By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

City council members were handed petition documents Monday night from residents of the Sage Addition and along West 12th St., requesting a Street Improvement District (SID) for the construction of streets and curb/gutter.

The potential project is also included as one of the priority items in the city's One and Six Year Street Plan adopted at Monday's meeting in other action.

Sid Harchelroad, who presented the petition on behalf of the residents, said the petition signatures include owners of 76 to 77 percent of the property frontage in the addition.

Law requires that a 60 percent minimum be met to create an SID and start plans for streets.

City officials, by checking courthouse land records, will verify that the 60 percent frontage minimum has been met prior to a "sufficiency" hearing set for the council's Feb. 4 meeting.

If it is found the 60 percent requirement is met, and that actual owners of the properties signed the petition, the city can proceed with specs and let bids for the work.

Residents of the SID will pay for majority of the project costs. In past new street projects, the city has paid for the costs to do the intersections, said Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland.

Kent Cordes of Miller & Associates was at the meeting, and said their estimates of the project cost are $1.85 million, which also includes the engineering fees and intersection work.

Of that total, about $103,000 to $110,000 was estimated for costs of the intersections.

The project cost has grown, Cordes said, about 21 percent from estimates given five years ago when Sage Addition residents talked with the council on a street improvement district.

In previous SIDs in the city, assessments to landowners benefitting from the improvements has been on a frontage foot basis.

Some who spoke Monday did not favor assessing based on a lot's frontage due to the irregular shape of many of the addition's lots.

Dirk Haarberg said he'd rather see all lot owners be assessed equally with each lot owner paying the same amount.

Council member Chad Yaw said he didn't really favor the frontage foot assessment, either, suggesting maybe it should be assessed based on the lot's square footage instead.

City Attorney Josh Wendell said the council has discretion on how the costs will be assessed, and could consider any of the options.

"There is no special way the council is obliged to do it," he said.

The petition from the landowners requests a 24-foot wide street and be five inches thick, which also brought forth some discussion.

Cordes said his preliminary engineering plans have 36-inch wide streets, and would prefer a six-inch concrete thickness.

One concern Cordes had with a 24-foot wide street is the use by fire equipment and other large trucks, which would be crowded if on-street parking was allowed.

On the narrower street, Cordes noted, the driving area would actually be about 22 feet since the 24-foot designation is from the back of the curb across to back of the other curb.

Harchelroad said the 24-foot street request in the petition was "a starting point and not set in stone."

There was some question if the streets are built 36 feet wide whether they would affect some of the sprinklers and landscaping in place, and possibly some fire hydrants and light poles.

Harchelroad said drainage in the area is also a concern of many living there, noting that elevations on the current gravel roads vary throughout the addition.

Cordes said they will address the elevations of the streets before the work would start, and reviewed the tie-ins to existing storm sewers that are in the plans.

City Attorney Wendell said it's part of the city's responsibility to make sure the project is bid correctly.

Harchelroad asked about the possibility of using city sale tax money earmarked for the street department to help with the cost on 12th Street.

Leyland noted the recent use of sales tax money on the 5th, 9th and 12th St. repaving projects completed a couple years ago was considered maintenance of existing streets.

"Repaving is a general obligation of the city," she said.

There is about $439,000 in the street fund from sales tax, according to Leyland.

When bids for the project would be let was uncertain, as the city may combine the project with the opening of 2nd Street in the city's Cornerstone property.

Both the SID in the Sage Addition and along West 12th, as well as 2nd Street, are in the city's One & Six Year Street Plan as priority projects. Cordes also presented that plan to council members at Monday's meeting.

Special meeting set

A special council meeting has been set for Monday, Jan. 28, at 6 p.m. on the proposed street work in Sage Addition and West 12th St.

Leyland said the council will likely finalize its decision on street width, extent of curb and gutter and how far to extend the project on West 12th.

Assessment of costs will also be addressed.

In setting the special meeting, Leyland said the council members felt it was in the best interest to have their plans finalized so the residents will be able figure costs before the project proceeds.