

Hall, Renee

From: Merlin Pfannkuch <me2magic@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 1:16 PM
To: City Council and Mayor
Cc: Schainker, Steve
Subject: Bad sidewalk, injured wife

[External Email]

Mayor Haila and members of the Ames City Council:

Something needs to be done about the deteriorating sidewalks in my neighborhood (1424 Kellogg), and probably in other areas of town. I believe the policy is to send a person from inspections out to take a look when there is a complaint. If so, that policy needs updating. I recommend the City establish a cost-share program with property owners, with a sliding scale of some kind. Maybe those with a provable federal taxable income of whatever pay, say 20 or 25 percent, etc. Maybe it could even be free for households below a certain income. Household incomes vary considerably in Ames, and many residents are low income, such as the elderly still living in the house they may have lived in for fifty years,

My neighborhood has many elderly residents who walk, some with dogs. Some use a cane. Poor sidewalks are especially a hazard for us.

Yesterday, just before the storm of about 5, my wife (Nancy Blyler) tried to hurry our dog around the block before the storm hit.

She tripped in front of 1526 Kellogg where the sidewalk sections in one place are 1 and 1/2 to 2 inches in height different. She skinned one knee quite badly and the other knee somewhat. She also hurt her left side when she landed. She is 82 and has very thin skin, so I would guess it will take two to three months for the badly skinned knee to heal. I took pictures in case you would like to see them, but I would need help figuring out how to send them electronically,

When council forced some sidewalks on our neighborhood in 2020, taxpayers paid for them. A blind person living somewhere around 14th and Douglas requested better sidewalks to get to the CyRide stop just north of 13th and Duff. Okay . . . but since 15th was going to be redone/resurfaced, council mandated a sidewalk in certain areas where there were no sidewalks.

When council was considering these new sidewalks, I suggested that maybe these monies would be better spent trying to fix the poor sidewalks in our area. Helping residents pay for sidewalks would not be a first.

Maybe some sort of fee eventually could be added to property taxes for those who refuse to repair a poor sidewalk.

I thought perhaps a citywide sidewalk inspection could be done as part of the assessor's 2027 structure appraisal project. My first phone call just a bit ago, essentially: "No, we will be looking only at structures. The inspections department deals with sidewalks."

Sincerely,

Merlin L. Pfannkuch
1424 Kellogg Ave.
Ames, IA 50010-5547
515-509-8148
me2magic@yahoo.com