

# MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Meeting held: Wednesday, August 5, 2015  
Leawood City Hall- Main Conference Room, 7:30 AM

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carrie Rezac, CHAIR and Councilmember Ward 3  
James Azeltine, Councilmember Ward 4  
Jim Rawlings, Councilmember Ward 2  
Adam Abrams  
Ken Conrad  
Jon Grams  
Abbas Haideri  
Todd Alan Harris  
Chris White

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Andrew Osman, Councilmember Ward 1  
Marsha Monica

## GUESTS (listed by order of sign in sheet):

Meg Blinzler, Girl Scout- Troop 1905, 9908 Catalina, Overland Park, KS 66207  
Jane Swanberg, Girl Scout-Troop 1905, 10309 Wenonga Lane, Leawood, KS 66206  
Lily Wagner, Girl Scout-Troop 1905, 9737 High Drive, Leawood, KS 66206  
Jessica Pierce, Girl Scout-Troop 1905, 5801 W 100<sup>th</sup> Street, Overland Park, KS 66207  
Teddi Pendland, Principal, Brookwood Elementary School, 3411 W 103<sup>rd</sup> Street, Leawood, KS 66206  
Jill Swanberg, Girl Scout Troop 1905 Leader, 10309 Wenonga Lane, Leawood, KS 66206  
Susan Wagner, Troop 1905 Co-Leader, 9737 High Drive, Leawood, KS 66206  
Ellen Sweeney, Property Owner, 10123 Pawnee Lane, Leawood, KS 66206

STAFF PRESENT: Joe Johnson, David Ley, Julie Stasi

Chair Rezac Chair Rezac called the meeting to order at 7:40 AM. Introductions were made of Committee Members, staff and guests in attendance. Chair Rezac moved the item from the Girl Scouts under NEW BUSINESS to the first item of the meeting discussion. Chair Rezac asked Joe Johnson, Director of Public Works to give an overview of the Scout Project.

## **FIRST ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

Review Project Request from Girl Scouts-Sidewalk near Brookwood Elementary School

Joe Johnson-Gave an overview as he had met with the Scout group previously. Joe advised the Scouts had met with himself and the Mayor and that they are working on a Silver project; addressing a concern in the community. Looking at the Sidewalk on the north side of 103<sup>rd</sup> the scouts are concerned with the pile up of snow/ice on the sidewalk in the winter months-hoping to get the snow removed in a more timely fashion. Information in the Committee's packet today included the City Ordinance relating to how quickly the snow removal is to occur by property owners. For those that do not know, the removal of snow from a sidewalk is the responsibility of the property owner. Everyone has 48 hours to clear the snow off the sidewalk at the end of the snow event. If not, the City does not actively go out and issue tickets; but if we get calls then the Code Enforcement Department will go out and issue a courtesy notice first, then if in a given time the snow is not removed, a citation is written. The scouts are trying to find a resolution to get the snow off the sidewalk quicker after a snow event.

Jill Swanberg-A little background on what the girls are doing. The girls are going to be freshman this year at Shawnee Mission South and are working on their Silver Award Project. The Silver Award Project is a project the community that the girls identified as a sustainable project to make a change. Girl Scouts have identified this project with a safety issue for children who are walking to school from the north side of 103<sup>rd</sup> Street. This is a very popular area; particularly students and their parents who live too far away to walk to school but the children and the parents still desire some physical activity to get to school in the morning. They park along the two streets; come down the street-go to the sidewalk and in the middle of the sidewalk there is a crosswalk. The

crosswalk takes them across the street to the school. As you will see in the presentation, it will demonstrate the area we are speaking of. The girls started on this project earlier this year and we met with the Principal of Brookwood mainly to get her support and the dynamic that we are dealing with at the school.

The school has one custodian. That one custodian is responsible for removing all the snow on the District's property. When time allows and if the snowfall is not too overwhelming, then the custodian can shovel the sidewalk across the street. However when the snowfall is heavier and more equipment is required, because of the width of the sidewalk, the district equipment does not fit down the sidewalk. With one person and the districts limit of time, their priority is to get their property taken care of for the safety of the students.

Troop Leader Swanberg advised the scouts have met with Principal Pendland and received her support, they have met with Mayor Dunn in May and with the Director of Public Works, and now the project is assigned to this Committee. The scouts have also spoken to Ellen Sweeney, the home owner. Everyone's participation and comments are welcome regarding the project after the girls make their presentation.

*Scout Presentation:*

Individual Scouts presented different points of the project/situation.

