

Norwalk Utility Advisory Commission – Regular Meeting
October 8, 2018 6:30 pm
Public Works Facility

The regular meeting of the Utility Advisory Commission was called to order at 6:30 pm on Monday, October 8, 2018 by chair Newton Standridge. Members present at roll call: Newton Standridge, Ric Graves, Amy Hock. Absent: Tim Kalvig and Dan Merriman.

Staff present: Wayne Schwartz, Public Works Director; Joseph Ballard, Assistant Director Public Works; Shelley Stravers, Public Works Administrative Coordinator.

Council Liaison Jaki Livingston was also present.

Agenda

*Motion by Graves and seconded by Hock to approve Agenda as presented.
Approved 3-0.*

Minutes

A motion was made by Merriman and seconded by Graves to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2018 regular meeting as presented. Approved 3-0.

Foundation Drain District Update

Schwartz reported that he would be giving the report for Tony Stravers. Stravers provided handout information for the Commission. The first handout provided information for District 5, which is the current district they are working on. 49% of District 5 has had their initial inspection and 11% of those homes have been found to be illegal.

The second handout showed a map of all the districts. Discussion was held regarding how quickly staff would be able to complete Districts 6-10. They feel it benefits the City to get these connections off our system. Schwartz explained that there are many factors at play, including staff and budget that we would need to look further into before knowing for certain how quickly this could be completed.

Discussion was held regarding the benefits to the City in accelerating the program and eliminating the illegal connections versus just having the illegal connections.

Further discussion was held regarding the future districts and different options the City could possibly explore in reimbursing homeowners in the program. Staff will look into some of those options and see if they are possibilities and report back to the Commission.

Consideration of Authorizing National League of Cities Service Line Program

Luke Nelson asked Stravers to look into the National League of Cities Service Line Program. This program offers three different types of coverages to residents for a monthly fee: water line, sewer line and in home plumbing. This program is run completely through HomeServe and not through the City. The City would only enter into a marketing agreement with HomeServe which would allow them to contact our residents up to six times annually regarding these programs, along with using our logo in

their marketing campaign. Residents are able to opt out of being contacted by them if they so choose. The marketing campaign does educate the residents on their service line responsibilities, which would be a benefit to residents and the City.

After receiving the original information and marketing contract, Stravers called around to many different communities that have this program to get feedback. After calling many communities and having generally good feedback, a call was made to Des Moines Water Works, who has this program. During a conversation with them, Stravers found out that DMWW has a completely different program because they went through the RFP process to have it designed the way they wanted it. One key factor was they wanted the curb stop to be included in the water line coverage. After that conversation, Stravers called HomeServe and negotiated that into the City of Norwalk's contract also, for no additional fee. This would be a great benefit to the residents of Norwalk, as curb stop repairs are something that we seem to have a lot of in Norwalk and they are very costly.

Commission asked staff to look at other programs for comparison of services and costs to make sure we would be doing our due diligence to provide a good service to the residents. Staff will report back to Commission.

Consideration of Authorizing Warren Water Buyouts

Schwartz reported that Brody's Landing is a new residential development currently in the City review process. This area is south and east of Bedwell Garden and Greenhouses. This area is in City limits but in Warren Water District territory. The City is currently working with developer to install City owned infrastructure to serve the site, but before we can serve the development we have to purchase the rights from Warren Water District. Along with this area, it makes sense geographically to buy the water rights and to serve Bedwell Gardens and 7805 G14 at the same time. Discussion was held regarding the burden that would be put on the business owner this would affect.

Motion by Graves and seconded by Hock to approve authorizing Warren Water District buyouts. Approved 3-0.

Regionalization of Water Utilities Update

Schwartz noted that a year ago a consultant was hired to evaluate whether it made sense to consolidate all the independent water producers which include Des Moines, West Des Moines, Urbandale, Grimes and Altoona. They are recommending the metro continue to move forward with a regional water authority that would be similar to the WRA. There was about \$300M in savings identified in the next 40 years for the metro. There are 14 organizations that would be involved. The organizations that are starting out with infrastructure will save more money because they will get paid for that infrastructure that they've already paid for. The value will be that each of those communities will be gaining governance. Right now we don't have any say in how DMWW or the other entities control their water production or rates. Once communities gain governance, they gain a spot at the table.

Project Updates

Schwartz updated Commission on new water line from Maffitt toward Norwalk. It has been slow going with all the rain. One thing we will all need to keep in mind next spring/summer is the delay we are having right now was unavoidable due to the rain and will cause them to be behind their original timeline if they don't have some nice weather to make up time. They have some pipe in the ground, but have not started the interstate crossing yet.

NCIS update – Lakewood Drive is completed. Staff is working right now to decide what street is next for NCIS. They are currently looking at Woodmayr Drive or Golden Valley Drive as the next area for Lakewood. Luke Nelson and Schwartz spoke with Jeff Schug at McClure to help them understand the NCIS as a whole. He explained that NCIS was to be a multi-phase study that evaluated the entire City and the only part that was completed was Phase 1, which included Lakewood. So Schwartz wants everyone to remember that when we talk about NCIS, we are talking about projects in the entire City. Right now staff is working on prioritizing projects to bring a list to council for the CIP.

Graves asked about Skylane and Meadow and the storm water issues in that area and if those would be included. He said this was included in discussions in the past. Livingston remembered the discussions and thought there was some mitigation from the farmer in the area that helped the residents.

Graves asked if there was any progress with getting a third lane on Highway 28 by Delaware Street. Schwartz answered that staff has been working on an access agreement with the DOT, but nothing regarding widening it. Staff has not heard anything from the DOT regarding adding a lane in that area.

Open Forum

Dan Rein, 1331 Greenhills Drive, spoke regarding the service line program that was discussed. As the owner of a brand new home he was not in favor of it and would find very little value in it.

Standridge called the meeting to adjournment at 7:35 pm.

Next Regular Meeting December 10, 2018.

Newton Standridge, Chair

Shelley Stravers,
Administrative Coordinator