

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE BRAHAM CITY COUNCIL
WEDS, SEPT 12, 2018
6:30 P.M.

The Special Meeting was called to order with the following present: Mayor Patricia Carlson; Council Members Lowell Jaques, Jeremy Kunshier, and Vicky Ethen; and City Administrator Sally Hoy. Council Member Shawn Sullivan was absent.

City Engineer Brian Miller, Police Chief Eric Baumgart, and Street Supt. Dan Eklund were in the audience, along with many of the residents from the S. Cypress neighborhood. No one was present from the press.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PAVING ISSUES ON S. CYPRESS BETWEEN 3RD ST SE AND 4TH ST SE

City Engineer Brian Miller gave the audience the background of the 2018 Streets and Utilities Improvement Project. He explained that when they originally bid the project, it included both the utility and street work. He said only one bid came in, and it was quite a bit higher than anticipated, so the project was split into two contracts—utilities and streets. He said this resulted in a savings of \$50,000 which was a reduction to the assessed properties and the part that is covered by the general taxpayers of the City. Miller told them that in splitting the project, they were working with two different contractors' schedules. He said the utilities contractor was ready to go right away, but the paving contractor was not able to have it that early on their schedule. He said the paving contractor came in and ground up the street so the utility contractor could do all the utility work. Miller said at pre-con, the paving company said it would be at least the middle of September for paving, and more recently they said it was going to be more towards the end of September. He said this helps explain the gap between the utility work and the paving contractor coming in.

Miller continued, noting that in the design bid, the water table was lower, and the borings done by both the contractor and MSA for the water line replacement between 3rd and 4th showed the soil was dry. He reminded everyone of the amount of rain the City has received all summer long. He said that with all the rain, the water table had risen, and when wet soil is dug out, it is hard to put it back in and compact it.

He reported that when the contractor replaced the manhole at 4th St. SE, it was very wet. He said they tried to set the manhole without dewatering, and the manhole sunk, pulling the sanitary sewer line apart. He said they had to raise the manhole, set dewatering points down, and replace the sanitary sewer pipe that had come apart, all at the contractor's expense.

Miller said his concern was whether the trench between 3rd and 4th was firm enough to go ahead and pave the road and not have any substantial settlement over the next five years. He said that at the last council meeting, there was discussion on what should be done—whether to sub-cut it, pave it, and see what happens; or shape it up and leave it as is. Miller said the last time he'd

checked it, and by the descriptions from other people, it was soft enough to move when it was stepped on. He said that trying to put a layer of bituminous on that would be futile because the bituminous would fall apart very quickly.

Miller told the council and audience that he looked at the road before this meeting, and with the recent dry weather, the road is very firm. He warned that he doesn't know if its just on the top layer of clay, or whether the trench is dried out. He said there is enough hard, firm material in there now that he believes they can shape the road and get at least one layer of bituminous on that block. He noted the bituminous will help water run off the road and keep moisture from percolating in the ground. Miller said that for local residents, they will have a blacktop surface to drive on. He said what is not known for sure is how well it will hold up. He said it may crack, and crack a lot, which could result in that block being peeled back, sub-cut, and rebuilt next year. He explained that when they do the roll test, they can watch to see if the road remains firm. He said if it passes the roll test, they may put both layers on. Miller cautioned that even if its firm enough for the roll test, there still may be enough moisture in that trench that they may get some movement and cracking in that road in 3-4 years that would need to be cut out and repaired. He said this is something they will need to make a judgement call on when they are doing the work and do the roll test to see if there is any softness or concerns beneath the road.

Miller noted this is a change from what was discussed at the council meeting last Tuesday. He said from what he saw today, most of the road should survive. He said that he'd reported to the council that if they had to take the bituminous back out, the cost would be around \$7,500. He said he still won't know if that cost would be sacrificial until it's gone through the winter. He said that if the roll test is good, it would be better to put the whole road in, recognizing there may be some settlement and cracking. He said even then they'd wait for 2-3 years to let it settle, rather than repair it and have it settle even more. Miller said his recommendation to council would be that, at a minimum, they put one layer of bituminous on it, and if during observation they determine its firm enough, they go ahead and complete the road.

The council reviewed a letter from Amy Graham, living at 215 3rd St SE, where she expressed concerns about going without water for days with no notice, her new driveway and sod being dug up, the muddy condition of Cypress, and having to park her vehicle on the side of Cypress where it was broken into. Graham noted she was expecting her whole driveway to be re-blacktopped, and that waiting until next year to complete the paving of the road and her driveway was not acceptable to her.

There was substantial input from the residents present at the meeting, as well. Some living on S. Cypress, south of 4th St SE, did not want the sacrificial expense of the \$7,500 to put a layer of bituminous on the road before winter if it was only going to break up and have to be redone. Others living on the block between 3rd and 4th who were dealing with the road, yard, and driveway issues did want the layer of bituminous on the road before winter. Miller explained how the water table works with frost, and that the same type of material taken out during the project is the same type that needs to be put back into the trench for uniformity.

Comments of frustration were expressed from the audience on the drainage and water problems, how this project got dragged out over the summer, the negative impacts on the driveways and yards, and the properties being assessed. They aired frustration on how the contractor handled the temporary water service, the mess they've left behind, forcing traffic to drive in yards, the

horrible condition the 4th and Cypress intersection had been left in, the contractor's lack of response and follow through with what they told the City Engineer they would do, the timeline for the contract, the potential of ever using them as utility contractor again, restoration work, and the overall lack of communication on the project.

In responding to concerns over the high water table and poor soils in Braham, Miller gave examples of past street projects that have turned out good. He clarified the only area in question of leaving it as gravel for the winter was the section of S. Cypress between 3rd and 4th, and the intersections of 3rd and 4th. He said the rest of S. Cypress south of 4th St. SE was in very good shape and would be receiving the final lift of blacktop, as well as all of 3rd St SE and S. Eastgate. He confirmed the manhole and water lines were stable under S. Cypress and would not need to be replaced or repaired for years to come. Miller said nothing in the trench gave him concern with the water main or water services. When asked about another utility company coming in and digging in the new street, he answered that he could not guarantee that wouldn't happen. He told them State law requires the City to let them in the right-of-way. He noted there is enough ROW that in the permit process, they can be told they cannot disturb the pavement, but if the utility has to physically see the utilities beneath the blacktop, by State law, the City cannot stop them from taking the pavement out.

The timeline for completion was asked. Miller responded that according to the calendar restriction in Minnesota, bituminous cannot be laid after August 31st without the City Engineer's approval. Miller said he was pretty sure the contract deadline to lay the bituminous was mid-October.

Mayor Carlson asked if anyone else had any questions. With no responses, she asked Miller for his recommendation, Miller replied his recommendation is to prep the road, and put down at least one layer of bituminous on the section of S. Cypress between 3rd St and 4th St, including those intersections, and that if by their observation the road is firm enough, to proceed with both lifts of bituminous. He said they will only go with both lifts of bituminous if there's just a very small area of the street to be concerned with. He said he wouldn't want to put both layers down if a large area had the potential for settling.

Jaques moved, and Ethen seconded to rescind the motion from last week to let the road settle over the winter, and to accept the advice of the City Engineer regarding the paving of S. Cypress from the corner of 3rd St. SE all the way to 8th St. SE. Motion carried 4-0.

Ethen moved, and Jaques seconded to adjourn. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sally A. Hoy
City Administrator