

Town of Ulen Board Meeting – Feb 2, 2022

Monthly Meeting	Attendees
Date and Time: 6:30 PM, 2/2/2022	Steve Lewis
Location: Ulen Country Club	Elmer Parks
Notes Compiled by: Mary Ann Herny	Jennifer Jones
	Mark Ransom
	Bob Burgun
	Adam DeHart
	Kip McKenna

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30.

Meeting Minutes from Prior Meeting

A motion to accept the minutes from the prior meeting was made and seconded.

Updates on Electrical Grid Work

The electrical work has been successfully completed, thanks to the ongoing support and help from residents, contractors and our unofficial consultants.

Conduits were drilled for every house, beginning on the north end of the neighborhood. The utility company then pulled wires through and switched us over with no known issues and minimal disconnection time. Neighbors who had some issues worked well with us and contractors to resolve them. All homes are now on the new circuits.

Overall, the Board believes that the project was a success ... in addition, the neighborhood was able to pay for the work without using any borrowed funds, thanks to good fiscal management and planning.

Streetlights

Streetlights continue to be a separate thorny issue. Currently, they are not metered by the utility company for power for these lights – a flat fee is charged per light. The Board is seeking ways to address lighting in a more cost-effective way, as they believe this fee structure is more expensive than it needs to be. Solar options have been explored, but these options have not been fully satisfactory.

While homes have now been moved to the new wiring, streetlights are still hooked up to the old system – the box in the “island” is currently part of the streetlight circuits, so for the moment it cannot be removed without losing the lights.

The in-ground junction boxes are underground and feeding power. New conduits to those junction boxes could be a solution (approximately 12). SetCo created an early estimate (around \$100k) which Ulen declined at the time. The Board can do additional research to see if additional state funds can be used for this purpose. Alternatively, Ulen may be able to pay for this work without additional funding (via our unused loan) in 2022 - however, this is time consuming and requires a lot of red tape, so the Board is seeking alternatives.

The Board will revisit the original plan to see if it can be made more efficient and cost-effective. If we put all the lights on the same system and meter it, quarterly cost should be cheaper. If we can separate Country Club Drive in the estimate, we may be able to ask the Ulen Foundation to cover some or all of the costs for that street.

The benefit to residents is that we can avoid taking on debt if we are able to live without streetlights until funding can be arranged sometime this year. Another option would be for residents to pay for streetlights adjacent to their properties themselves, or install their own lights, although the solution may not be consistent from one property to the next and the uniformity of appearance may be affected.

Other Utility Work

There are still several areas in the neighborhood where cable/telecom cables are still unburied. Steve is writing letters to utility companies to get them to finish burying cables, which have been unsightly for many weeks. Individual owners should also send letters – it was suggested that a form letter be developed so that the companies hear the same compliant from all parties.

Board Elections

Board members may need to file paperwork for next election cycle. At first glance, it appears that Feb. 4 is the deadline – the Board will contact Jessica Fouts to confirm next steps.

It is possible that some Board members will choose not to continue in their roles. However, there are no current candidates that we are aware of who might have interest in taking on the role. Many new residents have moved in recently – we will need to improve engagement to ensure there are potential successors in the pipeline.

Community Engagement

The Board discussed the ongoing need for better community engagement. To attract new potential members, we need to better communicate:

- Why participation is important (for both residents and Board members)
- Expectations, roles and activities of Board members
- Term limits (4 years – an ordinance requires staggered term lengths to ensure some overlap) and the amount of time that might be required
- Potential training and job shadowing opportunities

- The process for elections, procedures, and documentation

Mary Ann Herny offered to start collecting some ideas for how to recruit/communicate with participants. The Board will update its current list of residents to begin communication planning.

Snow Plowing

A new snow plow contact has been established and is ready for upcoming snowy weather.

Bridge between Ulen and Elmwood

No update has been seen on the status of bridge reconstruction.

Action Items

- Review and approve meeting minutes from February meeting
- Steve Lewis to follow up with cable/telecom companies about completion of their work and removal of equipment from yards
- Additional review of SetCo's streetlight plan and continued search for options
- Board to contact state about next election and registering
- Ideas to be considered for improving community engagement. Mary Ann Herny to research and list some ideas.

cc. Elmer Parks, Steve Lewis, Jennifer Jones, Mark Ransom