects cannot be completed fast enough because there is not enough money and the City can only do so much so fast.

Mr. Hammer inquired if there are other meetings property owners should attend to voice their concerns. Vice Mayor Holman explained every public meeting has an opportunity for public input. The Council would likely approve plans on April 3, but there is an opportunity to change the plans at this meeting. There is also an opportunity for input on March 21 at 5:30 p.m. at the Utilities Commission meeting. Public Works Director Walter asked property owners to inform the city of any drainage issues.

Jenny Gunsbury, representing Tom Bercher, inquired if the project would be voted on in one vote and explained Mr. Bercher's legal counsel is asking for an appraisal. City Administrator Chapulis explained the Utilities Commission review the design on March 21 and on April 3 the council will review the plans and a component of the project can be pulled at that time.

MOTION by Council Member Barrows, seconded by Council Member Cross to close the public hearing at 7:13 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Mayor Holman explained if the Council moves forward with the project, it would be bid and then the actual project costs would be known, as the costs tonight are engineer estimates.

1. Adjourn

MOTION by Council Member Barrows, seconded by Council Member Cross to adjourn at 7:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Approved by:

Darrel Olson
Mayor

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Steele
Assistant City Administrator