

MINUTES
REEDLEY STREETScape MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
January 9, 2001

The agenda for the Streetscape Maintenance Committee Meeting of January 9, 2001, was duly posted in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

A regular meeting of the Streetscape Maintenance Committee was held on January 9, 2001, in the Reedley City Hall Conference Room. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

Members Present: Richard Bedoian, Jan Minami and Dale Melville.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Mike Olmos, Assistant City Manager; Jeff Viau, Public Works Superintendent; and Kay Pierce, Administrative Assistant.

Others Present: Steve Loeffler of Loeffler Landscape Maintenance.

Dale Melville moved, Jan Minami seconded, to approve the minutes from December 12, 2000. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORT ON MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY

A. Steve Loeffler reported that the water schedule is the same as last month. His crew is still cleaning out the centers of the Magnolias and will begin on the Crepe Myrtles; not doing any topping, just cleaning out centers.

B. A Crepe Myrtle on the corner of 12th and “G” in front of Reedley Flower Shop was destroyed by a vehicle jumping the curb. No witnesses to this accident. The Committee directed Steve Loeffler to replace this Crepe Myrtle with a Hackberry tree.

C. Steve stated that he spoke with Jeff Viau regarding the time frame for removal of the five magnolias on “G” Street between 9th and 10th. Jeff stated that as soon as his crew is finished at the airport, he will schedule the tree removal so that Steve Loeffler can plant the new Hackberry trees.

OLD BUSINESS

A. The Committee does have some concerns regarding the accounts receivable for the Streetscape account. Several businesses have closed in the last several months leaving a reduction in the monies received for the Streetscape District. The expenditure sheet for the Streetscape account shows that 48% of the budgeted funds have been expended through December, 2000. This shows the account running slightly under what was originally projected, but enough to cover expenses through the fiscal year, with no extra funds for tree replacement over and above the five trees discussed for replacement

on "G" Street between 9th and 10th. This shows that the Streetscape fund is just barely keeping up with expenses. No additional funds will be available for improvements such as additional decorative pots and flowers. Some of the streetscape funding has been absorbed by the Public Works Division.

B. Dale Melville submitted three drawings which have already been presented to the Reedley Downtown Association. The RDA selected the drawing that eliminates only two parking spaces per block. Decorative pots could be placed on each side of the crosswalk and Loeffler Landscape could be requested to use the blower to blow out the debris from the curb for the streetsweeper. RDA did not make a decision on whether to install the mid-block crosswalks all at the same time, or do one at a time.

Dale Melville stated that the angle of the parking stalls has been changed over the years, and this should be verified to make sure that the present angle is correct before the crosswalks are permanently installed. It was reported that an RDA member stated that with a slight change in the angle of the parking stalls, additional stalls could be added. Jeff Viau stated that a previous City Engineer changed the angle for the parking stalls, which added approximately 60 parking spaces, but the general public did not like the steep angle and the close proximity of one vehicle to another, and it was changed back to the 33 degree angle. Richard Bedoian added that it also takes a vote of the citizens of Reedley to change the angle of the parking stalls. Jan Minami asked if there isn't a happy medium to change the angle and add additional parking stalls?

Mike Olmos explained to the Committee that this restriping of parking stalls happened when "G" Street needed work because of all the raised humps that used to be on "G" Street. The Public Works crews shaved the humps down and then had "G" Street slurry sealed. The parking stalls needed restriping after this slurry seal. The Engineering staff drew up the plan for restriping using Caltrans standards which incorporated a 45-degree angle and that's the way the plans were advertised. The contractor awarded the bid striped the stalls at this angle. It wasn't long after the restriping of the stalls that folks complained about the angle, even though 60 additional parking stalls resulted from the restriping. However, the angle was returned to the 33-degree angle and the resulting 60 parking stalls were lost. With the 33-degree angle, vehicle doors could be opened and the vehicle next door was so far ahead that the door would not touch the adjoining vehicle, plus trucks stuck out too far and narrowed the street. Many of the parking spaces are taken up by employees of the businesses downtown and these employees should be asked to park in the parking lots between "G" and "H" Streets.

It was decided unanimously by the Committee that the mid-block crossing where only two parking stalls were lost was the best design. Staff might be able to find a grant to help with the expenses of all crosswalks installed as well as additional decorative pots to be placed on either side of the street.

Mike Olmos asked if there was any feedback from the business who will have the crosswalks in front of their stores? Dale Melville stated that between 10th and 11th Streets, the crosswalk will be in front of Pam Melville's store and Pam Melville spoke with the owner of The Pub and Rico's Barber shop, who were both fine with it, but did not yet speak with Sylvia Hassett of Gourmet Garden. A decision hasn't been made between 11th and 12th.

Dale Melville asked how to pursue this project. Jan Minami stated that it has the Downtown support, but the project needs better drawings and funding. Staff will obtain a cost estimate and look into better drawings.

C. The Committee unanimously agreed that the monthly Streetscape fee has not been increased since the inception of the District. Dale Melville stated that 15 years is a long time for the rates to remain the same considering the cost of living increases over the years. Jan Minami added that a five to ten percent increase in the monthly fee is not unreasonable. Dale Melville stated that the Committee should consider including the next five years in relation to a monthly increase. It would not be unreasonable to expect an increase in the monthly service from Loeffler Landscape in the future since his fees have not increased in several years. Mike Olmos added that fee increases are usually tied into the Consumer Price Index. Jan Minami asked if there is anyway the City uses to projecting five years into the future as a basis for raising rates or fees? Mike Olmos replied that there really isn't any way because it is all based on inflation. Jan Minami added that the Committee needs to project beyond just next year's budget if there is going to be a fee increase. Dale Melville added that an increase of twenty percent over the next five years does not sound unreasonable.

Richard Bedoian asked if there is anything stated in the bylaws restricting the current Committee Members from increasing the rates? Mike Olmos replied that he would have to research this request, but that it would most likely be a recommendation from the Streetscape Committee to the City Council asking for a rate increase. However, when the City Attorney was contacted, staff asked how a rate increase could be done with this type of District. The City Attorney checked State law which stated a vote by the business owners was not required. Mike Olmos will do more research on this matter and report back to the Committee.

Mike Olmos obtained a copy of the most recent Ordinance No. 97-07 which states "The assessments to be levied on each business within the boundaries of said Area shall be imposed either according to recommendations of Committee or according to such changes to those recommendations as may be approved by the City council at a public hearing following the filing of the report by the Committee. The initial monthly or other periodic charge on the annual assessments shall be billed and collected during the month in which the improvements to be maintained hereunder are accepted for maintenance by the City." This means that the Committee does have to hold a public hearing, but it does not have to have majority of the businesses vote on an increase. The Committee agreed unanimously that this request for a fee increase should be taken to the City Council even though the ordinance states "shall be imposed either according to recommendations or Committee or.....since it says recommendations, not decision of Committee.....or according to such changes to those recommendations as may be approved by the City Council at a public hearing. Bottom line is that the recommendation from the Committee has to go to the City Council for its decision.

Jan Minami asked for clarification on the monthly maintenance fee from Loeffler Landscape Maintenance to make sure the additional \$125.00 charged for the maintenance of the pots is included in the monthly fee. Mike Olmos stated that the \$1,083.79 charged

each month by Loeffler Landscape includes the maintenance of the pots. Loeffler has not requested an increase for several years.

Jan Minami stated that the current budget indicates that the fees collected monthly are just barely keeping up with the monthly maintenance fee charged by Loeffler Landscaping. There are no additional funds for tree replacement or any other additional improvements in the Streetscape District.

Dale Melville indicated that there are still 40 trees that need to be replaced at a cost of \$100 per tree for a total of approximately \$4,000. This amount could be spread over a five year period, but this would mean that the trees would not all be growing at the same rate and the Committee would like to have all 40 trees replaced within a shorter time frame.

