

January 14, 2010

Northville: Council approves \$2 million sidewalk, streetscape project

NCBA members to review plan at January meeting

By Pam Fleming
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Northville city council members gave their blessing to the \$2-million downtown sidewalk and landscape improvement project last month, even though design changes can still be made.

"We're working on refining the plan," Bob Doyle from the landscape design firm JJR in Ann Arbor told council members at their Dec. 21 meeting. Members of the Northville Central Business District will take a look at the plan at their meeting this month.

The design firm plans to lay brick pavers at Wing and Main streets, Cady and Center streets and Dunlap and Center streets, with colored concrete planned at the bump-out areas.

Brick crosswalks at the intersections of the gateways to the city, such as at Center and Main street, are also part of the plan.

Council member Nancy Darga thinks the improvement plan solves a lot of problems, such as making it safer to enter and exit downtown streets, providing more pedestrian areas and adding more sidewalk areas for outdoor dining.

But, she's somewhat concerned about the brick pavers with the high number of manholes in the city's intersections and also some of the colored concrete planned.

Darga described the colored concrete design as a little "patchworky."

"It's going to read like we're doing things in sections," she said. She would just like for the sections of concrete to be more integrated. "It's a little schizophrenic here with three different patterns in a half block."

MARY ALEXANDER COURT

Council member Doug Bingham was concerned about the amount of money that might have to be spent to change the driveway into the parking lot off of Mary Alexander Court when it is made into a two-way street.

Lori Ward, DDA executive director, explained that the configuration to the entrance of that parking lot had to be changed if the street is going to be made into a two-way one.

Mayor Chris Johnson said some people already make illegal left turns onto Mary Alexander Court off of Center Street.

"It's time we make Mary Alexander a two-way street," Johnson said.

TREES VS. PLANTINGS

Some council members would have preferred to leave trees instead of small plantings at the bump-outs onto the streets, but that's not what the current design specifies.

Johnson thinks the concept needs to be reviewed again by the Design Committee before construction drawings are finalized.

The motion to approve the plan passed 3-1, with Darga casting the dissenting vote.

"Your comments are not off-base," Doyle said to Darga. "This (colored vs. the plain sidewalks) is what we've been struggling with all along."

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