

Present: Mayor – Joyce Hudson
Council members Jeff Kennedy
Jim Aden
Tim Strauser
Jeff Whiting
City Administrator Bruce Clymer
City Attorney Mike Bacon
City Clerk Connie L. Dalrymple

Also present: Shane Gruber, Schemmer reps Mark Lutjeharms, Lonnie Berkland, and Doug Holle, Scott Bahe, Shawn Boyd, Frank Boyd, Robert Boyd, Joe Richeson, Joan Ostergard, Larry Ostergard, Jeff Morris, Donna Morris, Lori Clymer, Josie Clymer, Mary Lou Block, Dale Block, Lois Stanton, Anne Anderson, Koby Rickertsen

Mayor Hudson opened the meeting and public hearings at 7:00 p.m. Advance notice and a copy of the agenda were given to the Council and members of the press. City Council meetings are conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, a copy of which is available for public inspection on the north wall of the Council Chambers.

The public hearing on the transportation study was taken up at 7:00 p.m. Schemmer Association has been working on a transportation study that includes truck routes and the feasibility of a second overpass since April. A public meeting was held on July 27 to solicit public comments on the results of the study. They have tried to address those comments in a draft of the study and will take technical questions today.

They have tried to compile a safe, efficient evaluation of the feasibility of an additional overpass and connecting roads that also diverts truck traffic from the downtown and residential areas. The entire community was considered in the evaluation. Any State funding assistance requires a grade separation study and any new grade separation requires a minimum of two at-grade rail crossing closings. There are 20 criteria for a grade separation, one being a minimum exposure of 75,000 vehicles.

The traffic analysis included traffic volume, train volume, crash data and exposure factors. Gothenburg's existing combined factor is more than five times greater than the 75,000 minimum. The East side alternative sees 500 to 600 vehicles per day, the West side alternative sees 2,000 to 3,000 per day and would relieve some Lake Ave traffic. Factoring growth and traffic increase, it's estimated our exposure factor without an overpass will be 612,500 by 2020 and 1,087,713 by the year 2030.

Screening criteria used for each proposed site:

West A (1st Street): \$15.8 million

- Pros: Promotes future growth
Provides alternate route for through traffic
Provides greatest traffic relief on Lake Avenue
Easy connectivity to existing streets
Provides access to existing industry
- Cons: Impact on Agricultural property
Minor impact to property in floodplain

West B (4th Street): \$14.8 million

- Pros: same as West A concept
Cons: same as West A concept

Near East: \$14.8 million

This option was eliminated because it follows Avenue M to 27th Street and there is less vehicle traffic and more residential properties on Avenue M.

Far East: \$20.6 million

This option was eliminated because of impact from airport property and it required more right-of-way.

At the July 27 meeting, 51 people signed in, although more were there, and 23 comment sheets were left. Of those, 18 were opposed to the viaduct, two supported it, and two did not respond.

Comments supporting the viaduct included:

Rail crossing safety

Promotes growth

Train horn noise is lessened if two crossings are closed

The preferred option was West A with 1st Street as the connector because it provides better access to industrial areas in the southwest area and it avoids the existing Hiway 47 / 4th Street intersection.

Comments in opposition:

It's unnecessary

Cost

Loss of at-grade crossing access

Impact on private property

The West A / 1st Street option is also the technical recommendation of the Schemmer study team. It would consist of two 12 foot lanes, a 10 foot sidewalk and two eight foot rights-of-way. State funding would require two grade crossings be closed, Lake Avenue and Cottonwood Dr. Typical construction cost share is 80% federal, 10% state, 5% railroad, and 5% local.

Action required will be to hear public comment, then have Council approve and accept the report and recommendation of the team. If Council decides to proceed, the Department of Roads will review the study, preliminary design would begin, and necessary documents prepared. A request for funding approval, right-of-way acquisition, and then final design all occur before construction begins.

The City will include a public question sheet as a bill stuffer in the utility bills in November. Once tabulated those responses will be included in the final report of the Schemmer team and then the Council will take action on the report. Construction would require a separate decision. It is such a long process that the earliest construction could begin would be 2016, probably past 2020.

At this point, the podium was opened to the public for questions and comments (Q- question, A - answer, C - comment).

C: If a viaduct is mainly for the railroad, they should contribute more than 5%.

Q: What's the impact to retail stores when you skirt a town? Are those numbers available? Surely stores would appear along the new route.

Q: If there are to be two at-grade crossings closed, why not the Road 410 crossing since the viaduct would be 1000 feet away?

A: The Dep't of Roads wants the most for their money. There is more traffic exposure at the Cottonwood Dr. and Lake Avenue crossings. Road 410 has less than 100 vehicles a day crossing it. According to Gary Thayer of the Dep't of Roads, if the City chooses to go forward with the project, the City could ask to close all three crossings and it would help the funding.

Q: If the Council decides to move forward, what recourse do the citizens have? It should go to a public vote. If the Council says 'no' and the railroad says 'yes' and will pay the cost, will there be a vote about closings and funding?

