

# COV- HMDAC October 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes

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**Present** were Jason Lacey, James Olson, and Rick Navarro for the City, and Brian Kilian, the landscape architect under contract to the City; for HMDAC, Doug Link, Byrne Conley, Bob Schussel, and Jen Pollard.

## **Parkway Capital Improvement Project (CIP):**

- **Overview**

- Status of Irrigation Audit - Completed

Brian Kilian, Landscape Architect, presented, with commentary from Jason Lacey and city Engineer Rick Navarro, (**paraphrasing**); the Main Line, Valves, and Controllers are working fine. Laterals need to be replaced. Repairing is not feasible.

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The Parkway audit is completed. The result is as built plans from the waterfall to the homes (the rest of the way down through the Welcome Center was done previously). It shows trees, and valve stations. The laterals are in disrepair, more than half do not work. Some are turned off or were capped over the years. The ones that operate have leaks, breaks or in some places are watering plain dirt. The main lines and valves are satisfactory, however. The laterals are showing the wear and tear expected for 20-25 year old lines. Brian thinks the laterals are not worth saving. The choice of revamping vs. new laterals has to consider function, maintenance, age, and tree growth. The roots are strangling the spaghetti of lateral tubing. Also we have 60 to 70 per cent loss of shrub materials. The laterals are below grade, so when we turn them on there are wet spots. At master valve B outward, the entire system is out.

(At some point we discussed contractor responsibility. The problem has been that various contractors have been out there over the years, with loss of historical memory as we changed contractors, repairs being done without mapping of added laterals as they have been installed, etc. compounded over 25 years. Also the laterals above ground are affected by weather and the sun, and collateral damage during trimming.)

We asked about maintenance going forward. In the future Brian would recommend a monthly walk through by the contractor. This does not mean a drive by, it means going out and spotting wet patterns around shrubs.

There are smart alarms wired to the City from the control boxes but this only tells the City the controller is on and water is flowing. Here there are so many failures that the system does not work; in some places they are watering "ghost" plants, but the system does not know that shrubs are gone. The controllers now in place do work with smart meter valves, with flow meters. The plans show Bubblers, Drips, Spray and Rotors.

When there are breaks, the trees are not getting water, and water goes down the street even though the smart meters show the system is working. Also there are pop up sprayers on hillsides that show as

working but are not efficient. There are drips to slopes and trees that are working, but the plants are mature, and don't really need them – a lot of wasted water. The plant system has essentially outgrown the irrigation system.

The spray system on the lawns work OK but use a lot of green space. One area of design thinking nowadays is to get rid of lawns to the extent possible to save water – even if not eliminated totally, perhaps to cut back the area to reduce consumption. Brian noted that a lot of people walk along the parkway and he expects people would like some lawn at least near the sidewalk.

In the median, most of the trees are on a drip system – crepe myrtles and sycamores – but at this point the trees do not really need them and more than half do not work properly now anyway.

The plans plot where the valves are and make educated guesses where the main lines are, shown as dotted lines. The mains are buried 18 inches deep, and Brian did not see evident breaks. They can be retained, and are not at the end of their life expectancy. Since they are buried underground, they are not subject to the weathering damage of surface laterals.

The F clock (valve) shows 20 stations, Brian could only identify 10-11 of them. He cannot tell where the rest go, there are no wet spots, it appears they are capped off or shut off. Some of the bubblers he uncapped and they were dry when running the system, so perhaps the laterals were cut at some point. It would take a lot of time and energy to trace every one. BRIAN THINKS IT WOULD BE BETTER TO START FROM SCRATCH WITH THE LATERALS. It would take a lot of time and energy to trace where the laterals are and what is working. The irrigation system is designed on the original plant design but we have allowed the plants material to change over time and the trees have matured.

In the medians he would leave the laterals alone; the trees do not need them, he does not think new laterals need to be installed. Instead new laterals would go in only on the road sides.

The G and H valves overlap, at H1 and G7 the shrub bubblers extend and cross.

We noted that the median now has areas of tan bark, only, that seem to look pretty good. We asked if Brian thought they should be planted or left as is, with more emphasis on the sides of the road. He said he would like to put some color on the median but would like to improve the pedestrian experience on the west side, a little more accent there. We discussed that people drive 50 in a 40 zone and many probably do not pay a lot of close attention to the landscaping, at least until they slow down near the Welcome Center.

We also talked about the community resistance to removing the trees and turning the parkway into a construction project again; the trees are a signature item now. But removing and replacing plants along the side would not leave us with such a stark picture.

