

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Tim Wilson called the workshop meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Tim Wilson; Councilmembers: Ken Caylor, Dan Dever, Genna Dorow, Charles Garcia, Kenneth Johnson, Mark Snyder, and Marc Spohr.

Also Present: City Administrator Ehman Sheldon; Department Heads: IT Manager Stan Anderton, Police Chief Steven Dunnagan, and City Clerk Debbie Kudrna.

DOT PRESENTATION – SR & 1ST AVENUE

Bob Romine, Project Engineer and Assistant Regional Administrator Kirk Berg from the Department of Transportation (DOT) were present. Mr. Romine reviewed the completed improvements at SR 24, under the SR 26 overpass which improved vertical clearance. He explained that DOT has found that the cross movement and turning movements at the SR 26 and 1st Avenue intersection have created traffic collisions and their project is to reduce those by restricting some of the movements. He reviewed DOT's project for the intersection at SR 26 and south 1st Avenue, which includes providing left turns onto 1st Avenue for eastbound traffic on SR 26; however it will eliminate cross traffic between 1st Avenue and 1st Avenue spur and will eliminate left turns from the 1st Avenue spur westbound onto SR 26. This will re-direct traffic onto south 1st Avenue and Columbia Street between 1st and Broadway Avenues. The radius corners on Columbia Street will be improved to accommodate haul trucks. They will install raised isles on SR 26 to inhibit traffic making illegal turns. Mr. Romine explained that this project has been going on since 2005 and the City endorsed the project, as it is currently shown. Stage 1 was funded based on the City's endorsement. He showed existing traffic projections at the SR 26 and 1st Avenue intersection, adjacent intersections, and future traffic counts with the completed project. He noted that the projections show increased traffic along 1st Avenue because of the reconfiguration. Mr. Romine advised that WSDOT staff provided the traffic projections. State Representative Joe Schmick stated that he has concerns of putting the existing businesses in harm's way and feels that less people will stop at the local businesses. Further comments were made by the audience. State Representative Susan Fagan asked if there were traffic projections based upon reduced speed on SR 26. Mr. Romine advised that their traffic projections are independent of speed limits.

Representative Fagan asked if they have any data that shows DOT's configuration is superior to reducing speed on SR 26 and asked if they have considered other solutions to not impact the community so adversely. She asked if they have data that would show how this will impact the community economically. Mr. Romine advised that he does have data for economic impacts and the City was involved in the value engineer process, in which they discussed options to reduce accidents at this intersection. Mr. Lance Silva from Inland Oil said that due to the current economics, changes should be considered to take a softer approach. Mr. Shawn Logan asked what level the City endorsed the project. City Administrator Ehman Sheldon advised that in 2005, the City was involved in the value engineer study relative to the intersection. It was a week long study and he attended the last day. At that point they were considering blocking off 1st Avenue because of the number of accidents and the safety factor. Then they discussed the installation of the island on SR 26 to reduce crossing traffic, with the caveat that there would be three public hearings with the business owners and City Council to talk about the final design and the desires of the community. Mr. Sheldon stated that we have had two public hearings and several public meetings with business owners. Councilmember Johnson advised that Council was provided the DOT proposal this year. They will continue to monitor the intersection and accidents and if they increase, they will revisit the issue. Councilmember Johnson noted that this will greatly affect east bound traffic and feels it will be confusing to drivers to get back onto the highway. Councilmember Dorow said that traffic will pull off SR 26 at Royal City because it is very easy to do at that location. Councilmember Dever said that it will be cumbersome and we will have the same issue at SR 26 and 14th Avenue in the future. He suggested signage to slow traffic down on SR 26.

Mayor Wilson noted that traffic already backs up at the intersection at SR 24 and the 1st Avenue spur. Mr. Romine explained that they are looking at improvements to the radius to help with the site distance problem at SR 24 and the 1st Avenue spur. Representative Fagan asked if DOT is bound by all recommendations by the Council in 2005 and whether they had all of this information at that time.

