

MINUTES OF STREETS & SIDEWALKS COMMITTEE MEETING
January 17, 2012

The Meeting of the Ravenna City Streets & Sidewalks Committee was called to order at 7:45 P.M. by Chairman, Jack Ferguson. In attendance were Sharon Spencer, Fred Berry, Frank Seman, Bruce Ribelin, Amy Michael and Fran Ricciardi. Also attending the meeting were Mayor Joseph Bica; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Service Director, Kelly Engelhart; Finance Director, Kim Cecora. Also in attendance was Donna Swigart of 528 Riddle Avenue, Ravenna.

Mr. Ferguson said the first item on the agenda is the issue of parking on the tree lawn. He would, at some time, really, really like to get this issue put to bed. They have discussed grandfathering people who have improved parking on the tree lawns. The general feeling was to grandfather those people but not to allow anything new to come along. That is going to need some kind of legislation or something stating this could be done and quiet the folks down. He knows on Elm there was an area where there were no parking signs. Those were all removed because there is no ordinance stating Elm is a no parking street. What do they need to do to grandfather these folks in and make some kind of stipulation that is it.

Mr. Berry said they will need to go out and identify all of those individuals that will be permitted.

Mr. Ferguson said that the parking enforcement officer is probably around town more than anybody else.

Mr. Finney said she was enforcing tree lawn parking and no parking signs. People were parking under the no parking signs. He would guess over the next couple of months they can look at aerial photos and start sketching out where they see dirt in the tree lawn and just say they are all approved because they are already there.

Mr. Berry asked if there wouldn't be a cost associated with that.

Mr. Finney responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Berry said it would be just as easy if he and Mr. Ferguson drove down streets and made notes of addresses.

Mayor Bica said that some of the parking that is being done in the tree lawns now revolves around rental properties where it is not appropriate. Rental properties must have a certain allocation of parking and that does not include the tree lawn.

Mr. Finney said that when it comes to rental properties, they should not allow tree lawn parking. Tree lawn parking would be an extreme case for a resident. It has turned into what somebody else believes is a hardship, therefore they should park there because they don't want to move their car.

Mr. Ricciardi said he agrees with the issue about the rentals. He thinks the landlords need to comply with the correct number of spaces.

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Mayor Bica said that it is in the Codified Ordinances. It is what it is.

Mr. Ricciardi said that the single family residents are a little bit different story. He thinks Mr. Berry had a good idea that he and Mr. Ferguson could drive around and determine who those are.

Mr. Ferguson said he and Mr. Berry will get together and try to figure out some system where they will do this.

Mayor Bica said that he thinks the committee should come up with a resolution on the rental properties. If it's a rental property, in his opinion, there is no tree lawn parking, period.

Mr. Seman asked what if there is no place else to go.

Mayor Bica said that it's in the Codified Ordinances.

Mr. Seman said they were granted by the city with variances, older properties.

Mayor Bica said that if can give them a variance, he's okay with that.

Mr. Seman asked how they think single family homes became two family? They had to get a variance.

Mayor Bica said that part of the licensing is that they have parking for each bedroom plus one for the house.

Mr. Ricciardi said then they sure gave a lot of variances because there are a lot of rentals in this community.

A discussion ensued regarding a person who has been parking on Mill Street with no parking signs up on the street, blocking traffic for cars traveling in both directions.

Mr. Seman asked if it is a rental property and the people have been using it for years and years and there is no where else to go, what are they supposed to do?

Mr. Finney said he had a landlord who is rebuilding a house right now and he wants to turn it into a rental. He told that landlord that he would need four parking spaces. His point was that he has a whole backyard he could turn into parking. He would say that an older rental unit could do the same thing. If they have a backyard then they can park back there.

Ms. Michael said they can't do that to some of these houses. They probably can't even get a car into the back of the house.

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Mr. Seman concurred noting these are very narrow lots.

Mr. Ricciardi said that the problem in this city is that they are over 50% rental properties.

Mr. Seman said that enforcing this law isn't going to change that.