- Plowed snow can get up to 3 to 4 feet high; piling up on the walk forming a wall. The wall of snow can then freeze making it difficult for small children to maneuver.
- There is no green space by the sidewalk area. All other schools have green space in front of their sidewalk, where their snow can be piled (which is much safer) than what Brookwood has.
- Brookwood School does not have the equipment needed to shovel the snow on the sidewalk. The equipment the school has does not fit in the space.
- Brookwood School only has one (1) custodian in the morning to shovel snow.
- The sidewalk in question is not on Brookwood School's property, so it is not the responsibility of the school to shovel it.
- Is the City of Leawood able to help them resolve this safety issue?
- The solution to this problem is to clear heavy snow from the sidewalk so the walk is safely accessible.
- There is not a heavy snow each year, so the service will not be a yearly necessity.
- Is there a different type of smaller snow plow specifically designed for leaving a clear path on sidewalks or corners? If so, can this plow be used on 103<sup>rd</sup> Street to avoid extra snow pile up?
- The City Ordinance says that snow must be removed from sidewalks within 48 hours of the end of snowfall. This Ordinance does not work for us because the snow needs to be removed before students start arriving for school. Many times that is before the end of the 48 hour limit. Caregivers and students walk on the sidewalk. If the end of the snowfall was within a certain amount of time before school starts, the walk may not get shoveled; which means pedestrians have to walk on the dangerous sidewalk.

School Principal Teddi Pendland Thanked everyone for coming together at the table. One of the big things in Shawnee Mission is all means all. Not sure if they are aware of this-three (3) of the girls in this troop were Brookwood Students, but we have one (1) from another school that came today and it is appreciated that she took this on when she didn't have a vested interest other than attending a school in USD 512. We only have two public elementary schools in Leawood, so the fact that we get to be here today and help us be problem solvers; it is really appreciated. You are part of "all means all" when it comes to being a part of the school district and the City of Leawood.

Principal Pendland said this is her ninth year as Principal and the job of custodian continues to become bigger and bigger. Safety is the number one priority. Students can't learn if they don't feel safe. When we are talking about safety, this is huge on our list. In her nine years she has had three head custodians. She is getting ready to hire the fourth and thinks it is becoming a really big job for the custodians. Part of that is (if you remember two to three years ago) we had snow after snow pile and it was daunting to keep our sidewalks at Brookwood clear and then to get complaints from parents that the street across is not clear. We have another strip that is not actually our land that is a shortcut sidewalk on the east side of the school. This other one goes over to Wenonga Lane on the south side of 103<sup>rd</sup>. The school also tries to keep that taken care of not only with snow removal but with ice melt as well. The school asks that we all put our heads together and hopefully come up with a solution that helps all of our resources.

Property Owner Ellen Sweeney Advised she came mostly to listen. Knows this has been a problem. The Sweeney's have had three children that went to Brookwood and they have lived in their house for 23 years.

They feel like they are definitely a neighbor with Brookwood. They are sort of a launching pad for Brookwood because half of their yard goes from Wenonga over to Pawnee Lane. People part up and down the street there all the time and we have rescued a lot of Brookwood kids from various situations. They have had kids left on their lawn, and clothes and books and all kinds of stuff. My kids probably left half of them too, so we want to be a good neighbor with Brookwood. We value the school and for the most part we love to see the kids come and go. Mrs. Sweeney thinks the plowing is a huge problem since they put the barrier wall up. When her kids went to Brookwood, there was no barrier along the sidewalk. Kids used to ride their bikes along there and fall off the curbs and it looked bad thinking some kid might fall into the street with their bike. Now the wall is up it created another problem. Agrees, the snow removal is very hard. We have gone down and tried to shovel it up and can't get it up over the retaining wall. And they can't get it up over the barrier wall. Part of it is that the snow gets trampled on really early if there is school that day. Is not sure she had any great ideas but is certainly willing to try to do their part.

Mrs. Sweeney said there was an advantage to children using the catwalks on the south side of 103<sup>rd</sup> street and that those if left open would be a safer route for walking children in the heavier snow falls. There are less cars there than on 103<sup>rd</sup> Street. It's too bad the City or the School or whoever couldn't take eight feet of their property and move the sidewalk and make a greenspace. I'd be happy to donate the eight feet if that is what you want. But there is a retaining wall, there's trees, a wrought iron fence. (one idea). Another idea would be to train parents to let their kids off on one of the other catwalks that can be cleared more easily than the bigger piles at the intersections and corners. Other than that, she is here to listen. She herself had been a girl scout and she commends these girls for their tenaciousness. Sometimes you have to come in a back door to a problem and maybe the catwalk is the back door to this one. Thank you.

#### QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Chair Rezac thanked everyone for the presentation and comments; opening it up for the Committee for Questions and Comments. Chair Rezac did have a comment and question herself. Drove by the area a week or so ago and the initial thought was it seems like the segment between Pawnee and Wenonga is the issue. Can it be eliminated by having them cross at the intersection? Currently the crosswalk is in the middle of the walk and if they could cross at the street, you could take the person at the crosswalk every day and for the snow mornings, have a crosswalk done at the intersection. To avoid that strip all together until someone at a later time could get to it.

