

Hall, Renee

From: Kyle Poorman <kylepoorman@mac.com>
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 1:30 PM
To: City Council and Mayor
Subject: snow practices need augmentation

[External Email]

Dear City Council and Mayor of Ames,

I have three statements related to snow moving practices that I would like to address with the City.

1. Sidewalk network unusable for many people after large snow events

Currently, sidewalks across Ames are not accessible for anyone except those who are able to navigate large piles of snow in crosswalks where the curb and the sidewalk meet. This means that individuals with mobility issues cannot use our sidewalk network for long periods of time after large snow storms. The issue arises because large piles of snow occur where there is a grey area because it is not clear who is responsible for keeping a cross walk open, when snow piles are at the boundary of the street and side walk in crosswalks. Many of these piles are actually in the street. It should not fall to individuals complaining about specific crosswalks for this issue to be resolved. It should be a reasonable proposition that most of our residents are able to use the sidewalk network fairly quickly after a storm and that they do not have to complain about certain areas to be able to use the sidewalk whenever they need to. People with mobility issues should be able to use our sidewalk network in the winter. I have written to this body before about this issue. **Will you please clarify who is currently responsible for keeping crosswalks clear of snow, especially at the boundary where the road and the sidewalk meet? If the city is responsible for clearing piles in the street that block sidewalks, will you please deploy your resources to deal with these crosswalk issues.** If it is private property owner responsibility to keep sidewalks clear, even in the streets, will you please make a public announcement about this issue and place a notice in city side. Street clearing should not be only focused on keeping the streets clear for cars. Thank you very much.

2. Fragmented snow clearing problems impact Main Street pedestrian zone

The main street area needs a new pedestrian area snow removal regime. It is a pedestrian zone and as such snow removal in this area is haphazard because multiple entities are charged with doing small pieces of the snow removal. This makes for a haphazard and often times substandard snow removal regime that is dangerous, hinders commerce, and makes the main street area less accessible. Some property owners and their contractors are stellar, however some are very slow to remove snow, some do a middling job, some use contractors that use ridiculous and counter productive amounts of snow and ice melt and others don't do an adequate job clearing all of the area necessary for safe pedestrian activity. Clearing around the main street parking meters is also haphazard. This is a prime commercial district that is heavily pedestrian, it would be extremely helpful to have a single entity, like the city or city contractor clear snow in a uniform manner in this district. It would be better for businesses, residents, and customers that a reliable entity did this work. This could also apply to other heavily pedestrian areas in the city too, like campus town too.

3. Over use of snow melt chemicals is an issue in the Main Street pedestrian zone

The overuse of snow melt chemicals should be addressed by the City, especially in commercial areas like Main Street. In specific areas along Main Street and in front of the Ames Public Library, there seems to be an over abundance of snow melt chemicals used. These snow melt chemicals are not harmless as they can cause problems with paving infrastructure and specific plant and animal impacts in the localized area. Evidence of snow melt chemicals last in some areas for long periods of time after a snow event. I do not think it is unreasonable to have snow melt chemicals removed from public

sidewalks within a specific amount of time after a snow and that excessive snow melt chemical use should be discouraged using a best practices document distributed to businesses and snow removal contractors or through an ordinance that could have a fine associated. The use of snow melt around the Ames Public Library is especially egregious. I understand that many patrons use this facility and the library is trying to keep them safe, but the sheer amount of chemical put down is usually pretty astonishing. Snow removal contractors for these specific businesses also use an inordinate amount of ice melt chemicals of main street: US Bank, Wells Fargo, BMO Bank, and the old telephone building adjacent to BMO Bank. As Ames has just invested in the replacement of sidewalks along Main Street, it would make sense to emphasize the responsible use of snow melt chemicals in the district. Over and misuse of these chemicals can lead to long-term damage. It also makes dog walking on main street very difficult in the winter because the chemicals have adverse impact on dog paws and ingestion of some of chemicals can cause issues.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Kyle Poorman