



CITY OF FITCHBURG

REVISED
2:53 pm, Apr 20, 2023

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Public Works Committee was held on Tuesday, January 31, 2023, in person at the Legislative Building, 700 Main Street at 5:00 PM.

Committee Members Present: Councilors Marisa Fleming (Chair), Bernie Schultz, and Sam Squailia;
DPW Commissioner Nick Erickson;
Superintendent Gary Withington.

Committee Members Absent: Councilor Paul Beauchemin

- 1) Vote to approve minutes from previous meeting (10/25/22): Minutes were approved unanimously 3/0.
- 2) Vote to approve remaining meeting dates for 2023 as proposed at the January 31, 2023 meeting. Meeting dates with the exception of Tuesday, October 31st were approved by a vote of 3-0 in favor. A date to reschedule the October 31st to Tuesday, October 24th was proposed.
- 3) DPW Updates:

Commissioner Nicholas Erickson provided an update on the recent snow and ice events that have taken place this season. He stated that although the few recent storms were relatively small, the amount of rain we received has caused extensive damages and has made it difficult to keep up with the potholes due to the freezing and thawing that has taken place. In addition, the massive storm that hit last week downed a lot of trees throughout the City. He stated that they have two crews out almost every day filling potholes and picking up trees and that he expects this work to continue for the foreseeable future. He noted that it will take a couple more weeks before they make it through the entire City to remove trees. He explained they are moving through the City in a clockwise fashion starting with the South Street area and are currently working in the Mt. Vernon St. area. He asked residents to be patient with the cleanup in their area and urged any residents with trees still down in the areas they have finished to contact the DPW. He mentioned that it was going to get very cold at the end of week and due to the high ground water, they expect ponding and freezing in areas so they will have crews out to salt and sand.

A question was raised by Councilor Fleming regarding the current staffing levels at the DPW. Commissioner Erickson stated that for the streets division, there are a couple vacancies for working foreman that have been posted. Currently, they have several internal applicants and they are currently conducting interviews. He mentioned once these positions are filled, they will have to backfill positions that open up as a result.

- 4) NEW petitions for review:
 - a) **280-22. Councilor Bernie Schultz, to request the paving of a small stretch of sidewalk on Charles Street from the corner of Forest Street. (This sidewalk exists to the side of 44 Forest Street) Paving the sidewalk would allow a nearby resident to remove the snow from the sidewalk in the winter with a snow blower. (A photo of this location is attached.) (Referred from City Council on December 6, 2022)**

Discussion: Superintendent Withington stated that the homeowner had reached out to him regarding this issue and that he visited the property. Mr. Withington requested the homeowner contact Councilor Schultz to file this petition. Commissioner Erickson stated that a sidewalk was warranted at this location and that he and Superintendent Withington were in support of this petition.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 3-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- b) **281-22. Councilor Marisa Fleming on behalf of Ronald Varney of 45 Clinton St. to repair the damaged sidewalk in front of his home caused from the uprooted tree.** (*Referred from City Council on December 6, 2022*)

Discussion: Superintendent Withington stated that they did take a look and a new sidewalk is needed. Commissioner Erickson questioned the exact location since across from this address the homeowner had dug up the sidewalk years ago to install the wall and never put it back. Councilor Fleming clarified the area was on the corner at 45 Clinton St and not this location.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 3-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- c) **13-23. Councilors Marcus DiNatale and Andrew Couture, on behalf of Mark Balfe, to inspect and seek remedy to recurring water runoff problem occurring at 178 Stickney Road, including probable installation and/or repair of berm to the right of the driveway. Water entering property and causing significant property damage.** (*Referred from City Council on January 3, 2023*)

Discussion: Commissioner Erickson stated that he had visited the site and the owner had previously requested to redirect the curb cut and they approved a permit a few years back for this purpose. As part of the approval, he had agreed to install a berm to block off his old driveway entrance. Since then, the all the runoff we have received has eroded his driveway and it's getting to the point where it's almost unusable now. He agreed that we should install something to control the runoff better, and proposed that the owner move forward with the relocation of his driveway and the DPW would work with him and install a berm and apron to control the runoff onto his property. He also noted they would need to repair an area further down from his house that is causing the wall to fail due to the erosion taking place. He stated that he believes that we have to do something to help the homeowner since ultimately the road runoff is contributing to his issues. He mentioned this work will require cooperation with the homeowner and recommended they approve the petition as written. He stated he hopes they can work directly with the property owner to install the necessary berm and apron to control the runoff once the he is ready to get the work done.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 3-0 that the amended petition be APPROVED.