A: This is a City project, not a railroad project, and the railroad will not just close two crossings. A public vote would be at the discretion of the Council.

Q: Should voting have been done in the first place? It seems like a waste of money with no public input.

A. The Council goes through lots of issues as representatives of the people. Funding for the study is partially provided by the Dawson County Transportation Safety Committee. The entire County pays property taxes into the DCTSC which was formed for railroad safety. By State Statute, the Committee consists of three first class City Council members (Lexington) and three County Commissioners. The Committee has decided to provide funds county-wide. The Gothenburg study cost \$50,000 but only \$19,000 is City funds. All of this originated with the 1995 Comprehensive Plan and the traffic issues that were recognized at that time.

As a Council, we try to use a 'crystal ball' to look into future community needs. This was an opportunity to cost share and see about future needs. If Gothenburg continues to grow, we need to be aware of issues 15 years from now. Studies such as this help see how the future may look based on current activity. Projects such as these take a very long time to complete. For example, we were just told it could be 2020 before construction begins, if we have no study in place, we could add another ten years.

Q: Has any thought been given to upgrading the current overpass? It's too narrow for combines and farm equipment. Going west is an even further loop.

C: Maybe the surveys should have been done before spending money on the study.

Whiting moved, Kennedy seconded, to close the hearing at 7:46 p.m. Roll call vote: Yea - Strauser, Aden, Kennedy, Whiting. Nay - none.

The public hearing on a request from Mike Wagner for a special use permit to place three 3000 gallon poly tanks on the property at 811 6th Street was taken up at 7:47 p.m. The Planning & Zoning Commission met

last week and continued the hearing to a special meeting on November 1 hoping to have answers to some of their questions. There was no input and the hearing will be continued to November 2.

Kennedy moved, Whiting seconded, approving the consent agenda that included:

- City Council minutes - October 5
- Cemetery Board Report- July, August, September
- Treasurer's Report - September
- Annual Treasurer's Report - Oct 1 2009 thru Sept 30, 2010
- Planning & Zoning Commission minutes - October 12

Roll call vote: Yea - Strauser, Aden, Whiting, Kennedy. Nay - none.

Kennedy moved, Strauser seconded, allowing payment of claims against the City, \$75,590.80, except #1920, #1323, and #1308; Public Works Division \$369,172.58; and the October 14 payroll of \$31,223.48. Roll Call vote: Yea - Aden, Strauser, Whiting, Kennedy. Nay - none.

Aden moved, Strauser seconded, allowing payment of claim #1920 to Kennedy Landscape Services. Roll call vote: Yea - Whiting, Strauser Aden. Nay - none.

Strauser moved, Kennedy seconded, allowing payment of claim #1308 to Runza. Roll call vote: Yea - Aden, Kennedy, Strauser. Nay - none.

Whiting moved, Kennedy seconded, allowing payment of claim #1323 to T & T Corporation. Roll call vote: Yea - Kennedy, Aden, Whiting. Nay - none.

Open Forum

- We have advertised for a Depot lease after November 30.
- There will be an open house at City Hall on November 4 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. to view the contents of the time capsule. The newly renovated police department will also be open to the public at that time.

Superintendent Teahon has proposed to the School Board a retreat of the governing entities, the hospital, City, School, and County representatives to discuss any issue of mutual importance and benefit. The Council agreed it was a good idea.

Aden moved, Kennedy seconded, to pass and approve Resolution 2010-12 approving a Deed of Conservation Easement between Gifford Massie and the Central Platte Natural Resources District. Roll call vote: Yea - Whiting, Strauser, Kennedy, Aden. Nay - none.

Resolution 2010-13 is a redraft of a prior resolution that named two spots on the north side of 9th Street for handicap parking. The Gothenburg State Bank owns the property adjacent to the east handicap spot and the new resolution allows the elimination of the handicap designation upon 90 days notice from the bank that they will open the fourth lane of their drive-thru. Kennedy moved, Strauser seconded, to pass and approve Resolution 2020-13 as proposed. Roll call vote: Yea - Whiting, Aden, Strauser, Kennedy. Nay - none.

Strauser moved, Whiting seconded, approving Drawdown #14 on the Downtown Revitalization Project, \$34,518. Roll call vote: Yea - Aden, Kennedy, Whiting, Strauser. Nay - none.

Strauser moved, Kennedy seconded, appointing Joyce Hudson, Bruce Clymer, Shane Gruber, J Buddenberg, Tim Strauser and one as yet unnamed citizen to a Community-wide Sewer Study Committee. Miller & Assoc will be included. Roll call vote: Yea - Whiting, Aden, Kennedy, Strauser. Nay - none.

Strauser moved, Whiting seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Roll call vote: Yea - Kennedy, Aden, Whiting, Strauser. Nay - none. The next regular meeting will be November 2, 2010.

Joyce Hudson, Mayor

Connie L. Dalrymple, City Clerk