

Public Safety & Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes, 3/12/10

Present: Ron Adam, Daryn Hamilton, Michael Halley, John Revolinski, Julie Harvey, Dan Smithburg, Bill Blackmore, Brian Horsfield, David Matt, Kate and Barry Ross

Points of discussion

Dan Smithburg expressed his concerns over the traffic situation at the intersection of N. Morgan and E. Hempstead. He explained that a vehicle is often parked on the East side of Morgan near the intersection, forcing traffic into the left lane when turning onto Hempstead and causing issues with snow removal. According to Police Chief Julie Harvey the vehicle is currently parking in a legal location, and there has only been one accident at the intersection in the sixteen years she's been with the City law enforcement. The committee discussed the possibility of putting up a "No Parking Here to Corner" sign in the location, though it would require a change in City ordinance, several readings at City Council, and would set a precedent for similar intersections in town. After discussing the issue the committee decided that Adam, as committee chair, would attempt to resolve the issue by talking directly to the owner of vehicle.

Bill Blackmore, on behalf of the Fairfield Train Safety and Quiet Zone Committee, gave a summary of financial position and proposal for the Fairfield Quiet Zone. The proposal meets all the guidelines set forth by the Federal Railroad Association (FRA) to create safer crossings in order to achieve a Quiet Zone, and the QZ Committee is willing to work with Burlington Northern Railroad on any supplemental safety measures. The key elements of the proposal are:

- 1) City closes the N. Main St. railroad crossing and appropriate half the funds paid from Burlington Northern to the QZ
- 2) Proposal for the 4th St. crossing involves a hybrid median system to accommodate the two sets of rarely used tracks south of the crossing.

The QZ Committee is requesting from the City Council:

- City agrees to contribute 50% of the money received from BNSF about \$30K for closing the 8th St. crossing.
- City agrees to contribute 50% of the money received from BNSF for closing 3rd and Main Streets crossings.
- No tax revenues are to be spent for the Quiet Zone (all funds have been raised privately).

Hamilton raised some concerns about the financing relying too much on pledges and/or bank loans. Blackmore acknowledged that some funds are pending the approval of the proposal by the City, but is confident that the pledges will come in at that time. The QZ Committee is willing to agree in writing that if there are costs overruns then the taxpayers will not be asked to pay for that, and to complete transparency in terms of the financing of the project.

French-Reniker did the original engineering work pro-bono, so the cost of the next phase of engineering needs to be ascertained. The Public Safety & Transportation Committee recommends that the QZ Committee get more information about the engineering costs and talk to FEDA about the two tracks outside of the cross-bars at the 4th St. crossing, then come back and report on those details. Halley will serve as the project lead for the Quiet Zone for the City.

Recommendations/Actions

- Adam will speak with the owner of the vehicle who parks at the Morgan/Hempstead intersection.
- Committee will wait to hear back from the QZ Committee before making a recommendation to the full council.

Signature of Chairperson _____