- d) **14-23. Councilors Marcus DiNatale and Andrew Couture, to install new streetlights where appropriate along McIntire Road where new home development have/are taking place up to the corner of Alpine Road.** (*Referred from City Council on January 3, 2023*)

Discussion: Mr. Peter Kettle of 44 McIntire Road spoke in opposition to the petition. Councilors noted they had not heard from any residents on McIntire Road regarding this petition and expressed concern with installing streetlights in a rural residential area. Commissioner Erickson stated that streetlights were appropriate at the intersections and currently there are lights in these locations. He noted he agreed that installing lights in a rural residential area is counterintuitive to the reason people move to these areas. He also noted that this is a scenic road and he sees this working hand-in-hand with the Scenic Road Act and lights are not something you typically see on a scenic road.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 3-0 that the petition be given LEAVE TO WITHDRAW.

5) HELD petitions for review:

- a) **089-20. Councilor Bernie Schultz and resident Alex Freeman to remove the "No Turn on Red" sign at the intersection of John T. Cetrino Memorial Drive and Water Street.** (HELD on the 10/28/20 meeting and the 1/26/21 meeting and the 7/27/21 meeting and the 10/26/21 meeting and the 3/29/22 meeting and the 4/26/22 meeting and the 5/31/22 meeting and the 7/26/22 and the 9/27/22 meeting and the 10/25/22 meeting). (Amended the spelling of Cetrino at the January 2021 meeting).

Discussion: Councilors noted they had recently received information regarding this petition and requested the petition be held until the next regular meeting to give them a chance to review the materials.

Recommendation: The committee voted 3-0 that the petition be HELD.

- b) **093-22. Councilor Sam Squailia on behalf of resident Nick Hains, to add a 4-way controlled stop at the intersection of Victoria Lane, Industrial Drive and Game-On Way. During times of heavy traffic flow in or out of the Game-On facility, residents of Victoria Lane do not have the right of way to cross, and thus must wait for long periods while the traffic lines go through. If a 4-way stop sign is not feasible, an alternate solution shall be investigated by the City.** (HELD at the 5/31/22 meeting and the 7/26/22 meeting and the 9/27/22 meeting and the 10/25/22 meeting).

Discussion: Councilors noted they had recently received information regarding this petition and requested the petition be held until the next regular meeting to give them a chance to review the materials.

Recommendation: The committee voted 3-0 that the petition be HELD.

- c) **243-22. City Councilor Bernie Schultz and Judy Perla of 236 Walton Street to install a yield sign on Pole 1615 facing out on Munroe Street at the intersection of Fairbanks and Munroe Streets to improve traffic safety when motorists depart from South Street Elementary School** (HELD at the 9/27/22 meeting and the 10/25/22 meeting).

Discussion: Councilor Schultz explained that this petition had been taken up at the Public Safety Committee meeting and Sergeant Boudreau stated that if we were going to install any sign that it should be on Fairbanks going down the hill. Commissioner Erickson noted that the School Department still has some outstanding tree removal work to do in the area and until completed they wouldn't be able to push the curb line back in this location and install a sign. He recommended the petition be held until further information had been received from the School Department.

Recommendation: The committee voted 3-0 that the petition be HELD.

- d) **244-22. City Councilor Derrick Cruz on behalf of Tyrone and Sheila Tines, residents of Clyde Street. I request that the City of Fitchburg implement either "No Parking from Here to the Corner" or "No Parking Signs" at the corner of Hancock and Summer Street, an appropriate distance on both sides. As residents exiting Hancock Street cannot see past the row of cars parked there, it has become a public safety concern for them.** (HELD at the 9/27/22 meeting and the 10/25/22 meeting).

Discussion: Councilor Squailia noted this petition was being held in Public Safety Committee so that Sergeant Boudreau could find out more information regarding the site lines of the particular distance from the intersection as there was concern with the fifty foot distance being proposed. Commissioner Erickson also noted that the fifty foot distance would require an ordinance change.

Recommendation: The committee voted 3-0 that the petition be HELD.

Councilor Sally Cragin arrived for adjournment.

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Squailia and seconded by Councilor Schultz.