

CITIZENS' ROAD COMMITTEE
AUGUST 27, 2018

“CALL TO ORDER” The August 27, 2018, meeting of the Citizens' Road Committee was called to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Olney City Hall, 300 S. Whittle Avenue, Olney, Illinois.

“ROLL CALL” The following committee members were present: City Treasurer Jane Guinn, Councilman John McLaughlin, City Manager Allen Barker, Bob Guinn, Bryce Fehrenbacher, City Engineer Roger Charleston, and Councilman Les Harrison. Also present was City Clerk Kelsie Sterchi.

“GENERAL DISCUSSION” Councilman McLaughlin began by stating that the group had not met in about six months because the road study was still in progress.

Mr. Charleston confirmed. Charleston Engineering currently had all City roads measured. Samples were being taken, and surface and base materials were being documented. From there, roads would be rates from 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent.

Mr. Barker asked if any coring had been done. Mr. Charleston indicated that no coring work had yet been completed. Because coring tending to leave soft spots in the roads, he wanted to be conservative with that kind of work. Any coring work would be done using City equipment.

The data from the road study would be compiled onto a spreadsheet for easy review, and color coded maps would also be created. Councilman McLaughlin requested that a legend be added so that the layperson could understand the information.

Roads described as High Functional Class would be of higher priority. Examples of such streets would be Butler, East, and Silver. Mr. Charleston added that STU funds were only allowed to be utilized on such roads. Mr. Barker recalled that the City had borrowed ahead on STU funds for the Whittle Avenue project.

Mr. Fehrenbacher asked how far under the oil and chips roads it was before hitting the mushy, wet, clay base. Mr. Charleston replied that it could vary, but typically about five inches.

Once all data had been collected, Mr. Charleston would put together cost estimates for converting oil and chip streets to concrete or asphalt. There may also be instances where soil cement would be suggested.

Flora, Illinois' roads were then briefly discussed. All of their roads were asphalted approximately 20 years ago by a large bond issue. When the roads are re-sealed, an additional life of 10 years would be added.

Mr. Fehrenbacher asked how crucial it would be for curb and gutter to be added. Mr. Charleston replied that about 90% of Flora's streets were without curb and gutter. In Olney's older neighborhoods, it would be at a large cost to add curb and gutter. He advised that many of the lower volume roads certainly would not need curb and gutter.

Mr. Guinn asked when the road study would be complete. Mr. Charleston expected that he would have the study completed by early October.

Mr. Harrison commented that some of the City's asphalt roads seemed to be in fairly good shape. He wondered if there was a process to better seal them to hold a longer life. Mr. Charleston confirmed there was a process, if money allowed. The committee members commented that they had never seen any sealing work take place in Olney.

The committee mentioned a few of the City's streets and asked for Mr. Charleston's recommendations. Such recommendations should be included within the study.

Mr. Fehrenbacher wanted to know if Mr. Charleston could provide any cost estimates before October. He wanted to have a referendum placed on the upcoming election ballot. Councilman McLaughlin did not believe that the time frame for referendum on the 2019 ballot was feasible due to the time needed to complete the study, the time needed to discuss with the committee, and the time needed to discuss with the City Council.

Once the study is complete, Mr. Guinn wondered if there would be any future purpose for the committee to continue. He pointed out that the reasons for having the committee formed had been completed. He felt that the rest of the discussion and actions should be taken by the Council. Councilman McLaughlin felt that the committee could also make recommendations for funding.

Because the Richland County School District had recently placed and succeeded with a sales tax referendum, Councilman McLaughlin did not feel that now was the right time to propose any tax increase for this purpose. Mr. Guinn agreed. It was then discussed that dependent on Mr. Charleston's cost estimates, perhaps a bond issue could be an option.

Mr. Fehrenbacher strongly felt that a tax referendum should be placed on the 2019 ballot. If the time frame he was working on was incorrect and could allow for two more months, he wondered if the extra time frame would make the placement more feasible.

Mr. Charleston then pointed out the possibility of ADA compliance that could factor in cost estimates.

Mr. Barker exited the meeting at 5:32 p.m.

Mr. Fehrenbacher had independently conducted a Facebook poll regarding public opinion on the condition of City streets and funding options for change. Mr. Fehrenbacher did not think

that a positive turnout for a referendum was out of the question. He stated that even if the referendum failed, the City would not lose anything and would still be in its same position.

Mr. Fehrenbacher indicated that 35% of pollers were in favor of a tax increase that would sunset, and 20% were in favor of a permanent tax increase.

While not popular, Mr. Charleston offered that special assessments could also be explored. If everyone along a certain roadway wanted the road repaired, an assessment officer could find out the cost of repair and dictate how much each of those specific people would need to pay.

Mr. Fehrenbacher pointed out that the current Council would have two tools that no other Council has had before: cost estimates and the Facebook poll. Mr. Fehrenbacher would hate to miss out on the opportunity for success from the referendum without at least trying.

Councilman McLaughlin understood Mr. Fehrenbacher's point of view, and added that he would have also been in favor of a referendum until the school district did it first. If a referendum was placed, he would only be in favor of it if it included a sunset clause.

Councilman Harrison was in favor of placing a referendum on the 2019 ballot.

Mr. Guinn expressed concern about future maintenance after any possible improvements. Councilman McLaughlin felt that about \$125,000.00 could be spent per year on maintenance, and that maintenance costs should be lower after improvements.

Councilman McLaughlin strongly advised that if the committee was going to recommend a referendum, then it needs to be done correctly. If the process was rushed, it would certainly not pass.

Mr. Fehrenbacher had concerns with bond issue. He did not want the City to be in debt if they could instead have a cash flow.

The committee agreed to wait until cost estimates came in before moving forward.

“PUBLIC COMMENTS/PRESENTATIONS” No one from the public was present.

“ADJOURN” The meeting adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Kelsie J. Sterchi
City Clerk