

MINUTES OF THE STRASBURG TOWN COUNCIL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2021 AT 7 PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE STRASBURG TOWN HALL.

PRESENT: Chairperson Weaver, and Committee Members Cherrix, Nicholson, and Reynolds. Other.

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Manager Coggsdale, Director of Public Works McKinley, and Clerk of Council Keller.

Chairperson Weaver called the meeting to order.

Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items

Action Item:

- **Approval of Minutes: March 2nd, 2021 Infrastructure Committee meeting**
The minutes of the March 2nd, 2021 meeting were approved as presented.

Discussion Item(s):

1.) Road Connections During Emergencies

Chairperson Weaver said this came up due to the explosion at Valley Milk. We need to take a look at the evacuation routes in the town.

Director of Public Works McKinley showed the Comprehensive Plan from 2018, map 4-18. This map showed all the connectors in the town. Borden Mowery Drive was pointed out, as well as the connector at Crystal Hill and Madison Heights.

Chairperson Weaver said we have neighborhoods with a number of homes with one way in and one way out. There have been times he could not get out due to a fire. If there was an industrial emergency, he would like to find ways in and out.

Council Member Reynolds said this has come up with existing or new developments. She has seen lots of support from Council to fix this, where possible, and she agrees.

Vice Mayor Cherrix said he understands why we push for more than one way in and out, but the topography does not allow for this in many places. Stony Pointe is almost impossible to fix. The apartment complex is another example since it is proposed to be built on a hill. Other ways were discussed with the approval, but it will be hard to make the connectors. If you are in Madison Heights, there is more than one way in and one way out. The west side of town only has a few ways around. The Crystal Hill connector does not need to be a full-time access. The people who live in the area do not want it to be open at all times. He thinks to just open it up, or have available, as an emergency access.

Council Member Nicholson said it also depends on the nature of the emergency. It is going to be hard to fix all of this, but we can be aware.

Chairperson Weaver said he thought about Crystal Hill being for emergency situations. He went to Berryville and he went into a development and it had one main entrance, but also an emergency access.

Council Member Nicholson said there have been incidents where emergency access was limited, but if a fire truck or ambulance needs to get in, they will get in.

Chairperson Weaver asked if we have pursued FEMA grants for things such as this. He asked **Director of Public Works McKinley** if he knew of any of these and **Director of Public Works McKinley** said they only know of VDOT Cost Sharing. **Chairperson Weaver** said we cannot fix all, but we can look into this.

Director of Public Works McKinley said the base could be built out at the Crystal Hill connector. This would make it be four season which would give year-round service. The gates would need to be replaced.

Council Member Nicholson said with the development across from Food Lion and with the one behind Denny's, we worked hard to get second access. She knows many people don't want the Crystal Hill connector, but we need to talk about it.

Vice Mayor Cherrix said creating access causes more traffic than not. We need to eliminate as much traffic as we can on our smaller streets during emergencies.

Chairperson Weaver asked what staff would need from the committee to get to find out the cost options for emergency access across Crystal Lane and staff said they could do this with just the committee's instruction.

Consensus was to get the cost for emergency access at Crystal Hill.

Town Manager Coggsdale said the bollards were mentioned, this could encourage developers to allow this when the topography allows for this. They can be used for recreational uses at other times.

Vice Mayor Cherrix said this was discussed with the Summit Crossing development. It comes down to the developer and how much they are willing to spend.

Chairperson Weaver asked **P&Z Administrator Pambid** what sort of provisions exist on the number of access points that must be given. **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said you can only have 50 units per point of access; he assumes this came about with the adoption of the UDO. **Chairperson Weaver** asked if this could be waived in a development. **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said boulevard entrances might be counted as two and this would depend on the person interpreting this. Specifically talking about emergency access, this provision would not count. It is specifically for houses and not emergency access.

Council Member Hooser said he talks to people in the neighborhoods and just as many people tell him they want the connector as those who do not. At Crystal Hill, it is hard to turn left into town. We need an emergency access.

Consensus was to pass a price study onto staff for Crystal Hill.

Council Member Reynolds said the Cedar Spring Estates does have emergency access off of Powhatan Road. Also, the Summit Crossing is designed to funnel traffic across the town.

Old or unfinished business:

1.) Water Tower Project

Director of Public Works McKinley said this was to have started in the spring, but then engineers got involved. Foundation mountings had to be increased, but is though we are now close to starting this project. The monopole has not arrived yet. Verizon is waiting for the project to be completed before adding to the tower. **Vice Mayor Cherrix** has concerns about the length of time this will take with winter coming in. All service should be maintained.

2.) Streetscape Project

Director of Public Works McKinley said Phase III is basically done. He had reported we were waiting on bricks, crosswalks, and trees. The bricks are in and the crosswalks are in and the trees are still not installed due to COVID. The drainage issue near Jalisco's is ready to proceed. VDOT had a final inspection and found a couple of things.

Chairperson Weaver said the Streetscape looks good and he thanked all for tying it in with the rest of the street.

Vice Mayor Cherrix is glad it is almost finished. He is asked daily who designed the lightpoles being out in the street. These were place this way due to ADA compliance.

3.) Queen Street Sewer Project

Director of Public Works McKinley explained the I&I coming into the area. The loan was for \$520,000 and we got \$107,000 grant dollars and have \$60,000 for engineering.

Chairperson Weaver asked if there are unique challenges when dealing with this oldest section of town. **Director of Public Works McKinley** said you are fighting with the old terra cotta pipes and it is hard to investigate. There are also unidentified inlets and trying to decide if they are usable; they will be replace with PVC pipes. It is thought it would last 100 years, but it has not been tested for this.

4.) Holliday Street and Town Lot Connector

Director of Public Works McKinley said a title search was ordered on about 10 different properties. **Former Town Manager Pearson** said he was to get these and then survey.

Vice Mayor Cherrix said the piece is owned by so many different people so the problem was how to break it up. Some of the area was only used for parking for the businesses. If we do this, who is responsible for the actual maintenance. If we take it all, how will we keep people from parking? Much of this started with the giant sinkhole or pothole.

Director of Public Works McKinley showed the small part that the town actually owns.

Vice Mayor Cherrix thinks **former Town Manager Pearson** talked to most of the property owners on this.

Council Member Nicholson said the owners came to the town to mediate this.

Chairperson Weaver said he can reach out to **former Town Manager Pearson** to see what the objective was.

Council Member Nicholson said the main issues were maintenance and water runoff.

Chairperson Weaver asked what the level of responsibility is for water coming onto your own properties.

Town Manager Coggsdale said he likes to know the “why” of things. He hasn’t figured out the why on this. It is expensive and to take over the maintenance of this for six businesses and the spending of \$500,000 of tax payers dollars is hard to think about. Is the “why” because you want to make it a connector? If you make it a connector, the people who use it now might not be happy. **Council Member Nicholson** said you have both owners and renters. **Vice Mayor Cherrix** said if we take it over, you won’t have private parking places. It was left a jumbled mess. Do we really want to assume the responsibility of this?

Chairperson Weaver will call **former Town Manager Pearson** to see what the end game is on this. Connectors are nice, but expensive connectors are not.

Town Manager Coggsdale said in his opinion, you have property owners who need to have this area repaired so who is best to ask but the town because it is going to be expensive.

Council Member Hooser said asked about

Town Manager Coggsdale said you have to analyze if it is worth the cost.

Council Member Reynolds said we have had Community Block Grants to help improve facades. Is there anything like this that would help the owners? **Director of Public Works McKinley** said he is not aware of this since this is basically just routine maintenance.

Council Member Nicholson said our fire trucks and ambulances go out this way so we have a responsibility to look into this.

In other discussion, **Council Member Nicholson** asked about the new meters. **Director of Public Works McKinley** said he is just waiting for **Town Manager Coggsdale** to give him the go ahead for taking this out to procurement.

Town Manager Coggsdale said he knows there are some funds in the budget, but are there some other alternative funds that can be utilized. **Staff will get this started.**

New Business:

Council Member Hooser asked about the sidewalk connections. There are some sidewalks that just deadend. Can we look into putting in some ADA ramps?

Director of Public Works McKinley said each situation will be unique due to VDOT restrictions.

Chairperson Weaver asked for **Council Member Hooser** to compile a list of areas that need work and get to **Director of Public Works McKinley**.

Council Member Nicholson said we need to talk about a sidewalk on Route 55. If we cannot do a sidewalk, we need to improve the lighting. It is dark and you can't see people. **Town Manager Coggsdale** said we might be able to apply for the VDOT Transportation Alternative Grant.

Chairperson Weaver said the NSVRC talks about TAGS.

P&Z Administrator Pambid said he has a couple of plan reviews for this area. As an alternate route to get to the townhouses, many people are using Mineral Street. At some point, a real connection will be made to Pendleton Lane from Mineral Street. The green spine will connect from Summit Crossing to this development. He added that it is thought that the North Massanutten Corridor Study can add something that is close by, but VDOT does not like to see this. They like to see a starting and ending spot. As Mineral Street and Summit Crossing build out, there will be an access.

Vice Mayor Cherrix said they are looking at a safe crossing across Route 55.

Vice Mayor Cherrix asked about the brick wall in front of Handy Mart. **Director of Public Works McKinley** said he needs to discuss this with **Town Manager Coggsdale**. There are two ways we can handle this; we can eliminate it or rebuild it. The last person to look at this said it would have to be completely rebuilt; it could not be patched or repaired.

Town Manager Coggsdale said he has noticed this and been meaning to ask about it.

Vice Mayor Cherrix said since it has been hit so many times, he thinks it should just be taken down. **Chairperson Weaver** said he would not miss it if it was taken down.

Vice Mayor Cherrix said it would help at that corner when turning if it was gone and Handy Mart has so few parking spaces, it would help with that, too.

Town Manager Coggsdale asked what the purpose of it was and it was originally thought it would have a "Welcome to Strasburg" sign on it.

Director of Public Works McKinley said if we rebuild, we should put up bollards and that would take away from the wall. **Vice Mayor Cherrix** said those would take up more of the parking lot.

Both **Chairperson Weaver** and **Vice Mayor Cherrix** were in favor of the wall disappearing.

Being no further business, the committee meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.