

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Council Work Session of the North Mankato City Council was held in the Council Chambers on August 10, 2020. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. The following were present remotely through Zoom for roll call: Council Members Steiner, Norland, Oachs, Whitlock, and Mayor Dehen, City Administrator Harrenstein, City Attorney Kennedy, Finance Director McCann, Police Chief Gullickson, and City Clerk Van Genderen. Citizen monitoring was available through a conference call.

Review Intersection of Belgrade Avenue and Range Street

City Administrator Harrenstein reported the discussion is part of broader improvement plan for Belgrade Avenue. Discussion concerning the Belgrade Avenue and Range Street intersection was brought before the Traffic and Safety Committee, and their discussion was presented to the Council. City staff is requesting direction on the Belgrade corridor starting midblock of the 300 block and all of the 200 block of Belgrade Avenue. City Engineer Sarff reviewed two proposed reconfigurations. The first reconfiguration reduced the four-lane road to a three-lane road with the center lane being a turn lane. The first reconfiguration widens the sidewalks and eliminates most on-street parking on the 200 block. A discussion was held concerning the reduction in parking and traffic management. The second reconfiguration reduces the four-lane road to a three-lane road with the center lane being a turn lane. The second configuration does not widen the sidewalks and allows on-street parking. Additional changes include a pedestrian mid-block crossing with a pedestrian refuge in the middle. The configuration would also eliminate a left-hand turn onto Nicollet Avenue. City Engineer Sarff reported MnDOT has not reviewed the plan and that would need to be completed first before public engagements could begin. He noted the cost for the first reconfiguration is between \$400,000-\$600,000, and the cost for the second reconfiguration would be \$150,000 to \$200,000. City staff would like to coordinate the improvements with the work being completed on Frandsen Bank.

Council Member Whitlock stated he approved of removing one lane and making it a three-lane road allowing for parking on the north side of the road. He was also in favor of reducing the speed limit to 20 mph.

Council Member Oachs reported parking is a major concern on Belgrade Avenue and liked the idea of three lanes providing for parking and allowing room to go around someone who is parallel parking. She commented that a bump-out at the corner of Range and Belgrade might be a good idea to provide a better location for a stop sign.


Council Member Steiner agreed with Council Member Oachs and Council Member Whitlock.


Police Chief Gullickson reported he sits on the Traffic and Safety Committee, and they agreed that reconfiguration two would be the best way to go. He thought making the lane configuration changes and testing those changes out before making a speed limit change would be a good idea.

Mayor Dehen commented that he thinks the road changes should be implemented then a reduction in speed if it becomes necessary. Mayor Dehen said that the installation of a temporary bump-out might work at the corner of Wall Street and Belgrade Avenue to force a right onto Wall Street. City Engineer Sarff stated a temporary bump-out might assist in changing people's driving habits. Mayor Dehen requested reconsideration on the length of the traffic control on the 300 block of Belgrade Avenue. He indicated the movement from a two-lane to a three-lane with a turning lane could be made using less street marking to preserve parking on the 300 block of Belgrade Avenue.

A discussion was held concerning preserving parking on Belgrade Avenue, increasing the size or lighting a stop sign at Belgrade and Range, and clearly marking the new turn lanes. City Administrator Harrenstein reported City staff would like to coordinate with the Frandsen Bank contractors, and it is looking like this project would occur in the fall of 2021, but further discussion must be held during the budgeting process.

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to close the meeting at 12:50 p.m.



Mayor

City Clerk