

**ITEM NO. _____ TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS, IN COUNCIL,
ASSEMBLED YOUR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE to Whom was
Referred a POLICY SESSION Regarding a SIDEWALK SNOW
REMOVAL POLICY, with a Request for Direction.**

A Policy Session was held on Tuesday, August 18, 2015, beginning at 6:09 P.M. at City Hall, Council Chambers (Room 400), 419 Fulton Street, Peoria, Illinois, with Mayor Jim Ardis presiding, and with proper notice having been given.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed the following Council Members present: Akeson, Grayeb, Jensen, Johnson, Montelongo, Moore, Riegenbach, Mayor Ardis – 8; Absent – Spain, Turner, Weaver – 3.

Others present: City Manager Patrick Urich, Corporation Counsel Donald Leist, Assistant City Manager Chris Setti, Assistant Director of Public Works/City Engineer Scott Reeise, Assistant Director of Public Works/Superintendent of Operations Sie Maroon, Police Superintendent Jerry Mitchell, Chief Deputy City Clerk Stefanie Rice, Deputy Clerk I Dan Sullivan, interested citizens, and members of the media.

SIDEWALK SNOW REMOVAL POLICY

Assistant Director of Public Works/Superintendent of Operations Sie Maroon provided a power point presentation regarding the proposed Sidewalk Snow Removal Policy. He discussed the City's past performance and current operations. He stated the City's winter season staffing consisted of 29 permanent maintenance employees and 27 temporary employees. Assistant Director Maroon indicated the City had eighteen snow routes – 483 center line miles, but would be increasing to twenty snow routes for 2015-2016 snow season. He stated the City's goal would be to remove all snow on pavement within eighteen hours after snow had ended, in residential districts plow at two inches of accumulation and after completing primary streets and the eighty miles of alleys plowed when snow accumulation is four to five inches. He remarked during the 2013-2014 Winter Season the Public Works Department responded to twenty three events for total man hours of 14,551 with recorded snow accumulation of 57.5 inches. During the 2014-2015 Winter Season, Public Works Department responded to 12 events for total man hours, of 6,626 with recorded snow accumulation of 24.1 inches.

Assistant Director Maroon provided a brief description of the current equipment the Public Works Department used during the winter season. He discussed the snow plows, wing plows, and brine applicators. He stated a snow blower could move up to 1800 tons per hour and the brine machine produced brine in-house.

Assistant Director Maroon spoke in regards to the current operations for parking on City streets. He stated no parking signs were posted indicating snow emergency routes and signs were posted stating no parking during specific times after two or more inches of snow had fallen. He said that parking bans could be issued by the City Manager or Director of Public Works for a specific area or the entire City depending on weather conditions. He stated once a parking ban was issued motorists would have three hours to move vehicles before tickets were issued. He remarked fines could be issued for violating the parking bans or the no parking signs. He stated current fine was \$50.00, after seven days it increased to \$75.00, and after thirty days the fine

increased to \$100.00. He said tickets could be reissued every 24 hours. In 2014, he said 267 tickets were issued for a total fine amount of \$13,280.00.

Assistant Director Maroon briefed the Council on future considerations regarding a sidewalk snow removal policy. He stated a problem with not having a sidewalk policy was pedestrians were walking in the street, which caused a safety concern. He remarked the City's goal was to ensure the community was safe and walkable.

He reviewed three proposals to consider when discussing a sidewalk snow removal policy as follows:

ALTERNATIVE #1-Arterial Street Sidewalks

The following information was based on 2013-2014 for 105 miles of sidewalks, the City had twenty-three snow events at an estimated labor cost of \$1,678 per event for total of \$38,594. Total Capital cost would have been \$70,000 for total cost including labor and capital \$108,594.

The following information was based on 2014-2015 for 105 miles of sidewalks, the City had twelve snow events at an estimated labor cost of \$1678.00 per event for total of \$20,124. Total Capital cost would have been \$70,000 for total cost including labor and capital \$90,124.

ALTERNATIVE #2-All Sidewalks

The following information was based on 2013-2014 for 577 miles of sidewalks, the City had twenty-three snow events at an estimated labor cost of \$8,388 per event for total of \$192,924. Total Capital cost would have been \$385,000 for total cost including labor and capital \$577,924.

The following information was based on 2014-2015 for 577 miles of sidewalks, the City had twelve snow events at an estimated labor cost of \$8388 per event for total of \$100,656. Total Capital cost would have been \$385,000 for total cost including labor and capital \$485,656.

ALTERNATIVE #3-Property Owner Responsibility

Council could adopt an Ordinance requiring snow removal from properties with a sidewalk within a specific amount of time upon the completion of a snow event.

