

**BAXTER CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**Work Session**  
**August 6, 2014**

Vice Mayor Todd Holman called the City Council Work Session to order at 6:00 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Klein, Todd Holman, and Rob Moser.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Mark Cross and Mayor Darrel Olson.

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Gordon Heitke, Public Works Director/City Engineer Trevor Walter, Finance Director Jeremy Vacinek, Assistant City Administrator Kelly Steele, Community Development Director Josh Doty, and Consulting Engineer Aric Welch.

**Briarwood Lane Improvement Information Meeting**

Consulting Engineer Welch reviewed the history of the improvement project and indicated the next step is to conduct an improvement hearing for the council to consider accepting or rejecting the project. The soonest the project would be completed is 2015. Consulting Engineer Welch explained the City does not have plans to extend water and sewer services to the project area. The project area consists of five developed or developable parcels and seven un-assessable parcels. The east side of the project area is bordered predominantly by wetlands. The estimated project cost is \$60,000. The City's assessment policy is to assess 100% of the project cost for an improvement of a gravel-surfaced roadway to bituminous roadway. The city, in recognition of the unique nature of the project area and the number of un-assessable properties, will participate in the project by picking up 44%. The estimated per lot assessment is \$6,692 amortized over twelve years at an estimated 5.5% interest. Hardship deferrals are available for qualified senior citizens, disabled, or active military members. Construction is expected to be completed in two weeks. The roadway will remain open during construction.

Vice Mayor Holman, while asking for public comments, announced the presentation is strictly for informational purposes.

*Erna Folta, 4444 Briarwood Lane.* Ms. Folta stated she built her home in August 1999 and the improvement would be a plus. Ms. Folta expressed concerns with seeding the shoulders and introducing the seed to the adjacent wetlands. Ms. Folta asked if the city has completed an EPA study on the project area. Ms. Folta stated if the city put tar on the road, the city is introducing oil to the wetland. Ms. Folta explained the project area is located in a flood zone. Ms. Folta explained there would not be barriers between the improvement and the wetland. If the city proceeds with the improvement, Ms. Folta would like to see the city conduct an EPA study. Ms. Folta explained people are dumping grass clippings along an old logging trail. The city should abandon the trail to eliminate people from dumping and should sign the Blanding turtle area. Ms. Folta wants other generations to see the area in its natural state.

*Howie Bahn, 4689 Joler Road.* Mr. Bahn drives on Briarwood Lane daily and is concerned for the Blanding turtles. Mr. Bahn explained methods to protect the Blanding turtle eggs. Mr. Bahn questioned the average amount of the assessments. Public Works Director/City Engineer Walter explained the street assessment is similar to the street assessment for the Woida Improvement Project. Mr. Bahn explained the longer the city waits to complete the project, the more it will cost. Mr. Bahn explained Briarwood Lane is one of a few streets in Baxter that is not paved.

*Brad Folta, 4444 Briarwood Lane.* Mr. Folta asked if the seeding would be natural grass or a higher grade. Public Works Director/ City Engineer Walter explained two to three feet on either side of the road would be seeded. Prairie seed is more expensive, but due to the small project area, prairie seed may not be cost prohibited. Mr. Folta explained he is concerned with potential run off from salt, oil, etc. Mr. Folta questioned the grade of the cul-de-sac. Public Works Director/City Engineer Walter does not think the city will encounter problems paving the cul-de-sac due to the existing base. The cul-de-sac size would not change. Mr. Folta explained his son submitted an email to the city outlining his concerns.

*Erna Folta, 4444 Briarwood Lane.* Ms. Folta explained if the water table were changed, she would need to increase the elevation of her driveway because her driveway is lower than the grade of the street. Ms. Folta explained protecting the Blanding turtle eggs from predators during the first 72 hours is critical. Ms. Folta asked if the city could stop paving at the Joler Road intersection to protect the habitat.

Vice Mayor Holman explained Joe Reed, 4548 Briarwood Lane, called and explained he is indifferent as to whether the project occurs and Greg Selisker, 4624 Briarwood Lane, called and expressed his support for the improvement project. Bradford Folta Jr, 4444 Briarwood Lane, submitted an email explaining his concerns are protecting the Blanding turtle habitat and the effect the increased salt run off would cause to the adjacent wetlands.

