

From: [Justin Nickels](#)
To: [Mackenzie Reed](#)
Subject: FW: External: Knuell Street Sidewalks
Date: Friday, August 9, 2024 9:15:38 AM

Not sure if you got this to add to next week Wednesdays agenda.

Mayor Justin M. Nickels
City of Manitowoc, WI
www.manitowoc.org
jnickels@manitowoc.org
(920) 686-6980
Assistant: Haelee Tlachac
Facebook: Mayor Justin Nickels
Twitter: @mantymayor

-----Original Message-----

From: Jerry Strharsky <jerrystrharsky@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:36 PM
To: Tim Boldt <tboldt@manitowoc.org>
Cc: Todd Reckelberg <treckelberg@manitowoc.org>; Justin Nickels <jnickels@manitowoc.org>;
debaets@manitowoc.org; Michael Cummings <mcummings@manitowoc.org>; Chad Beeman
<cbeeman@manitowoc.org>; Brett Vanderkin <bvanderkin@manitowoc.org>
Subject: External: Knuell Street Sidewalks

Gentleman,

My wife and I have had an opportunity to review the minutes and decision of the July 8, 2024 Safety Committee meeting associated with the need to have sidewalks constructed in our neighborhood. It was extremely disappointing to see the lack of effort expended to ensure the Safety Committee understands the safety issues and concerns associated with a lack of sidewalks in our part of the neighborhood. It would appear that comments from a committee member that does not live in the neighborhood and one other individual was the extent of investigation used to make this important decision. Bottom line is that the entire decision process seems to be totally arbitrary. There are no criteria or guidelines to determine what is in fact safe or unsafe. Making a final decision based on minimal input that is possibly more opinion than documented fact is just a poor way of doing this.

We fully understand that many of the property owners impacted have no desire to spend any more money than absolutely necessary for this type of improvement. It's hard to see how safety is an issue when they are not being, or have not been directly impacted. And then there are the individuals that feel reluctant to speak up for fear of possible negative impact if their concerns force neighbors to spend money they may not want to. Hopefully, before this issue is completely squelched, we would like to give the Safety Committee and the Common Council some additional information that we feel is very relevant and important in making the decision of whether or not to have sidewalks constructed in any part of Royal Oaks Subdivision #3.

Firstly it is important to understand that there are a few significant differences between Knuell St, Red Fox Ln and Deerbrook Ln. Knuell Street is actually a boulevard which is wider than standard roads (Lanes). The portion of Knuell Street that is in Royal Oaks Subdivision #3 is a straight run continuation of the earlier part of the street. Being a dead end street with a turn around invites all sorts of construction vehicles, utility vehicles and daily curiosity seekers to come turn around passing through a neighborhood with no sidewalks. Additionally people seem to treat Knuell street like it has a 40 mph speed limit, something other streets in the neighborhood don't appear to have to deal with. We have numerous door bell video of all types of vehicles (cement trucks, garbage trucks, landscape contractor trucks with trailers and personal cars and pickups) traveling much faster than 25 mph. Being a wider street also results in a tendency for people to park in the street, which gives the kids more places to pop out of.

Something we can personally attest to, fortunately we have a pretty good idea of where the little ones live and when to take additional precautions.

There are some additional issues that you may not be aware of, at least on the Knuell Street portion of the original sidewalk request. During the winter months our streets are not always plowed, just like many side street neighborhoods. In many of those neighborhoods shoveled sidewalks are available for public use. On Knuell Street that options obviously does not exist. We are aware of at least two occurrences in which one home owner slipped and fell on the frozen unplowed street because there was no other place to walk. And a more regularly occurring condition is the impact on a homeowner that is confined to a wheelchair. She takes her wheelchair from our neighborhood with no sidewalks a little more than four blocks to Menasha Ave to catch the city bus. Without shoveled sidewalks in the winter and with any traffic at other times the safety concerns should be very obvious.

A drive around the city will identify numerous neighborhoods with dead ends, cul-de-sacs and much less traffic than Royal Oaks Subdivision #3 but still have sidewalks. We fully understand the desire and need to manage city spending. And as retired homeowners we also have no desire to spend needlessly. But just like paying our taxes we realize sometimes we need to bite the bullet for the greater good. And I'm confident that we all agree that public safety is one of those bites the bullet issues. Again, it is very disappointing to know that the information used to determine the safety concerns that might impact the need for sidewalks came from one delivery driver and one homeowner. The fact that the one homeowner is the chief of police with the opinion that spending money on sidewalks is not needed seems like it may have carried a somewhat unbalanced impact on the committees decision making. Know that in no way is this a personal attack on any one individual in attendance at the meeting, just a video viewers observation.

It's been very difficult to understand how paying for stamped or colored sidewalks downtown warranted the additional cost but the city feels it's not important enough to spend anything so people can walk safely on sidewalks rather than frozen roadways. It's also hard to understand why nearly four blocks of Knuell street needed sidewalks but the fifth block is somehow safe enough for no sidewalk. As a tax paying property owner I feel we deserve the opportunity to utilize the same safety benefits as other homeowners in the city, it's one of the reasons we moved into the city.

Giving property owners substantial advance notice can allow time for budgeting or implementation of alternate plans and I suspect the city's processes already address this. I don't know if any additional time or effort will be expended by the Safety Committee or the City Council but we felt it was important to ensure these groups are fully aware of our concerns. And if the end result is that the entire neighborhood does not need sidewalks, perhaps there is a need for a portion or portions of the neighborhood that do.

Respectfully,
Jerry and Louise Strharsky

Jerry Strharsky
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