Troop Leader Swanberg said that was discussed with the Mayor as well. Wenonga and Pawnee are the entrance and the exit to the driveway to Brookwood. Having kids cross there would probably be more dangerous because the parents that are driving are entering Brookwood's driveway directly across from Pawnee and then they are exiting on Wenonga. All that traffic would be right there where the kids are trying to cross. Currently they are crossing in the middle of the street. Other areas have cars backing up with loading as well, plus the unhappy commuters that speed up to go around.

Jon Grams-Mentioned that the snow that ices up and gets trampled on can be there for weeks; even after other snow has melted. If the walk is not immediately cleared that ice can be a major concern for quite a while.

Principal Pendland-Advised there are around 150 people that use that area. It may be hard to train that many people to not use the area in a large snow. Adding that the stretch of sidewalk is not the only stretch that is not shoveled. The walk all the way down 103<sup>rd</sup> many times is not clear.

Joe Johnson, Director of Public Works advised the Public Works and Parks Department responsibilities in regards to snow removal of City streets, City facility sidewalks, and City Park Trails. When plowing, you can't pull up and push the snow to fit. You have to pull out and then back and we end up with triangular pieces where it all gets pushed up to the intersections. The trucks do not turn quick enough to get the turn plowed. In a normal snow it is not too bad. But with large snows we spend several days going around and clearing back our intersections. This is a long tedious process.

Ken Conrad-asked about the snow plowing and the wall and looking at the location of the other walks. Certainly cultural change also might be part of the issue besides the physical limitations; when there is a heavy snowfall.

#### **ACTION: NO OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMITTEE.**

Suggestions given for all parties.

**To the Scouts:**

The Girl Scouts were commended for bringing their project/concern to everyone's attention. This is a learning experience for the Scouts in understanding what everybody's role is and what they can and cannot do. The City and School District are only allowed to provide snow removal in certain areas and with a limited amount of funds. There may be other solutions within their own organization or school volunteer groups. The scouts were commended for bringing together the School District, the City, and most likely other people after this meeting. The Scouts accomplished something in getting the ball rolling and having the issue brought to everyone's attention.

**To the School:**

Educate/train the parents that if there is a high volume of snow, do not drop the children off in this area. Review the parking lot and the facility scheme for heavy snows days on where drop-offs occur. Possible PTA or volunteer groups to help and/or the PTA to come up with an alternate snow plan. Ask for additional/temporary assistance for school custodians with either more help or new equipment by School District during these times.

**To the Private Property Owner:**

By City Ordinance, it is the duty of the property owner and/or occupant of any lot(s) abutting upon any sidewalks to clear all snow and ice within 48-hours of a snow event ending. Information to the property owner on what is required and a continued relationship with the school is helpful in meeting City Ordinances and in understanding everyone's needs. Code Enforcement may also need to be sending courtesy notices/reminders and subsequent citations in regards to clearing the walk.

**To the City:**

No change with the current City Policy on Snow Removal. However, the Director of Public Works advised after the City Crews had met the Snow Removal Policy Requirements (Policy & Maps currently posted on the City's Web Site) and after all the streets were cleared and City responsibilities met, the crews could go back and check the corners of intersections/walking areas near elementary schools (similar to our "Hot Spots") and try to clear out any of the triangular mounds of snow left in the intersections by the plow. The response time of this would depend on the volume of the snowfall.

Possibly look to the Police Department in securing an extra School Crossing Guard on 103<sup>rd</sup> & Wenonga during heavy snow times to assist with drop-off children crossing. One (1) crossing guard is currently provided; heavy snow storms may call for two (2) guards for pedestrian/crosswalk safety.

**SECOND ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

Review/approve the previous meeting Minutes.

Jon Grams Motioned to approve the Minutes of July 1, 2015. Ken Conrad seconded the Motion to approve Minutes as written. All attending members were in favor. Motion Passed.

**THIRD ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

Re-visit Hallbrook Farms request for assistance with street light upgrades.

Chris White recommended the Staff look at the savings projected and see if costs are verified up to 70%. No up-front payment by the City and modify the Policy as discussed by the Committee.

Ken Conrad seconded the Motion. All present members were in favor. Motion passed.

Chair Rezac moved the **Fourth Item of Business** (Review standing water in curb at 2233 Condolea Terrace) to the next meeting as we were out of time to maintain a quorum.

Chair Rezac adjourned the meeting at 9:16 AM.

Minutes reported by: Julie Stasi, Leawood Public Works Department