Jan Minami stated that the Committee could start with the base price of \$100 per tree, but there should be an additional amount added to make up for the funds donated by the Public Works Division for tree removal and additional repairs. A twenty percent additional amount should be added for inflation and expenses that are being absorbed by the Public Works Division would be even more. For instance, maintenance of benches is performed by the Public Works Division.

Dale Melville continued by stating that if you look at just the 40 trees at \$100 per tree, add approximately twenty percent overhead which would make that figure \$4,800 and divide that figure over a four year period, it would come out to \$1,200 per year over the monthly fee that would need to be collected. The Committee would like to have the 40 trees planted sooner than over a four year period, possibly over a two year period so the trees can grow at the same rate. Jan Minami suggested \$1,500 per year would be a more realistic amount which would not only include the trees, but major items that are not currently covered under the Streetscape budget. The amount could include installation of more decorative pots downtown. Dale Melville continued by stating that the monthly maintenance is approximately \$1,100 per month for a total yearly maintenance of \$13,200 per year. Adding twenty percent cost of living over five years would add \$2,640 for a total of \$16,000 per year, plus tree installation of \$4,000 would make \$20,000 the figure needed for budget purposes. The accounts receivable for this fund are approximately 14,000 per year, but since businesses come and go, this will not be an accurate figure to rely on each year. This fund is breaking even at \$14,000 per year and needs to be brought up to \$19,000 to \$20,000 per year in order to upgrade the downtown streetscape district. This works out to a thirty percent increase in fees. There are approximately 100 businesses that pay on a regular monthly basis which could bring the receivables up to \$17,400 per year if the monthly streetscape fee is raised to \$14.50 per month. This would still be over \$2,000 short per year for funds needed for maintenance and upgrade of the downtown streetscape district. The greatest cost will be from the tree replanting, which has not occurred on a large scale since the original trees were planted. As these new trees grow, the maintenance might go up because they require more pruning due to the proposed larger size of the Hackberry and Pistache trees.

It was suggested that staff prepare a report to submit to City Council that outlines where the streetscape fund is at this point, summarize the projected costs such as a five-year projection on an annual basis and include some capital expenditures, which will result in

an annual fee increase. Mike Olmos asked the Committee if they would like the fee phased in over a period of time or just raise the fee all at one time. The Committee agreed that although phasing in the fee over a period of time would be better received, the money is needed up front because the Streetscape District is in the middle of a redevelopment program for tree planting and the fund is out of money. Many business owners might suggest just leaving the magnolias in, but they are lifting the curbs and need to be removed. Mike Olmos stated that the Committee might have to look to another fund to replace the trees and not raise monthly rates. The Committee unanimously agreed that what is needed is a one-time amount of \$5,000 to buy and plant all 40 trees. The Committee directed staff to request from City Council this amount for the Streetscape District upgrade. This one-time need for funding would most likely eliminate the need for a monthly rate increase, even though the fund is just breaking even on the maintenance costs and if the maintenance fee is increased, then the fee will need to be increased to cover this cost.

Public Works Superintendent, Jeff Viau, asked if it was the Downtown Association who was responsible for the lighting on the tops of the buildings adding that the bill for lighting was paid out of the Public Works account. He has noticed that more lights are being added because the energy costs have increased. He stated that another circuit will need to be added to accommodate the electrical needs. This energy bill has been paid through the LTF account in Public Works.

NEW BUSINESS - None.

CITIZEN REMARKS - None.

COMMITTEE / STAFF COMMENTS / REPORTS

A. Dale Melville asked if there was any new information on their request for additional trash cans for the downtown area. Jeff Viau stated that he is waiting for a call back from the company.

B. The replacement bench which goes in front of Reedley Social Services is not complete. Kings River Casting is still waiting for an order of wood from their supplier.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m. Next meeting will be February 13, 2001.

Richard Bedoian, Chairman
Streetscape Maintenance Committee

ATTEST:

Andrew Benelli, Secretary