Brian would not try infilling, as opposed to re-landscaping entirely, along the side. First, there are dead plants, some sheared, and there would be competition between new and old plants. New plants need significantly more water initially, during an establishment period, while older mature plants would be drowned with the same watering. The very nature of construction during infilling tends to damage existing plants. If we are going for less intensive landscaping, the spacing is different. There are certain foundational things that should be done, including soil remediation. The soil structure that exists is not that great. Brian would prefer to see it rototilled, which would take up the spaghetti type existing

laterals, with new laterals installed, to match the design and location of the new plants. There was no section of the existing landscaping that he thought was “really nice” to make him lean toward saving it. Some of the oleanders are OK, but from a design point of view, leaving them in would interrupt the rhythm of a design.

We had a discussion of backfilling vs. a “go big” redesign. City staff was concerned re costs and leaning toward backfilling. THEY WANTED OUT INPUT RE SCOPE OF WORK, INDICATING THAT IT WAS OUR DECISION. In fact they hoped we could decide at that call. We indicated we would prefer to consult with HMDAC members that were not present, and the HPOA Board, but could see the logic in Brian’s recommendation for a bigger plan. This infrastructure is 25 years old and HMD spends \$79K per year on water. Future maintenance costs of patching together the current aging system would entail extra expense as well. (Also, even a backfill project would be governed by current State water use standards, and many of the same expenses.) Brian mentioned that a backfill plan raises difficulties in “looking right” from a design rhythm for drivers’ point of view.

We asked if Brian could give us some conceptual illustrations of what a backfill vs. complete rebuild would look like, and an order of magnitude on expenses. **WE AGREED HE WOULD GET THIS TO US FOR OUR NEXT MEETING, AND TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED IT FOR Monday November 30, 2020 at 10 a.m.** Again, the controllers, main lines, and valves are good, only the laterals need replacing.

Rick Navarro suggested that we consider phasing the project. This will depend on whether HID money is used or just HMD budgeted money; Brian indicates it would ultimately be cheaper to do it as one project.

Doug indicated he would like to see plant selection addressed in the mock ups.

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Summary:

- The Smart Technology that controls the watering, and notifies employees when issues arise, is working but cannot detect water delivery issues on the laterals.
- Laterals are over watering plants, under watering plants, watering plants no longer in existence, Bubblers are next to mature trees that no longer need water, and pop ups are watering hillsides (no longer a standard practice). Many laterals are broken and indications are some have been for year(s). One area is watered by two different valve stations due to improper “cross-over” repair.
- Much of this is a Maintenance issue. (City should be accountable.)

AS you replace the laterals, you’ll disturb (lose) smaller plantings and shrubs. Rototilling in much needed soil amendments for new plants will further damage existing laterals. Infill planting is likely to fail (and has failed) due to the varying water requirements and competition between mature plants and new plants.

- **The State has severely restricted what can be planted, impacting ability to infill with plants matching existing plants.**
- **State approval is required on water usage calculations regardless of project size.**

**Recommendation:** HMDAC consider desired project scope;

- full removal and replacement of Laterals and plants.
  - One Project/ or smaller projects
- Infill projects (not favored by the city)

Brian can provide a “Master Plan” or update the last landscape plan for consideration w/ plant listings

- HMDAC can review and comment.
- Suggested that, for cost savings and aesthetic s, focus planting on HB entrance and Welcome Center, while minimizing planting areas where traffic speeds detract from landscape.
  - Recommended larger shrubs and trees to maximize coverage.

### **Welcome Center**

- Rehabilitation, Status of Bid docs.

Rick: Specs should be back next week (11/6), needs to include replacing HVAC

Final Bid Docs by 11/13

Bidders will be notified by invitation to avoid delay with city council approvals.

Bids returned ETA 12/4 (by my calculation DL)

### **Entrance Arbor and lighting under engineering review and plans are being prepared ETA - TBD**

It was noted that Arbor and sign at Welcome Center is also in need of dry rot repair. We agreed to handle separately using the maintenance contract to avoid delay.

***Consultants can leave the meeting here if there are no other issues for them to address.***

### **HMD Contract**

- 6 Yr Total Contract - ReBid 2022
  - Despite what the contract says, city prefers to rebid contract every three years.
    - This year they can extend current contract or re-bid.
  - Doug expressed concerns that the contractor’s performance at the beginning of the year left many plants stressed and had some losses.
    - Noted: James has worked diligently to get the contractor to perform, there has been some recent improvement though performance had fallen off seriously
    - Normally, the City tries to work on a 3 year contract basis, with renewals staggered between districts, to even out cost variability (if prices rise, it does not hit all districts at once, and allows for budget planning).
    - The City has an option in March, 2021 to advise it will go to bids effective the July 1, 2021 renewal, if desired.
    - With regulatory compliance, the City expects 100% from contractors, but with contract compliance, there is some pliability because we are working with

moving parts and living organisms, for example some tasks might be triggered based on the first two rains of the winter, etc.