Mr. Ricciardi said a lot of these landlords are from outside of this community; people from different areas and come in here because housing is cheap. They can turn them into something they weren't meant to be and reap a profit off of it. Yet, they're not complying with the code that is required. It is problematic.

Mayor Bica said that with the rental properties, not only are they breaking the rental property code, but they are also breaking the tree lawn code. There is a double issue there.

Mr. Seman said they are going to create a house that will be empty. It's going to be a blight, for sure. That's what they are going to do. Because they are not saleable. They are hardly saleable now.

Mr. Finney said there are some cases where they have the ability to widen the driveway. They just don't want to spend the money.

Mr. Ferguson said they aren't going to be able to identify all of these properties right off the bat but if they can identify those who have improved tree lawns and have been parking there for a certain period of time, they can identify those and get it taken care of. Then they can tackle the others. That would be single family homes.

Mr. Finney said the Engineering Department has a map of exactly what they are looking for. They have multi-family, single family, rentals, on the GIS map that Gary has created with an aerial photo behind it.

Mr. Ferguson said that he, Mr. Berry and if Ms. Spencer is interested can drive around the neighborhoods in the near future. That will give them a starting point at least.

Mr. Ferguson said the next item for discussion is the completion of Collins Pond Drive sidewalk. They've talked about this. There are two sections on Collins Pond Drive that has never had the sidewalks completed. One is an empty lot and the other is in front of the gas well at the cul-de-sac. He understands a letter is going out to the developer to see what can be done to take care of that.

Mayor Bica said that it won't be the first letter that's been sent to him.

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Mr. Finney said along with this conversation, there are sections on Lake Avenue to Collins Court and around the bend, there are roughly three or four lots that don't have sidewalks. There are a few in Annevar with the same problem. Carter was approached last year. They own five of the vacant lots in Annevar. They did install sidewalks on five of their lots. The remaining lots in the Annevar subdivision are privately owned by builders. One of his questions is, do they want to finish these sidewalks; first they will notify the owners that if the city has to finish them, their taxes will be assessed. Is that fair?

Mayor Bica said he thinks they should put them on notice right now and do it in the spring and assess their taxes.

Mr. Berry said he thinks it is a good idea but it will present a problem when they finally decide to finish those lots because their backhoes, bulldozers are going to tear those sidewalks right back out again.

Mr. Finney said then they will have to replace them. That was a concern for Carter. They simply stated that whatever they tear up, they will have to replace. Where the driveway is, they will have to put in six inch or run six inch sidewalk throughout. It could be 15 years before those could be built on. He doesn't think the residents should do without.

Mr. Ricciardi asked if the city has the authority to assess their taxes.

Mayor Bica responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Finney said he doesn't think they need an ordinance to do this. He just wants the committee approval. They are the people who will be getting the phone calls. If they are all on the same page, it makes things a lot easier and things run a lot smoother.

Mr. Berry said that since Carter has already done five, it certainly makes it easier for the committee to say the others have to do it as well.

Last year they discussed a bond for developers where at the end of the bond period, the developer must turn over the remaining monies or make the repairs. When Annevar was being developed, they were building 50 homes a year. They were progressing as though they would finish the subdivision and then the bottom dropped out. The bonds had expired and here we are. They can ask why the bonds expired but he doesn't have an answer for that. Why were they allowed to and not renewed? Maybe that's the legislation that is needed is that the bond shall not expire until authorized by the city.

Mr. Ricciardi asked if Mr. Finney could prepare something like that.

Mayor Bica said that if they pony up the money at the end of the bond period, the city could finish whatever needs to be finished.

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Mr. Finney said he doesn't remember what the situation was, if it went out of committee or what the situation is.

Mayor Bica said he was approached a few days ago about Collins Pond. Mr. Polichena would like to sell Collins Pond to the city.

Mr. Berry asked if he was going to take care of all of the issues associated with the pond before selling it to the city.

Mayor Bica said he did tell Mr. Polichena they were not interested in buying the property but they may consider taking it for free. That may come up later. He thinks Mr. Polichena is getting to the end of his rope and may just want to get rid of the liability.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Jack Ferguson, Chairman
Streets & Sidewalks Committee