Kalamazoo Avenue project slated to begin in March

PETOSKEY — The City of Petoskey will pay $1.7 million this spring and summer to have a portion of Kalamazoo Avenue repaved.

The project, which has been in the works for several months, is slated to take place in two phases, running from March to June and June to September, respectively. The project is largely intended to allow for utility improvements in the area, but is also slated to include reconfigured curb lines, vehicle parking and sidewalk improvements. The project will affect portions of the road from East Mitchell Street to Jennings Avenue, as well as a small segment of Jennings Avenue east of Kalamazoo adjacent to the “Corner Market” convenience store.

Utility upgrades include water main and valve replacement, water service line investigations and upgrades, sanitary sewer main and manhole structure replacement, and replacement of storm sewer main and catch basin structures.

Early drafts of the plan would have resulted in reduced parking for the store, but suggested adding parallel parking along the street to make up for the possible lost parking spaces that would be incurred in the course of the repaving project. After months of back-and-forth, officials finally landed on a concept that extends sidewalks in both the Jennings and Kalamazoo rights-of-way, creates perpendicular parking in the Jennings Avenue right-of-way and eliminates all parallel parking bump-outs.

City council members approved that plan in November. This week, council members awarded the job to Tri-County Excavating Group in Harbor Springs, who turned in the lowest bid out of four applications.

Phase 1 of the project, beginning in March, runs from East Mitchell to Hoffman Street. Phase 2 will move south toward Ottawa Elementary School and will begin in June.

“We hope to be substantially complete by the early September school start date,” Public Works Director Mike Robbins said Monday.

Although the project is listed in the city’s capital improvement plan for 2020, Robbins said there were some concerns that the money would be too tight in this year’s budget to complete the project, especially given the fact that a number of erosion projects along Petoskey’s bayfront would also need to be funded.

But he said funding sources for the Kalamazoo Street project are mostly restricted funds and would not have been available for erosion anyway.

City employees are also working with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council representatives to design a “rain garden” at the intersection of Sunset Court and Kalamazoo Avenue.