

Public Works Committee Report

RE: Forest Street Neighborhood Paving Project

Date: August 9, 2022

Chair: Alderman Chris Etti

Other committee members present: DePoy, Gillam

Other Aldermen present: Davis, Doenges, Franco, & Talbott

Others present:

Mayor Allaire

Jim Rotundo, Commissioner of Public Works

Ted Gillen, Associate City Engineer

Pete Kelley, DPW Engineering Tech

Police Chief KilCullen

Gordon Dritschilo, Rutland Herald

Patricia Beauchamp

Barbara Giancola

Janet Keefe

Verna Navin

James Potter

Courtney Potter

Linda Wortman

Wayne Wortman

Lynn Markowski

Marty Markowski

Sofia Maguire

Christini Zullo

Terry Zullo

Donna Goodhale

Brad Goodhale

The meeting convened at 5:30pm to discuss the proposed Forest Street Paving Project. Commissioner Rotundo began the discussion with a presentation on the work that has been done to this point, the various considerations that needed to be taken into account with projects of this large scale, the existing road and sidewalk conditions in the neighborhood, and a series of before and after photos from recent city DPW projects that help illustrate the impact of the proposed project modifications. Commissioner Rotundo continued the presentation with the specific information about the Forest Street Neighborhood Paving Project. On Forest Street DPW was looking to create two 11-foot travel lanes, an 8-foot parking lane that would extend from River St to Pine St on the East Side, and a green belt of 3-5 ft on both sides. The only modification to this was just north of School Street where, in front of Bellomo's Market, an additional parking lane will provide a small number of necessary additional parking for their commercial business. Commissioner Rotundo concluded his presentation reminding the committee that the current plans provide the best balance of safety, complete streets and stormwater management principles. Additionally, the design helps protect the city's investment in our streets and sewer system, minimizing impacts on the budget.

Community members then expressed their interests and concerns. The Potters discussed their property near Traverse Place and how the new design would eliminate parking for them since they are North of the Pine Street intersection. Commissioner Rotundo discussed the possibility of adding a parking lane on the East side of the street in that area.

Discussion then moved to the subject of on-street parking. A number of residents in the neighborhood have been using the city right of way as parking, with some spots being paved by land owners and others

just turning into dirt and mud. Many of those present at the meeting expressed how they felt parking in those spots was much safer than entering and exiting a car parked on the street. They also expressed the issue of the November to April night parking ban and how the spots they have used for many, many years have addressed that issue. Some land owners spoke to having no parking on their property and the impact this would have on their tenants. Lynn Markowski passionately discussed her specific issue, with owning a house on the corner of Forest and Howe with not parking on her property. She was particularly concerned with the impact on the salon on in her building and with the winter parking ban. Christini Zullo expressed her interest in coming up with a compromise so that she and her neighbors would have parking available to them.

Over the next hour, community members continued to ask questions and get responses from DPW members, aldermen, the police chief, and the mayor. Some community members, like the Goodhales, spoke to their experience on recently redone streets and how it has had a positive impact on their neighborhood, and Alderman Talbott (on this 90 degree day) spoke to the climate impact by having more green space with room for trees. There was general consensus that the design was mostly positive for its overall impact and effect but that people who have become accustomed to needing the previous parking may be negatively impacted. One need that was also agreed needed further discussion on was the issue of the parking ban.

The chair summarized the concerns as a request from the community and those present to add the parking lane North of the Pine Street intersection on the East side and to look for any opportunities to create additional parking on the West side of the street, similar to the modifications for Bellomo's. It was the chair's opinion that a motion to this effect was not necessary.

Alderman DePoy moved to refer the issue of the winter parking ban to the parking committee. The motion passed 3-0, with President Doenges stepping in for quorum when Alderman Gillam departed, and I so move.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Etti, Chair