

The Allegan County News



Contact Us:
Kaschyle Publications, Inc.
231 Trowbridge St.
Allegan, MI 49010
Phone: (269) 673-5534
Fax: (269) 673-5535

The Commercial Record



The Plainwell & Oberg

Union Enterprise

City hearing proposes a non-motorized trail

By **Sara Ramaker**
Staff Writer

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In the hopes of receiving a \$335,000 grant, Allegan City Council hosted a hearing for a proposed non-motorized trail between Eastern Avenue and the intersection of M-89 and Fifth Street.

The comments collected during the meeting will be forwarded to the Michigan Department of Transportation, which is administering the grant.

The grant is designated for improvement of non-motorized transportation. If approved, the city would use the funds to construct a sidewalk and boardwalks along Hooker Road/Bond Street from the city limits to Fifth Street and a pedestrian bridge over the gully where Bond Street becomes Hooker Road.

The project would also include installation of new guardrails and fencing along the stretch of roadway as well as a sidewalk on Fifth Street from Bond Street to M-89. It is expected to cost \$760,000.

If the MDOT grant is received, city manager Rob Hillard said the city would then pursue a \$225,000 grant in April administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.

A remaining balance of \$200,000 would be paid from the city's general fund to complete the project.

The city received 14 letters of support from local officials, community entities, businesses and individuals. At the meeting, one letter writer and three additional individuals expressed their support for the project.

Citizens for a Safer Community president Petra Robbert praised the project's barrier-free access features.

Fellow committee member Nancy Ingalsbee said, "This is a wonderful idea for a project that is very needed and very necessary."

Letter writer Kathryn Gray, representing Disability Network/Lakeshore, said that her organization fully supports the project and is eager to partner with the city to help in any way possible.

Citizen Dan Gratz said the project would be a great investment.

"It's a big expense, but well worth it," he said.

Complete Streets

On a similar note, the council also received comments from Robbert, Ingalsbee and Gray regarding a Complete Streets resolution on the agenda.

Each of the women asked the council to adopt the resolution that will shape the way the city approaches design projects.

According to the city's resolution, "complete streets are defined as a design framework that enables safe and

convenient access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and drivers of all ages and abilities.”

Hillard said the complete streets policy offers a holistic view of transportation.

Adopting the resolution, he said, signified that the city endorsed the plan, adopted its viewpoint and would direct its planning commission to implement complete streets policies into future projects.

The resolution passed unanimously.

Council Rick Day said, “This proves that we do listen and care about what’s going on in our community.”

Council member John Hotchkiss said he was happy to have adopted the resolution and was excited about the new grant opportunities it may create in the future.

E-mail [Sara Ramaker](mailto:Sara.Ramaker@allegannews.com) at sramaker@allegannews.com or call (269) 673-5534.