

CITY OF RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN
JOINT COMMON COUNCIL AND PLAN COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
For Cascade Avenue Concept Plan

January 29, 2008

Council President Wayne Beebe called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. in the basement meeting room in the River Falls Public Library.

City Council Members Present: Alderpersons Wayne Beebe, Dave Cronk, Matt Fitzgerald, Jim Nordgren and Michael Woolsey.

City Council Members Absent: Mayor Don Richards, Tom Caflisch, Joleen Larson

Plan Commission Members Present: Sandy Bowen, Dave Cronk, Susan Reese, Ellen Smith, Reid Wronski

Plan Commission Members Absent: Tom Heimerl, Don Richards, Todd Schultz, Erin Tomlinson

Staff Present: Reid Wronski, City Engineer; Bernie Van Osdale, City Administrator; Buddy Lucero, Planning Director

Others Present: Dale Braun, Dick Trende, Michael Stifter, Glen Van Wormer, Dave Simons, community members

INTRODUCTIONS:

Council President Beebe asked Wronski to provide introductions of the Technical Committee. Wronski began by talking about the three previous meetings that have been held about Cascade Avenue Planning. He said the meetings have been well attended. Wronski introduced the members of the Technical Committee: Dale Braun, UWRF Campus Planner; Jeff Abboud, WI DOT; Buddy Lucero, City Planner; Roger Leque, Police Chief; Dick Trende, UWRF Director of Public Safety; Lanny Gleason, Public Works Superintendent; Glen Van Wormer and Dave Simons from SEH.

Wronski introduced Van Wormer who gave a presentation about Cascade Avenue. He discussed how the meetings were publicized and said the committee made a list of stakeholders. He talked about the feel of Cascade Avenue and how it was the 'front door' to the University. He shared that two large concerns were parking and pedestrians. He said in creating the design for Cascade Avenue, the committee wanted to guide pedestrians and provide safe crossings.

The concept plan is to vacate Third Street and expand the University's parking lot that is currently located on the corner of Cascade Avenue and Second Street. Parking would be eliminated from Cascade Avenue. There would be a median in the middle of Cascade Avenue with a fence running down the middle of the median preventing pedestrians from crossing at any place. There would be three roundabouts on Cascade Avenue: one located at Second Street, one at Sixth Street and one at Wasson Lane. The roundabouts provide a steady traffic flow at slower speeds.

Van Wormer said the reaction has been very positive and there are a lot of funding opportunities. His suggestion is to continue the cooperative effort between DOT, the City and UWRF.

Wronski discussed the preliminary costs of the project and the funding sources. He noted that this project would likely be done in two phases with the first phase beginning in four to five years. Wronski read two letters of support for the project – one from Chancellor Don Betz from UWRF and the other from Tom Beekman from WI DOT. Wronski also discussed traffic on Hwy. 29 and Cemetery Road.

Wronski turned the meeting back over to Beebe who asked for public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Bill Allen, 615 Oak Knoll, shared his concern about property values with the possible closing of Oak Knoll and losing Oak Knoll as an address.

Fred Marnach, 1095 Cascade Avenue, thought the plan looked good but had some concerns about losing land to the roundabout and a change to the location of his driveway.

Beebe noted that with no further public comments, he would open it up for discussion for the Council and Plan Commission members.

Nordgren asked about access for properties on Cascade. Van Wormer said he did not show every driveway on the map.

Wronski said the City would work with property owners on the right of ways.

Woolsey asked about residents on Oak Knoll. Wronski said many of the residents wanted a disconnect from the university and its traffic and student parking. He said the plan was a starting point. He said there has been a lot of input from residents from the previous meetings.

Fitzgerald asked about parking on 6th Street. Wronski said the university would be regulating the parking as the demand comes from the university.

Woolsey asked about the commitment of money from WI DOT. Wronski said this plan sets a vision but if the Council approves the plan, he will sit down with the DOT and negotiate the terms of moving the highway designation from Cascade Avenue to Cemetery Road.

Woolsey asked if it was a long-range plan and Wronski said this was a 50-year plan. Van Wormer said that a well-documented plan is needed to give to the DOT.

Smith, representative from the Plan Commission, recommended that the City Council approve the concept plan.

Beebe asked for other input from the Plan Commission. Bowen asked about the City paying for and redoing Cemetery Road. She asked if DOT moved Hwy. 29 to Cemetery Road, would that put the City in a better bargaining position? Wronski said the DOT needs a connecting road and financial arrangements would be worked out.

MS Cronk/Nordgren move to approve resolution approving the Cascade Avenue Concept Plan. A roll call vote was unanimous approving the resolution.

Beebe thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

MSC Nordgren/Woolsey move to adjourn meeting at 7:57 p.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk