

## **Public Works Committee Meeting**

City Of Virden

City Council Chambers

Thursday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Meeting called to order by Alderman Bertolino at 7:00 pm.

**Alderspersons in attendance:** Bertolino, Carter, Neighbors, Karrick, Donley, Matrisch, and Calloway

**Absent:** Boster

**Also in attendance:** Mayor George Murphy, City Clerk Jon Myint, and Director of Operations Gary Etter

**Audience:** Bruce Buckellew and Craig Carlile

### **Comments from Audience:**

Bruce Buckellew of 432 W Green St. Virden requested a variance to keep the Gumball (sweet gum) trees or plant new trees following their removal (due to liability slipping and drain clogs).

Discussion: There are two trees on the city's easement in front of his house, which are slated for removal.

Mr. Buckellew said the Gumball trees provide shade, curb appeal, privacy, and puts additional value to his property.

He is requesting the city leave the trees or plant Silver Maples in their place.

Mr. Buckellew would provide the Silver Maple trees.

He said due to the vicinity of his house to the easement putting replacement trees on his property would possibly damage his foundation.

The shade benefits was disputed by the committee because the trees are on the north side of his property.

Concerns for future owners, sidewalk maintenance, city's responsibility, and possible expansion of exemptions for others in the city.

Alternative proposed: gravel the easement if the trees are removed and no replacements permitted.

Discussion about residence responsibilities and city authority if infrastructure work is needed in the easement (e.g., utilities).

Residents are responsible for maintaining (mowing) easements but cannot plant in them.

Current problematic trees date to pre-1973.

City policy prohibits planting in the easement.

**No motion** made to take the variance requested to the council; **variance denied**.

## **Topics:**

### **1. Approval of Minutes 8/21/25**

**Motion** made by Carter seconded by Matrisch to approve Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes of 8/21/2025.

**Motion** passed

### **2. Speed bumps down W Jackson St.**

Issue deferred to a later date.

### **3. Open Bids for Tree and Stump removal.**

Director of operations Gary Etter passed out a list of trees (15) and stumps (19) to be removed.

The bid process and the work needed was explained.

Two bids were received and opened.

The low bid \$15,000 was from Whalen Tree Service.

A line item transfer in Public Works funds may be needed.

Gary Etter will review the Public works funds.

**Motion** made by Karrick seconded by Matrisch to take the tree removal bid from Whalen Tree Service to the council for approval.

**Motion** passed

**Additional**

1. IDOT will be sweeping route 4 on Monday September 22<sup>nd</sup>.
2. Gary Etter spoke on the cuts to the Public Works budget.
3. There have been several unforeseen bills that have come in (two notable from IDOT of MFT funds for the years 2011 and 2012).
4. Mayor Murphy spoke about an OSLAD Grant that the Parks Initiative would like the city apply for.

**Executive Session:**

**None**

**Motion** made by Karrick seconded by Calloway to adjourn at 8:10 pm.

**Motion** passed.

Jonathan J. Myint  
City Clerk

Date Approved: