

Property owners speak about paving costs

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Saturday, 16 January 2010 17:06 -

No complaints about overall project.

Three property owners addressed the council during the public hearing Jan 5 about paving assessments.

Tim Jordison, who lives at 2221 Ave. G, thanked the city for doing a good job.

However he said some of the landscaping was of poor quality, noting that leveling was shoddy in places and a metal bar was sticking out of the ground near his home.

Jordison also complained of a rusty pipe left by the gas company which company officials haven't taken care of.

"I'd like that followed up on," he said.

The homeowner also wondered if the city would plant trees, removed during street improvements, that he bought to replace the ones lost.

Travis Mason of Miller & Associates Consulting Engineers—the company that designed and oversaw construction—said there's a one-year warranty on the project.

"Any issues that come up during the period, they have to come back and fix," Mason said, suggesting that Jordison and others tell city officials. "We'll try to rectify it the best way we can."

Mark Peyton, 2118 Ave. H, said he had no complaints about the finished project but told the council that some property owners had no say in the project.

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Paving of 22nd, 23rd Sts., Avenue I and Fifth Street was initiated by property homeowners who petitioned the council and street improvement districts were formed.

Later, the council passed a gap paving ordinance that affected Peyton and others who had land abutting the streets in the improvement district.

City law allows the council to authorize the paving of up to two blocks of street without permission from affected land owners.

At that time, Peyton asked the city to share in the cost of paving.

Peyton, at the Jan. 5 meeting, asked the council to change the gap paving ordinance.

“Originally the tax was set up because people asked for streets to be paid,” he said. “We didn’t.”

Council member Jim Aden asked Peyton how changing the law could be explained to property owners who have been charged and paid assessments through the years.

Peyton said the law was wrong in the past and will be wrong in the future.

Aden agreed that paving assessments are costly but said he feels people choose to live in Gothenburg knowing there’s a good chance unpaved streets will be paved.

Jordison then asked what happens to the lien if a property owner paying for assessments sells the property.

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City administrator Bruce Clymer said assessments must be paid before the sale or reassigned to new owners.

Dick Schwanz, 705 22nd St., asked about grant money available to qualified-income residents.

Clymer said Schwanz and anyone else with questions about the Community Development Block Grant the city received to help eligible homeowners pay assessments should notify Jen Wolf at the Dawson Area Development office.

City officials said they are unsure if unused grant funds—if there are any—could be appropriated to non-qualifying homeowners.

“Rather than go back to Lincoln, I’d like to see it used here,” Clymer said.

Mayor Joyce Hudson said they intend to use the entire grant.

Schwanz added that the paved street in front of his home is a 100% improvement.

When the council set the yearly interest rate at 5.5%, Jordison thanked them.

“That speaks volumes about your sense of compassion,” he said.

When setting the rate, Clymer said downtown business owners who are still paying for sidewalk improvements are charged 6%.

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With the most recent assessments, he estimated bond costs to be about 4.5% with an additional 1.5% to cover administrative costs.

“Before that, it was 7% on most everything,” he said, adding that he recommended 6%.

Aden suggested 5.25% or just enough for the city to cover approximate costs.

“I’d like to help out as much as we can,” he said.

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