

Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Public Improvements Committee Meeting
May 19, 2003

Members: Mr. Walters, Chair
Mr. Bauer
Mrs. Pyke

Mr. Walters called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. All members of Committee were present.

The minutes from the April 21, 2003 Public Improvements Committee meeting were approved as submitted.

LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

Temp. Ord. No. B-78
Temp. Ord. No. B-79

Mr. Walters indicated there were people present to speak about the water problem which occurred last Thursday and that they would have a chance to speak after the legislation was discussed.

DISCUSSION

Temp. Ord. No. B-78

Mr. Walters read B-78 (second reading). Mr. Pierson stated this will permit the continued development of the three field softball complex at Water Works. They had received a \$267,000 grant from the Water Conservation Fund. He indicated they were able to match one-half in 2002 and this year, they will do the same. This will pave the road, parking lot, install home run fences, and construct a picnic pavilion. It will be ready for 2004. Mr. Pierson stated that they have some grass now, and they will plant again this spring and fall. It should be ready to play on next spring. This phase only contains the pavilion. Phase II contains a restroom, storage building and lighting, which is slated for the following year. If it looks like that won't happen, they will just construct the restroom.

Mr. James asked if there was going to be a concession stand. Mr. Pierson stated not at this time. He indicated that a lot of different organizations utilize the park for different ball games (such as baseball, softball and soccer) and that the residents also use it as a park. They are trying to keep the area more park-like. Right now, concessions are present on a temporary basis, but there are no plans to make them permanent. There is still time to talk about it, though. Mr. James

asked if there would be electrical outlets available. Mr. Pierson stated they will have it at the building and they could also extend power out to the areas.

Mr. Barnhart asked if the lighting was for parking or the fields. Mr. Pierson stated it was for the three fields. Part of the master plan was once the lighting was up at Water Works, the lights could then come down at Ross and Harrington Parks.

Committee recommended bringing out B-78.

Temp. Ord. No. B-79.

Mr. Walters read B-79 (second reading). Mr. Bell stated he would like to hold B-79. He will get a substitute to Council once they get everything worked out.

Committee recommended holding B-79.

Other Business

Mr. Walters stated that huge amounts of rain fell in a very short period of time on Thursday evening, which resulted in some flooding and sewer backups into some residents' basements.

Robert Lynner, 229 Lehigh, stated there has been a habitual problem with the City's main sewer line for over 40 years. It again backed up into his basement on Thursday. The problem was a clog in the main line. In the past, problems were due to power failures but this time, that is not what happened. He believed it showed that the sewer has deteriorated further. The whole area is in deplorable condition. They have turned claims into their insurance company twice in the past ten years, and his rate has doubled from \$400 to \$820 a year. If he turns this claim in, his insurance agent informed him that it was very likely he would be dropped when the policy came up for renewal. What this means is, if he follows City policy and turns the claim in, he will no longer have homeowners insurance. He does not feel he should be forced to turn it in. He did nothing wrong and cannot control the City's sewer system. This has occurred too many times for too long of a time for the City not to be responsible. Mr. Walters stated he knew it was a unique situation in the Kilarney/Katherine/Lehigh area because it was due to a clog. However, history shows that something is going on in the area. He asked Mr. Christopher, the City's Water Superintendent, if they will be getting a camera down in there. Mr. Christopher stated that is already in the works and that they will be going out first thing tomorrow. He said it is difficult for him to know the exact history after being on the job for only eight months and indicated this was the first he had heard about the problems in that area. He stated this was the only area where there was an actual blocked sewer line. He will be videotaping the sewer to see if there are any broken tiles or root infiltration. Once he sees inside the sewer, he can then make a better assessment. Mr. Walters asked to be notified once that has occurred so he could, in turn, notify

the residents. He asked if it has been checked before. Mr. Christopher indicated he has not had a chance to review any previous information but will be calling the video company first thing tomorrow. Mr. Barnhart asked what the obstruction was. Mr. Christopher stated that sometimes if there is a low flow period for a long period of time, an obstruction can develop.

Greg Arndt, 2830 Fairview Place, stated they had no problems until about four years ago, when they had just a little water back up onto the unfinished side of their basement and the City corrected it. This time, they had 4" of sewage throughout their whole basement. He stated he'd like to know what the exact cause was so he could determine if it would happen again. He feels there is something wrong in their sewers, too. He keeps getting told it's an "act of God." Mrs. Arndt stated they can't turn their claim into their insurance either.

Mr. Walters stated there is a history in certain areas. There are some things a resident can do, such as a check valve or backflow preventor, but those are not always fool proof plus it costs the residents money to install those devices. Mr. Lynner stated that backflow preventors will cause as much, if not more, aggravation than the sewer would cause because the devices collect things which cause blockages.

Mr. Bauer asked if the area of Ward 5 around Fairview and Oakwood was a low-lying area. He received several calls from residents around there. Mr. Bell stated that those reports may have made it to the water department but never reached him. He was not aware of anything. Mr. Bauer stated he had between 20 to 25 calls around Lyons Park. Mr. Bell stated he has no history.

Mayor Robart stated that four or five years ago, the City was told that if they placed pump stations in four strategic places, it would alleviate the flooding problems occurring within the City. In fact, they were assured it was fool proof. Obviously, it's not. The areas where the pump stations were placed were Valley Vista, Broad Street, Lyons Park and 10th and Portage. He stated the City will do whatever it takes to correct this problem. They will be coming back to Council with specific solutions and they will fix it. Mr. Christopher will get them the information and they will do whatever it takes. Mr. Gorbach asked if the pump stations had back-up generators in case the electric goes out as well. Mr. Christopher stated they did.

Mrs. Pyke stated that as a resident, we do have certain expectations. She hoped that the service the residents received that night and the follow-up was to their satisfaction. She received calls from people outside of Ward 2. She wanted to personally thank Mr. Christopher because she called him at home and he went right out their to address the problem. Mr. Bauer also thanked Mr. Christopher for his response in Ward 5. The residents present indicated that Mr. Christopher was very responsive. Mrs. Pyke also stated that the department has a list of areas they jet on a regular basis every six months.

Mr. Arndt asked if the sewers could be too small. Mr. Christopher stated that when you design sewer lines, you need to keep in mind what the anticipated flow is, plus you need to keep everything flowing. If you make a sewer too big, solids begin to accumulate on a regular basis which would then cause problems. If the flow is there on a daily basis, you may want to look at enlarging it. Mr. Bell also stated there are several older properties that have sump pumps, downspouts and footer drains that drain into the sanitary sewer line. While this is illegal, they have not gone after those property owners about the situation. Mr. Walters stated those should be totally separate and that this is what happens when they're not.

Mr. Gorbach clarified that Mr. Christopher would call and get the videotaping going. Once that has been completed, Mr. Christopher will get together with Administration to put together a plan and then let Council know. Mr. Christopher agreed.

Mr. Walters thanked everyone for coming and voicing their concerns. He hopes this will help their problem.

Meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.