Public Works Director-City Engineer Walter explained the culverts were installed along Joler Road for drainage and turtle use. Public Works Director-City Engineer Walter inquired about the long terms transportation plan for the Briarwood Lane area. Joler Road is planned to connect to Mountain Ash in the future. There are concerns for emergency exits and entrances to the Briarwood Lane area with only one access.

Mr. Bahn inquired if a dust control application can still be applied to Briarwood Lane this year.

Vice Mayor Holman explained the workshop is to gather input from residents. This project came up during the City's Capital Improvements Plan discussion. The next step for the Briarwood Lane project is to hold an improvement hearing. The Council will discuss during the August 19 meeting if an improvement hearing should be scheduled. Council indicated they would like to see a cost option for prairie grass seed.

City Administrator Heitke explained the Woida project update agenda item could be skipped.

### **Fall Leaf Disposal Options**

On Monday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, Parks and Trails Supervisor Roy Rauhen and City Administrator Heitke met with Mary Corrigan, Northland Arboretum, to continue discussions regarding re-establishing their composting operations. Being familiar with the number of vehicles and amount of leaves that should be expected, Parks and Trails Supervisor Rauhen viewed the access road and proposed composting site. It was his opinion the site was of sufficient size and the access road should work with the possibility of minimal gravel being added in certain locations if they become soft from vehicle traffic. The proposed compost area will be divided into four cells, one for each year. It is assumed by the fifth year the compost in the first cell will have been removed.

The Arboretum is clearing the area, leveling the compost site, and constructing fences. It is being requested that the City of Baxter provide the equipment and operator to move on-site fill material to level any remaining low spots, if necessary.

Once the compost site is prepared and opened, the Arboretum will staff it. Deposited leaves will be piled by Arboretum staff and equipment. As in the past, Baxter equipment and operators will need to periodically move and turn the piles to expedite the composting process. The Arboretum is seeking financial support from the City in the amount currently being paid to Hengel's to help offset composting operating costs.

City Administrator identified key considerations for both the Hengel and Arboretum sites. Utilizing the Hengel's site requires only the minimal staff time required to make the arrangements. If the City chooses to not partner with the Arboretum, the depositing and composting of leaves is expected to be discontinued, eliminating the need for city equipment and staff to move and turn leaf piles as provided in the past. If the City chooses to not partner with the Arboretum, the depositing and composting of leaves is expected to be discontinued, resulting in no place to deposit leaves within the City of Baxter.

City Administrator Heitke explained the Arboretum provides a site within the City to deposit leaves and grass clippings. Site will be open spring, summer and fall, six days per week. Finished compost will be available to residents for gardening and landscaping. The City will provide financial support to the Arboretum in the amount previously paid to Hengel's. The City will need to periodically provide equipment and operators to move and turn leaf piles as it has in the past.

Council discussed if the time is right time to change back to the Arboretum. Council discussed if we are fostering a correct land use when considering the neighboring high-density residential use and if the top floors of the neighboring residential structures will be looking down on a compost site. The goal of the Arboretum site is to be opened by next fall. Council discussed if Excelsior Road's high traffic volumes would be able to handle the Arboretum's composting traffic without turn lanes. Turn lanes will be constructed with the future Excelsior Road project. Council discussed the working relationship with Hengel's has been great; Hengel's is always quick and assessable.

Public Works Director-City Engineer Walter explained the goal is to open Clearwater Road by the end of Friday. HDR will submit a draft stormwater plan to the City by Friday for council discussion on August 19. Five private connections have been completed in the Woida Improvement Project area.

### **Berrywood Park, Riverview Park Projects**

City Administrator Heitke asked if Council would like to host a formal public dedication of the parks or participate in a tour of each park after the improvements are completed. Council indicated support to host a formal public dedication for Riverview Park since it is less known by residents and provide information on improvements to Berrywood Park in the newsletter. Public Works Director-City Engineer Walter updated council on the timeline for completion of each park, including the Riverview Park boardwalk. Council discussed scheduling a public dedication for mid-September.

### **Joint Commission Meeting on Comprehensive Plan**

City Administrator Heitke explained this agenda item could be explained under his staff report during the regular meeting.

At 6:56 p.m., Vice Mayor Holman recessed the work session until the completion of the regular meeting agenda.

**MOTION** by Council Member Moser, seconded by Council Member Klein to adjourn the work session at 8:00 p.m. Motion carries unanimously.

Approved by:

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Darrel L. Olson  
Mayor

Respectfully submitted,

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Kelly Steele  
Assistant City Administrator/Clerk