

James Rabe (00:00):

We're talking about assessments and boy, is it a hot topic on social media in person, people get really annoyed when they see that they have to pay X number of dollars for a sidewalk fixing where they're all out of skew and stuff.

Shaun Palmer (00:14):

And, and we have to have a program and we have one that we do every 20 years, we go through a neighborhood and do it and we send out, uh, we go out and we mark an X or we align on it. And then we send out a letter and says, this is what it's going to be, this to be the most cost. And then the homeowner can buy their own or do their own. They can't do their own, but they can hire somebody. And it costs a hundred dollars for the fee. And in one of the little nuances that people don't realize is if I don't like that and I want to call public works and say, Hey, you know, I want to talk to you about it. We charge you a hundred dollars. And so a lot of people just call their friendly councilperson. And I go out and talk about concrete with them and trying to explain our, how we do that. And that's part of the service that we have. And is

James Rabe (00:53):

There more to the process than that? Cause then you're doing, you're going to be talking about it tonight at the meeting, but I want to make sure I understand what's going on before we talk about what might change.

Shaun Palmer (01:01):

Well, the, the process right now, like my house, I had 10 squares removed at \$3,000. Now, now I knew it last fall so I can start to budget for it. But you know, you hand somebody, a bill for \$3,000 on a home that's expensive and hard for them to do. And now the city does allow you to take five years to pay that and put it on your taxes. And it's a 2% over prime is what they charge for interest rates. What's a fair Fairmont to do it. Um, the other idea is to put it on the tax rolls and say, you know, we're just going to take care of this problem and, and, uh, you don't worry about it anymore. Um, but the problem with that is, is that, you know, if you own it and you're supposed to maintain it, you might take better care of it. If you have to end up, you know, you won't put a lot of salt on it, you won't let the kids go out there with a hammer, bad example, but an example, um, you know, and so those are things that we look at

James Rabe (01:47):

Well, but people look at it and say, but I don't really own it, own it. I, you know, I I'm taking care of it for this.

Shaun Palmer (01:52):

No, you really own it. We have a, we have an easement on that area and that's your sidewalk. And you know, if somebody trips and falls, the city has to have a plan. And that's where this comes in a couple of years ago, we, um, allow them to grind. And so if you see a line that means they're going to grind it, an X means that they're going to replace it. And um, if you go underneath the driveway at six inches, it's cost a little bit more. And we have the now after July 8th, if you weren't done, then it goes out for bid as a package. And so one contractor will bid on that and say, I'll do all these sidewalks by the end of October for this amount of money per, per whatever. And they'll, they'll, they'll get that bid and they'll do the work.

Shaun Palmer ([02:28](#)):

Now, the city does make them have a bond and they do, I believe guarantee it for 10 years. So it's, you know, you do have some control over that and they do give you a five years to pay it, which is, which is nice. Um, but there's some tweaking, you know, kind of, uh, how do you want to handle this? And I don't know if there's ever going to be a perfect way, you know, in, you know, I think last time we might have talked about 1990s when new subdivisions would come on, we didn't require sidewalks. Well, if you didn't require sidewalks, you could save three grand on a house. Well, that's, that's a doable number. Then five years later, everybody shows up 70% want to have sidewalks and there would be a knockout drag out fight. You ask people, watch the council go. Those were horrible fights. Um, you know, be 30% didn't want it and I don't need it. Why do we need to do this? You're gonna wreck my yard. You're gonna wreck my tree, blah, blah, blah. And so good, good concerns. But it, um, it was ugly. So they just said, when you build a new house, you can put it

James Rabe ([03:20](#)):

Inside. So are there, are there proposed changes that you're looking at tonight? There

Shaun Palmer ([03:24](#)):

Are, and one of them is that the city takes it over. Um, the other one is, is that they, um, um, have a different program and I'm not particularly sure what they're going to do. One of the things we talked about last month was do kind of like the service assured that you pay so much in every month and in like RPU has, and you don't, when it comes time to get done, you just do it and it gets done and you don't have to worry about it. I did visit a house that I own 30 years ago and the sidewalk is still good shape right now, the house I'm in now that sidewalk was 70 years old. Um, you know, and you know, so, you know, how often do you have to replace your sidewalk?

James Rabe ([03:57](#)):

No. If you're age discriminating like that. Yes, it is. Sidewalks have feelings too, you know? No, they don't,

Speaker 3 ([04:05](#)):

I can't, I can't see the clock. What time is it? Do we get a few more minutes? Alright. The other side of that is roads

Shaun Palmer ([04:10](#)):

And we're doing road assessments. And the example that is very near to my heart is north Broadway. And we came in with the assessment policy and, and the state law is, is that we can only assess your property for the value that we increase it. So having that new road in front of your store or in front of your property increases the value X amount while it never covers the cost of actually doing the work. Right? So north Broadway, you know, we're digging up old sewers that are a hundred years old. We had all the concrete underneath there that the state put in with an overlay. So, you know, it's an expensive product.

James Rabe ([04:40](#)):

So you're saying that, uh, if a business is valued at a thousand bucks and you think the, uh, updating the road will increase it to 1,500, you can only assess them that 500.

Shaun Palmer ([04:53](#)):

Yes. But only the property, not the business. Okay. So w in what we did is basically property strictly property increased. And so what we did was that we went in and did a special assessment, um, and, and looked at different classes of property. And that Lord did quite a bit in, we had 75% of people who were going to fight your assessment, which is what they should do. And it turned out that we only ended up with four, um, after we did that, and he was a more agreeable number in P I mean, P people are fair. People want to pay their fair share. They just don't understand why I need to pay this month. Can

James Rabe ([05:25](#)):

They, can you like they're being gouged or something. It's great to go and challenge that.

Shaun Palmer ([05:29](#)):

That's what you should be able to do. And I hate to use the word fight city hall, but you should be able to work with city hall and you should be able to ask a question. And that's part of my, my goal is that you feel comfortable doing.