- The City does not have any landscape contract where plant maintenance and irrigation maintenance are separated, since it would involve duplicate labor costs and one system affects the other.

~~HMDAC vote of no confidence. — Issue dropped.~~

Are Bid contracts Posted (where), or Invitation only?

- Bidders / Stake holders are contacted via mailing list kept by city, RFP's sent to SF/SJ/SAC Builders...?, and Ads with the Ca. Lic. Contractors Assoc.

New Contract Review and Comment

- **January and February** are key months for Committee contract input to the City.
  - Start now?
    - City is open to our review and comment, considering cost and efficiency of requested revisions.
    - No indication they'll seek our input
      - HMDAC should review and mark up current contract and formally submit to the City by the end of the year to allow time for discussions and negotiations with the city
- Maintenance Practices
  - Contract Requirements
    - Five Days a week / 7a.m. to 5 p.m.
    - City does not dictate to contractor how to perform their obligations under the contract. If the contractor wants to use 100 workers once a month instead of the required 5 day work week, their OK with that.
      - Doug took issue with that approach as the litter does not get picked up daily.
    - Despite contract requirements, city considers the contract fluid due to environmental variances. Deliverables are pretty much adhered to depending on conditions in the field.
- Section D Special Provisions.
  - 3.2.4 activate controllers monthly. Do they do this given the amount of dead plant material?
    - 3.2.5 "...Plant Material exhibiting signs of wilt due to lack of water **SHALL** result in withholding of monthly payment until the problem is corrected". (emphasis added).
  - Plant Losses
    - Contract Section D 2.1 Plants -Contractor's Negligence
    - Contractor's Negligence vs. Warranty Replacement?
      - Contract has line item (s) for replacing plants. Why are we not doing infill where we have plant die out?

- Jason indicates infill can be difficult because watering needs are different between mature and new plants
- This section is basically ignored because infill issues described under Parkway Project.
  - Smart Technology
    - Infill plants fail

**March** - new project requests (e.g ADA Projects)

HMDAC Input Process?

- HMDAC should submit a “Wish List” of projects they’d like to see
  - A submittal in March may not be enough lead time to get an engineering review and budgeted.
    - Submit earlier if possible
  - Might get done depending on priorities and funding

### **Bennington Park (Tot Lot)**

Issue:

- ADA access to Picnic Table (table itself has cut out for wheelchair user, and flat pad, but is only accessible across a lawn)
  - Add to “wish List” for timely consideration of engineering solution
    - Law suit could expedite
      - Could just move (or remove) the table

### **HMDAC Oversight**

Monthly Inspections –

- Reporting Process – we give notes to James, he talks to LandCare about them, he has some written replies recently he will be passing on to us. Doug indicates the communication has improved.
- COV Feedback
- Current process is working OK.
  - Re stated that feed back to the HMDAC is needed to assure process is working
- October / November Replanting – Status
  - James did not report on any areas being planted under this section, other than Shade Tree Circle where plants have were previously replaced and did not survive. There has been some severe overwatering and James was no super happy with how they were planted, some too low, 3-4 inches below grade.

### **Other Issues**

Aeration of lawns

- Pending first rains to soften turf (?) – this is in the contract with a 10/31 deadline but the City lets this typically be extended to after the second rain of the season
- Replacement of irrigated lawns
  - Emphasized HMDAC concerns that the committee be kept apprised of any attempts or plans to reduce current turf areas.
    - James opined that the turf from Marshfield to the tot lot (aka Bennington Park) is underutilized by the community and could be reduced or eliminated.

#### Expanding HMD area of Responsibility

- It would really help if HMD took over all areas (and monuments) outside the Golf Course fence
- Weeds in the street

City sees complications with coordinating watering of turf with the controllers etc, being on and controlled by the Golf Course. HMDAC might consider how this could be coordinated with the Golf Course, then reintroduce the idea to the City. Jason indicated he was open to the idea of taking in some of the strips on golf course property that are not being maintained, but would need to look through the governing documents and thinks the golf course might have to pay something for this to be done (which they might not look upon favorably). We noted the strip along Bennington between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> holes is currently looking terrible, not being maintained at all by the course.

Lighting the redwood tree in front of the Welcome Center at Christmas time.

HMDAC needs to think about exactly what they want to light, check on electrical availability. City would need to do the stringing due to liability, need a high lift and traffic control. Jason thinks there are outlets sufficient for LED lights.

- **Alt idea would be for stringing lights on the welcome center which could be done by volunteers coordinating with Ed Medina.**

#### Waterfall Maintenance

Pump # 1 replacement status

- The Pump currently works intermittently
  - Waiting for company to investigate and recommend repair or replace.
    - It was suggested replacement with a two stage power conserving pump would be more likely since the current pump is near its useful life. One current pump is the original pump. A second, variable speed pump was added at some point.