

Dear Commissioners,

There has been a lot of complaining this winter about people not clearing their sidewalks of snow.

First of all, I would like to say that I think there should be different standards for private citizens and businesses. Some people are too old or infirm to clear their own sidewalks, although, perhaps those under 60 should be required to get a note from their doctors. Also, I think fines should be greater for businesses. And if snow plows throw a lot of snow on the sidewalks of private citizens, the city should be responsible for at least helping to remove it.

I want to state emphatically that I want you to crack down hard on businesses which do not bother to shovel their sidewalks. It is ridiculous to give businesses 5 days to clear their sidewalks. This winter they have, hoping the snow would melt in five days, have left the snow there. What has happened is that it partially thawed and then refroze, leaving a mass of ice too hard to shovel. Then, to prevent suits from people slipping on the ice, they put down sand. The result of this is that the sidewalks are a filthy mess. They should get a warning if the snow is not removed within 12 hours and a hefty fine if it is not removed in 12 more hours.

There has been a lot of talk lately about making communities more pedestrian-friendly, and Lawrence has happily taken some steps in that direction. Lets not forget that many of us want and need to walk in the winter, too and take appropriate steps to make that more feasible.

Thank you for your attention.

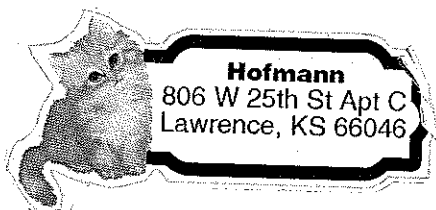
Sincerely

Dianne Hofmann
Dianne Hofmann

RECEIVED

FEB 27 2008

**CITY MANAGERS OFFICE
LAWRENCE, KS**



KANSAS CITY 641-001

26 FEB 2008 PM 8:1

Mayor and City Commissioners
PO BOX 708
LAWRENCE KS 66044

RECEIVED

FEB 26 2008

TO: Charles Soules, Director of Public Works
FROM: Bill Mitchell, 1201 Emery Road
SUBJ: Snowplowing onto sidewalks abutting the roadway - again
DATE: 25 February 2008

CITY MANAGERS OFFICE
LAWRENCE, KS

Our neighbor, Scott Willard Campbell, having recently complained to you of the City plowing snow onto his adjacent-to-the-street sidewalk and also of the special treatment we receive when the snowplows switch blade angles at our house to divert the snow/ice away from our sidewalk, I thought I should remind both him and you of my long-running efforts to persuade the City to 1) establish and 2) follow a reasonable and equitable City-wide policy of plowing to the sidewalkless side of the street in all areas where sidewalks are immediately adjacent to the street. To that end I've copied my two most recent letters (saving you the pain of reading all written over the past 30 years). The arguments in them are still sound so I will not re-state them and the invitation (not responded to in 2004) to point out to me wherein I am wrong still stands.

Thank you.

cc: Scott Willard Campbell
Dave Corliss
City Commission
West Hills Homes Association
Mayor Sue Hack

Postscript to Mayor Hack: Your quote in the J-W 22Feb08 ("I'm not going to blame Public Works for doing the job they need to do. We would have terrible complaints if we didn't get our roads plowed.") troubles me because of its close-minded tone. Although it may not be what you meant (and knowing newspapers, it may not even be what you said) but it doesn't seem to allow for establishing a reasonable snowplowing policy in areas of the City where 1) sidewalks abut the roadway and 2) are on only one side of the street. I agree, of course, that clearing streets is important but I've also heard a good deal of lip-service from Commissioners about being "pedestrian friendly" (mostly advocating new and wider sidewalks). It is pedestrian unfriendly in the extreme to have sidewalks unnecessarily covered with a foot or so of rough ice from the streets (not Mother Nature's snow, but Public Works' chunky ice), not to mention how unfriendly it seems to those of us who - long before you tried (and failed) to legislate good-neighborliness - have always shoveled our (and our neighbors') sidewalks. I've heard that the Commission intends to reconsider the predictably-failed sidewalk-clearing ordinance in March (I hope you either fix and enforce it or kill it; to the end of fixing it I hope you go back to my and others' comments, both written and spoken to the Commission at the time it was being considered) and I suggest that, in conjunction with that review, you require Public Works to establish a City-wide policy of plowing to the opposite side in all areas of the City where sidewalks are immediately adjacent to the street on only one side of the street. I trust you understand that this has nothing at all to do with "not getting our roads plowed."

TO: Charles Soules, Director of Public Works
FROM: Bill Mitchell, 1201 Emery Road
SUBJ: Snowplowing onto sidewalks abutting the roadway
DATE: 2 February 2004

You may remember that I spoke to you, after an earlier snowfall when I was shoveling my sidewalk and the plows were undoing what I had just done, about the City's thoughtless practice of plowing snow onto sidewalks in areas where 1) the sidewalks are immediately adjacent to the roadway and 2) sidewalks exist on only one side of the street. My point was that in such situations it would be a kindness (and no skin off your teeth) to throw the snow to the side without a sidewalk. I also gave you a little history about my years of letters of complaint to your predecessor, the most recent one being a letter of thanks because the snowplow crew finally got it right (apparently, it now seems, quite by accident). I also said that, since the crews make annual dry runs before the snow falls, it should be a simple matter to note where those abutting sidewalks are and to plan the removal routes accordingly. You said that you would discuss it with the crews, which I took to be a good sign.

Turns out, it was not a good sign, just more of the same old same old, because, last night, the plows threw the snow to both sides so, this morning, I and my neighbors shoveled not only Mother Nature's contribution but also Public Works' contribution.

You may not agree but I think that I am not asking you to do anything unreasonable or "extra." (And I most assuredly do not want "extra" or "special" treatment for myself; I ask for the same consideration to be shown to all neighborhoods with similar sidewalk configurations.) It seems to me that the snow can be thrown to the sidewalkless side with no increase of effort, no additional time or miles for men or equipment. It also seems to me, with the new sidewalk snow removal ordinance in effect, a particularly unkind cut for the City to undo the work that conscientious residents have done and to threaten us with fines if we do not clear the sidewalks of Public Works' snow as well as Mother Nature's. If you believe I am wrong, I should like you to explain wherein I am wrong. I can be reached at 843-1378 and I will be happy to come to your office for an explanation.

Thank you.

cc: Mike Wildgen
City Commissioners
West Hills Homes Association

TO: Charles Soules, Public Works, City of Lawrence
FROM: Bill Mitchell, 1201 Emery Road
SUBJ: Thanks, but...
DATE: 21 January 2007

A couple of snowstorms into the season and you and your snow-removal crew deserve many thanks for remembering to plow to the opposite side of the street, away from our adjacent-to-the-street sidewalk. After so many years (20-30?) of complaint, it is a pleasure to be given cause to praise. (To say nothing of the pleasure it is not to have to chip and shovel the ice that the snowplows throw on the sidewalk.)

BUT (my wife says there always seems to be a "but") I regret to see that you have not actually changed the policy city-wide but are, apparently, merely responding to my long-term and vigorous individual complaint. Although I am grateful for the individual attention, I think it is very bad policy (because of its unfairness) to treat different classes of people differently and I've made that point repeatedly in my letters to George Williams and you. If it is a bad (and easily remediable) thing to throw street-snow on my sidewalk, so it is a bad (and very inconsiderate) thing to throw it on my neighbors'. (Yes, I could look west on Stratford and see where, 2 doors west, the driver had switched to blade angle to stop throwing snow on the sidewalk.) So I suggest again that, in all areas in the city where sidewalks are adjacent to the street on one side, you establish a policy of plowing street-snow/ice to the opposite side of the street. Then both I and my neighbors (in whatever part of town) will have cause to thank you.

BUT #2. This letter was drafted before the crew made a surreptitious return visit on (I'm guessing) Thursday morning (18 Jan), when the roads were perfectly drivable but there was still a little quickly disappearing stuff around the edges, and, I suppose, having no serious work to do, went looking for mischief and pitched what was left of the ice and slush back on my cleared sidewalk and that of my neighbor to the west (and, no doubt, others). Bad show!

CC: Dave Corliss
West Hills Homes Association
City Commission

From: Bobbie Walthall
Sent: Tuesday, February 19, 2008 10:12 AM
To: Dave Corliss
Subject: message

Joy Patton called to say that the sidewalk ordinance isn't working. She had nothing but pleasant things to say about the staff she has talked to about the ordinance, but said that folks have 5 days to clear their sidewalks, then they get a \$20 fine....big deal. She thinks it needs to be revamped. Didn't want a return phone call, but wanted to make sure you got the message.

Bobbie J. Walthall, *Executive Secretary* – bjwalthall@ci.lawrence.ks.us
City Manager's Office | [City of Lawrence, KS](http://www.ci.lawrence.ks.us)
P.O Box 708, Lawrence, KS 66044
office (785) 832-3400 | fax (785) 832-3405

-----Original Message-----

From: Campbell, Scott Willard [mailto:swcamp@ku.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2008 9:09 AM
To: Tom Orzulak
Cc: Dave Corliss
Subject: RE: Snow removal Revisited

Tom,

I wanted you to know I had, in fact, noticed that concerted efforts had been made by your crews earlier this year to avoid our sidewalks, and my neighbors and I have appreciated this greatly. The new tactic of pushing the snow to the opposite side effectively solves the issue for us, really for the first time ever, and we had been very pleased right up until last weekend. I was mostly concerned that this latest episode not be suggestive that the plows would be reverting to the earlier customary practice, perceiving a danger that it is probably more convenient not to do it this way for the very reasons you described. I also understand, however, that there will be times and situations when there has to be some compromises made, and I appreciate the fact all of you are doing the best you can under often difficult circumstances.

At the same time I hope your crews will stay informed and continue to appreciate the tremendous burden the plows can create for any homeowner unfortunate enough to have a sidewalk adjacent to the street, and will try whenever possible not to make our lives more difficult.

I understand this issue is to be taken up by the City later this spring to establish some clear policy, and many of us in the West Hills neighborhood are thankful it is finally being given formal attention.

Hopefully a workable solution can be found that will be acceptable to all concerned, and we are appreciative that this important issue is to be given consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott Campbell

-----Original Message-----

From: Tom Orzulak [mailto:torzulak@ci.lawrence.ks.us]
Sent: Tuesday, February 19, 2008 10:41 AM
To: Dave Corliss; Campbell, Scott Willard
Cc: Charles Soules; Dena Mezger; boog@lawrence.ixks.com;
dhighber@kdhe.state.ks.us; Mike Amyx; mdever@sunflower.com;
robchestnut@sunflower.com; suehack@sunflower.com
Subject: RE: Snow removal Revisited

We have tried our best to accommodate this request during this winter. It is very difficult to do because it requires us to push the snow against on-coming traffic. Sunday was even more difficult because it had snowed 6" in a 2 hour time span. We were forced to plow and sand with each individual truck in order to make a one lane path to at least get the streets open for the first few hours of Sunday morning. I apologize for the inconvenience. We will continue try to do what you want we can.

Tom Orzulak, Street Division Manager | torzulak@ci.lawrence.ks.us Public Works
Department | City of Lawrence, KS POBox 708, Lawrence, KS 66044
office: (785) 832-3031 | fax: (785) 832-3071

From: Thomas Fritzel
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2007 1:46 PM
To: Dave Corliss
Subject: snow removal

We received a notice from the city regarding snow removal from public sidewalk at space saver storage on west 6th st. This is a tough issue and here is why. We pride ourselves on doing the very best job that we can on making sure not only that our tenants are taken care but that the public sidewalks are cleared as well. The snow that this letter deals with is the aftermath of the city plows running on 6th street and piling the excess onto the sidewalk after our crews cleared the walk. How can any of us win in this situation?

Dave Corliss

From: suehack@sunflower.com
Sent: Friday, January 18, 2008 5:32 PM
To: walterfamily
Cc: Mike Dever; Rob Chestnut; boog@lawrence.ixks.com; mikeamyx515@hotmail.com; Dave Corliss
Subject: Re: Snow Removal

Thank you for your email and your thoughtful proposal. The city commission will be looking at a variety of solutions. Sue Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

-----Original Message-----

From: "walterfamily" <walterfamily@sunflower.com>

Date: Fri, 18 Jan 2008 12:06:19

To: <suehack@sunflower.com>

Cc: <mdever@sunflower.com>, <robchestnut@sunflower.com>, <boog@lawrence.ixks.com>,
<mikeamyx515@hotmail.com>

Subject: Snow Removal

Dear Madam Mayor,

I just walked my neighborhood, your neighborhood Mrs. Hack, and I am appalled by the number of residents who do not remove their snow. This neighborhood (Inverness, west on Wimbledon turning into Carmel, turning south on Inverness back to Wimbledon) has treacherous sidewalks due to NO snow/ice removal. There are at least 20 houses, empty lots, and Alvarado who routinely do not remove their snow within the 24 hour time limit our city ordinance requires. Children walk to school every day on these sidewalks and there are a lot of walkers who use these sidewalks every day. There are sidewalks that do not have snow removed that you can see from your house. This is not good for our neighborhood, or for our city as prospective buyers see the many houses in our neighborhood for sale with snow in the driveways and on the sidewalks.

