

Council looks at improvements to city streets and aging water infrastructure

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 26 May 2011 19:56 -

The Gothenburg City Council looked at some costly cures for city streets and water infrastructure but took no action.

At their May 17 meeting, members discussed a priority item on the city's one-year road plan.

The item is the paving of Lake Avenue from Fourth Street to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

Officials directed the city engineer—Miller & Associates Consulting Engineers—to come up with different ideas of how to tackle the improvement which ranged in estimated price from \$193,703 to \$414,800.

Engineer Travis Mason described milling the section of street, applying new asphalt and patching what is necessary as the least expensive at \$414,800 but said it was a “Band-aid” approach.

A second alternative involves the removal of and reconstruction of pavement and curb and the installation of new water lines and services for about \$368,164.

The final plan, estimated at \$414,800, is about the same as the second alternative with more pavement.

Mason said the more expensive plans would allow crews to fix water problems in the area while the street was under construction.

Although \$400,000 hasn't been budgeted for streets, city administrator Bruce Clymer said officials could figure out how to bond the project to pay for it.

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He added that it's a good time to borrow money.

When asked about life expectancy of the least expensive plan, that doesn't involve new water lines, Mason said maybe 10 to 12 years

Council president Jeff Kennedy said members have talked for years about the need for street and water improvements.

"I feel the need to start going forward and chopping off pieces," Kennedy said.

Member Jeff Whiting wondered if the projects could be budgeted without bonding.

Clymer said that unforeseen projects, like an abundance of leaking water valves this year, come along each year that need to be fixed.

Gary Fritch, council member, said members needed to look at fixing the street and water lines at the same time.

Clymer said the city could apply for a Community Development Block Grant, like it received for street improvements a couple of years ago, but probably wouldn't rate high enough to receive one.

The council decided to think about the improvements and put them back on the agenda at some point.

"Maybe they would be a good item for our budget discussion," Clymer said.

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Members also reviewed a booklet, prepared by Miller & Associates, that lists 13 proposed water main improvement projects throughout the city.

The booklet, which includes estimated cost and maps, is available for viewing at city hall.

City services director Shane Gruber said larger water lines to handle more volumes of water and new wells, especially with increasing levels of arsenic and uranium, are needed

A couple of water main proposals will be also be considered during budget planning.

ebarrett@gothenburgtimes.com

308-537-3636