



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

BIANCA L. TIRADO, CITY CLERK

PUBLIC WORKS & PROPERTY VACATION

MARCH 11, 2024 3:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present:

Sheila Niezgodski, Karen L. White, Dr. Oliver Davis, Sherry Bolden-Simpson, Citizen Member Jason Piontek, and Citizen Member Carl Littrell

Committee Members Absent:

None.

Other Council Present:

*Canneth Lee, Ophelia Gooden-Rodgers, and Rachel Tomas Morgan

Others Present:

Bianca L. Tirado, Elivet Quijada-Navarro, Danica Kulemeka, Matthew Neal, Bob Palmer

Presenters:

Chris Dressel

Agenda:

Update – Chris Dressel, Department of Community Investment

Members marked with an asterisk (*) are present digitally

Please note the attached link for the meeting recording:

<http://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/browse.aspx?dbid=0&mediaid=381054>

Please note the attached link for the presentation:

<http://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/0/edoc/381303/ROW%20Vacation%20Update%20-%20PWPV%20-%20Council%20%203-11-24.pptx>

Committee Chair Sheila Niezgodski called to order the Public Works and Property Vacation Committee meeting at 3:30 p.m.

***Update* – Chris Dressel, Department of Community Investment**

Chris Dressel, Department of Community Investment, with offices on the 14th floor of the County-City Building, gave a presentation regarding improvements to the Right-Of-Way (ROW) vacation process. The goals are to provide additional guidance to applicants/petitioners (Alleys 101); improve quality of requests; use Pre-Application form/engagement process; add appropriate evaluation criteria as defined by Board of Public Works (BPW); update language to reflect changes to criteria, process, and responsibilities; set a ninety (90) day expiration date for petition requests following BPW review; provide further assistance to petitioners with filing requirements; and accompany/attend requests through the public hearing process.

Committee Chair Niezgodski asked, regarding the vacation process, if the person that would be

INTEGRITY | SERVICE | ACCESSIBILITY

Danica Kulemeka
CHIEF DEPUTY/ CHIEF OF STAFF

Elivet Quijada-Navarro
DEPUTY/ DIRECTOR OF POLICY

Matthew Neal
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

EXCELLENCE | ACCOUNTABILITY | INNOVATION | INCLUSION | EMPOWERMENT

455 County-City Building | 227 W. Jefferson Blvd. | South Bend, Indiana 46601 | p. 574.235.9221 | f. 574.235.9173 | www.southbendin.gov



representing the City would be the point person also that the Council will be able to contact prior to the committee meeting?

Chris Dressel answered yes.

Committee Member Dr. Oliver Davis asked if this vacation process has been implemented, and if so what have been the results.

Chris Dressel stated that they have taken into consideration the new model when dealing with alleys over the past year, and plan to bring this back to Council within the next month. An observation that has been noted while beginning to implement this new process is that there is a lack of information some residents have regarding land ownership (specifically ownership of alleyways). The goal is to fully implement this new process starting July 1, 2024.

Committee Member Jason Piontek asked if the roles and responsibilities of the resident, the neighbors, and the City would be defined before going to the Board of Public Works.

Chris Dressel answered yes.

Councilmember Rachel Tomas Morgan asked if it is the responsibility of the petitioner to collect signatures, and asked if additional staffing is anticipated.

Chris Dressel answered that it is still the responsibility of the petitioner to collect signatures, and that the total process is divided among a few departments so it is difficult to determine if any additional staffing would be necessary.

Committee Member Troy Warner asked if it would make sense to create separate processes for completely abandoned alleys and still functional alleys, and if outside experts are being used to do the legal descriptions and surveying.

Chris Dressel stated that the current goal is to create a single process that can properly handle all situations, and that typically they've found utilizing outside experts for legal descriptions and surveying to be unnecessary.

Committee Member Carl Littrell stated that petitioners should not expect the Engineering Department to necessarily be their advocate.

Committee Chair Niezgodski adjourned the Public Works & Property Vacation Committee meeting at 3:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheila Niezgodski, Committee Chair

NOTICE FOR HEARING AND SIGHT IMPAIRED PERSONS
Auxiliary Aid or Other Services may be Available upon Request at No Charge.
Please give Reasonable Advance Request when Poss