I have read the ordinance, talked with citizens who have complained, and city workers who try to enforce the ordinance. I conclude that the ordinance is ineffective and should be changed. By the time a letter goes out and 5 days pass, the snow could easily be melted. I see that it is easy for people to ignore the letter as our neighbors have routinely done. Plus, the ability for the city to actually collect the \$20/day fine seems costly and ineffective since there is no penalty for not paying and no proof that they are in violation after a letter and 5 days have passed. The labor involved in monitoring and enforcing this ordinance does not pay for itself, plus it does not take care of the problem or promptly removing snow for walking citizens. As an example, I spoke with Darren in maintenance at Alvarado today. I asked him if they planned on removing the snow from their sidewalks. He told me they never remove the snow and that he knew the city did not enforce the ordinance. Once I explained how dangerous the sidewalks were and that children walked on those sidewalks and that I would be calling channel 6 tomorrow, he was agreeable to remove the snow.

I would like to propose the following to replace the current snow removal ordinance - similar to the grass/weed removal ordinance already in place in our city:

- * Require snow be removed from sidewalks and any other public areas such as parking lots within 24 hours. If the property owner does not comply, the city removes the snow immediately and bills the property owner with a notice on their door that day (bright neon color bill affixed to their front door-no postage incurred). The city is not required to wait for a request or complaint. The city should proactively remove snow after 24 hours from sidewalks as they proactively remove snow from streets and other public areas. The city should prioritize sidewalks that are direct routes to schools, shopping areas, and bus stops where people normally walk even in inclement weather. The city should prioritize habitual offenders, especially businesses, churches, and other non-resident properties first as these will be the easiest snow removal fees to collect.
- * No additional notices or requests to pay for snow removal are sent to the property

owner. If the property owner does not pay their bill by the time their property taxes are due, include the snow removal bills, plus interest, in their property tax statements.

* Notify every property owner once of the snow removal ordinance change and new property owners when they purchase property in Lawrence.

From a business perspective this change in the ordinance would actually provide more revenue to the city with a more streamlined and effective way to collect snow removal fees without additional manpower or equipment. The changes would not require any additional staff as there is already staff attempting to enforce the current ordinance that would just change their procedures. The changes would not require any additional equipment as the city already has snow removal equipment. Less costs as no postage beyond the one-time and initial notice would be required. Less paperwork to enforce the ordinance, take complaint calls, etc. You would increase your revenue in a streamlined collection process, making the ordinance really work for the city and its citizens.

I have talked to city workers who would endorse this change to the ordinance. They are as frustrated as the citizens who complain about no snow removal. Since the city already has a policy in place similar to this for weed/grass removal, I assume any studies or consideration has already been done and can be used in consideration of this ordinance change.

I will be monitoring this situation and will continue to see that, at least Alvamar, clears their sidewalks in our neighborhood. I can only assume that other neighborhoods are in worse shape than ours.

I am aware of the volunteer program for snow removal for those that cannot shovel snow. I see no negative impact to this program, in fact it may increase its visibility. Property owners have a responsibility and they should be held accountable for their property and its impact on their neighbors. I know the cost of owning property is always a touchy subject in Lawrence, this ordinance can actually be added to the list of services Lawrence provides for those tax dollars to make it a great place to live.

In closing, I understand this is not a huge problem in the running of the city, but I feel strongly that small changes can have a big impact. We all want to change wasteful, ineffective, and outdated laws/ordinances whenever possible to make our government run more efficient. This ordinance is just such a cause. Small successes such as this increase pride in our community and compel citizens to do even greater things for their community. The change to this ordinance would be a powerful message to the city that we care about our citizens and take pride in providing city services that are streamlined and effective.

I am available should you need my help.

Millie Walter
4709 Wimbledon Drive
785-331-0286

cc: Mike Dever, Bob Chestnut, Boog Highberger, Mike Amyx