Assistant Director Maroon indicated a Sidewalk Snow Removal Pilot Program was implemented in February 2015, which resulted in 18.98 actual hours worked by contractors at \$250.00 an hour for total cost of \$4,745.00. He said the cost for the pilot program was 166% over the estimated cost.

He compared sidewalk snow removal practices for the following aspirational cities; Omaha, Nebraska; Des Moines, Iowa; Madison, Wisconsin; Lexington, Kentucky; Naperville, Illinois; Bloomington, Illinois; Springfield, Missouri; Springfield, Illinois; and Champaign, Illinois. He said practices ranged from snow removal within 24 hours following a snow event, to 48 hours

following a snow event, and some with specific times after a snow event to remove snow from sidewalks.

Assistant Director Maroon recommended an Ordinance for snow and ice removal. He stated all property owners would be required to remove snow and ice from public sidewalks adjacent to their property. He explained all snow and ice must be removed from the entire length of the sidewalk up to three feet wide (to accommodate wheelchairs, strollers, and adults with children in hand). He said the snow and ice must be removed within 24 hours after the snow stops falling when accumulations were less than six inches, and within 36 hours when 6 or more inches of snow accumulated (as measured at National Weather Service). He said if another snow event occurred, the clock would reset to the end of the most recent snowfall. He remarked that noncompliance would result in a civil penalty of \$50.00 for sidewalks less than 200 linear feet in length, or \$100 for sidewalks longer than 200 feet. He said the City may remove the snow or ice on sidewalks around private property when the owner failed to comply within the designated time period, with the cost charged to the owner.

Assistant Director Maroon explained some exemptions would pertain to the proposed Ordinance. He stated individual homeowners who were physically incapable of complying with the Ordinance were exempt. He said the City would not pre-qualify or maintain a list of exempt individuals. He said the City Staff would make every effort to contact owners to determine if they were exempt. He explained even though some individuals were exempt from the Ordinance, Staff hoped citizens would do their best to clear sidewalks, keeping the community safe and walkable.

Assistant Director Maroon stated commercial property owners were expected to comply with the Ordinance. He said snow clearing should be part of basic business operating plans. He stated if snow/ice was redeposited on cleared sidewalks as a result of government action (snowplowing), the business would be exempt from the Ordinance. He said school districts should be responsible for sidewalks adjacent to schools. He said the City's goal was to ensure the community was safe and walkable.

Assistant Director Maroon spoke on a recommendation for a mailbox replacement policy. He stated that currently the City had no policy in place and the City was notified by citizens when snow plow drivers damaged mailboxes. He said during the winter of 2013-2014, 144 mailboxes were replaced at a cost of \$36,000 (\$256.00 average cost per mailbox). He said during the winter of 2014-2015, 60 mailboxes were replaced at a cost of \$15,588 (\$260.00 average cost per mailbox). He reviewed aspirational communities' mailbox replacement policies, which were as follows: Bloomington, IL-\$75.00 per mailbox; Geneva, IL-\$25.00 per mailbox; Naperville, IL-\$75.00 per mailbox; Normal, IL-\$35.00 per mailbox and Shorewood, IL-\$35.00 per mailbox.

Assistant Director Maroon explained recommendations for a Mail Box Replacement Policy, which would require property owner/resident to report the incident to the City within two weeks of the occurrence. He said a temporary mailbox or temporary repairs would be made to allow the property owner/resident to receive mail service. He stated if the property/owner/resident's current mailbox and/or post could not be repaired, the resident may choose a \$100 reimbursement in lieu of a replacement post or mailbox chosen by the City. He indicated mailboxes would be installed following United States Postal Regulations.

Discussions were held regarding the proposed sidewalk snow removal and mailbox replacement policies.

City Manager Patrick Urich stated safety was a concern along with affordability of such policies.

Council Member Montelongo thanked Assistant Director Maroon for the presentation. He expressed concerns with kids walking in the streets because sidewalks were not cleared. He expressed a need for a sidewalk snow removal policy surrounding schools and neighborhoods to ensure safety for children.

Council Member Akeson expressed a need for commercial businesses, churches, social agencies, hospitals and schools to be responsible for their own sidewalks. She recommended the City implement policy changes in phases. She requested the City prioritize sections of town that would benefit from sidewalk snow removal. She voiced concerns for falling incidents during the winter months and she encouraged a sidewalk snow removal policy to protect the public's health and safety.

Council Member Jensen encouraged alternative #3 because of the City's budget constraints. She expressed appreciation for the exemptions listed for elderly and for already plowed sidewalks.

Council Member Moore voiced concerns requiring all of the City of Peoria citizens to shovel their walks since the City had problems with maintaining grass mowing within the area. She expressed concerns with individuals that had health problems and their ability to shovel sidewalks along with right of privacy pertaining to the release of medical conditions. She stated before a policy would be implemented several factors needed to be reviewed.

Council Member Riggerbach referred to a handout from Peoria resident Bob Hall that referred to the challenges of sidewalk snow removal on Knoxville Avenue. He voiced concerns with the plowing of streets such as Knoxville, University, Wisconsin and Western, noting that the plow driver had no alternative but to place the snow onto the sidewalks. He expressed concerns with downtown intersections piled with snow making it difficult to cross the street. He referred to Minneapolis/St. Paul snow removal policy that plowed from the middle of the street, and he requested the City Engineer to review the cost of such policy. Council Member Riggerbach stated his concern with the time frame allowed for snow removal with redeposited snow on the sidewalks. He encouraged using the Neighborhood Associations to spread the word to help one another to keep the neighborhood sidewalks clear.

Council Member Johnson stated he would not be supportive of any of the three alternatives discussed. He supported the idea of Neighborhood Association involvement. He asked Assistant Director Maroon for a breakdown of temporary employees at Public Works.

Assistant Director Maroon indicated Public Works had twenty-seven in-house winter employees, who worked two days a week from November – March. He stated the City also hired contractors in certain areas. In response to Council Member Johnson's question about the complaint system, Assistant Director Maroon indicated it would be a complaint driven system and parking enforcement would work on snow issues with complaints and enforcement.

Council Member Johnson asked if the City had data on the heavy pedestrian traffic areas, especially walking in streets during snow events. He encouraged the City to work with Homeowner Associations to help enforce regulations for sidewalk snow removal. In response to Council Member Johnson's question regarding liability on cleared sidewalks, Corporation Counsel Don Leist stated homeowners were exempt from liability.

Council Member Johnson expressed concern about the challenges residents faced when clearing sidewalks and driveways then snow plows coming through covering the cleared area.

Council Member Grayeb voiced concerns with the snow plow drivers speeding through the streets and throwing snow onto the sidewalks.

Assistant Director Maroon responded they needed to work with drivers, especially the part-time drivers, to provide training to prevent these problems.

Council Member Grayeb stated concerns with school children walking to school. He requested the City to work with the school systems to assure the safety of school children. He remarked on the good neighborhood associations, but voiced concerns with enforcement of the potential sidewalk snow removal policy. He questioned what responsibility the City of Peoria had if volunteers would become injured removing snow from sidewalks. He stated he would support a four inch rule, which would require the City to clear sidewalks after a snow event over four inches.

Mayor Ardis spoke on the positive feedback received regarding the sidewalk snow removal policy discussion. He stated commercial businesses should be made to clear their sidewalks and would like to implement a policy during the upcoming winter season. He reflected on the importance of sidewalks being cleared around schools. He requested the City implement a sidewalk snow removal policy in phases. He suggested a phase-in model of certain parts of Council Districts with no penalty for the first year. He voiced concerns with the mailbox replacement program and he requested a realistic number for replacement.

Council Member Akeson stated the Neighborhood Association piece would be a key to the sidewalk snow removal policy. She expressed concerns with snow plows blocking driveways with snow. She asked about vacant properties and legal owners on record being responsible to clear snow covered sidewalks. She asked if the City hired contractors to clear downtown sidewalks.

Assistant Director Maroon indicated Heartland Parking or private businesses cleared the majority of the downtown sidewalks, and the Peoria Park District cleared sidewalks in front of City Hall and Civic Center.

Council Member Montelongo voiced concerns with city bus routes, especially benches being covered with snow.

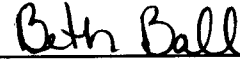
Assistant Director Maroon stated CityLink would start clearing the bus shelters and bench areas along the Peoria bus routes when covered with snow.

Council Member Grayeb voiced concerns on how the City would pay for a sidewalk snow policy, especially with the combined sewer overflow issue, runoff of storm water utility issues, rebuilding police issues, street matters and the continued deficit issues facing the City of Peoria. He suggested if revenue would be raised through taxes, citizens be notified on the cost and levels of services.

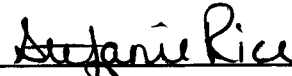
Council Member Johnson moved to adjourn the Policy Session; seconded by Council Member Grayeb.

Approved by Viva Voce Vote.

The Policy Session adjourned at 7:36 P.M.



Beth Ball, MMC
City Clerk, Peoria, Illinois



By: Stefanie Rice
Chief Deputy City Clerk

ds