Mr. Romine advised that he received the traffic projections last Friday and reiterated that DOT has softened the endorsed concept some. Representative Fagan asked if DOT would take into consideration the economic changes. Mr. Sheldon explained that the previous Council did see most of this; however, there was a caveat about subject to Council and community input. Mr. Romine advised that the City got a State grant to finance improvements at the SR 26 and 1st Avenue intersection and the improvements at Columbia Street. Ross Ogan asked how traffic will turn off of the 1st Avenue spur east onto SR 26 and stated that he has concerns of increased traffic accidents at this location. Mr. Romine advised they have studied this a lot and their proposal provides a more controlled access and extra radius. Citizen Eugene Bain asked if they researched building a longer acceleration lane for the traffic on 1st Avenue spur eastbound onto SR 26. Mr. Romine stated that they talked about a lot of scenarios during the value engineer study; however, they have to stay within funding constraints. He asked that we look at this as an interim fix to the accident issues; a long term solution would be an interchange. However there is not enough funding for that. Councilmember Caylor spoke about a local report in 1991 that indicated that WSDOT said warning signs for each traffic direction are in the plans and stop lights for north/south traffic. He stated that there are several intersections on state highways in Eastern Washington that have traffic lights and the reduced speeds. He mentioned that if speed was lowered and a sign that would show traffic their speed, it would slow vehicles down. He mentioned that stop lights will be necessary on this stretch of the State highway and if trucks were restricted to not make left hand turns off of SR 26, traffic accidents would reduce. He mentioned that this configuration will increase vehicles stopping on the highway and people walking to the businesses. Councilmember Caylor said that the City endorsed the improvement project at SR 24 and wanted to see the final plan for SR 26 and 1st Avenue. Mayor Wilson stated that he would like to see the speed reduced to 35 mph. Mr. Romine reported that this second phase will cost approximately \$600,000. Councilmember Johnson reiterated that he supports reducing the speed limit on the highway and adding additional signing, which would save the State construction money. Then, DOT could study traffic accidents after the speed limit is reduced. Councilmember Garcia noted that this intersection is a nightmare and he is concerned of drivers not turning off of the highway to our local businesses. He is concerned that those businesses will lose money if these improvements are completed. He also supports traffic signals and reducing speed.

Assistant Regional Administrator Kirk Berg said that they respect the comments; however DOT has a job to identify areas of high accidents and research opportunities to reduce accidents. He explained that they have worked with the City on the project and look forward to the City's endorsement as they move forward. However DOT will not reduce speed and add traffic lights as a solution. He asked for data and facts about potential business's financial losses. He asked that Council set a public hearing. Mayor Wilson stated that they appreciate the left turn lanes and wants the businesses to stay healthy and have very minimal impact. Mayor Wilson advised that they will put it on the next agenda. Councilmember Snyder stated that this will create a bigger problem at the 1st Avenue spur and SR 24. There were further comments on the project and the impact to local businesses. Councilmember Spohr advised that there was recently a 3 car injury accident at this intersection. He is concerned about the letter from the State Representatives and the recent letter from DOT. He noted that their projections show that this will increase traffic at this intersection and it is an intuitive feeling that the businesses will be impacted by these changes because there isn't supporting data. He advised that several years ago he endorsed any improvements that would reduce the accidents at this intersection. Councilmember Dorow stated that something needs to be done for safety; however, she is concerned that this will affect our businesses. Mayor Wilson advised that this will be discussed at the next meeting.

WELL #6 DISCUSSION

City Engineer Larry Julius updated the Council on Well #6. A meeting was held with Department of Health (DOH) about their potential rule change relevant to fluoride levels. Currently 4 mg/L of fluoride is the maximum contaminant level, when corrective action is to occur. DOH has reported that they are considering lowering the contaminant level at .7 mg/L to 1mg/L. He believes that communities will be given time to research how it will affect their water systems and plan for changes. The City's water system plan included fluoride levels, excluding Well #6, and the average is 1.1 mg/L to 3.1 mg/L.

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They met with the well contractor and the contractor has said that they are going to try to eliminate the vibration in Well #6. The contractor has asked that if it is determined that the vibration was not caused by their construction activities, will the City pay for the repair work. He noted there was no vibration before the contractor took the pump apart and reassembled it. Mayor Wilson asked Representative Schmick if they have any authority over the DOH and EPA. Representative Schmick said that he would like to hear what basis the lower fluoride came from. Mr. Sheldon advised that EPA has a federal mandate to increase testing by 37 more tests each year. Councilmember Caylor noted that if the fluoride level is lowered, it could be filtered out, but he feels the State would have to help financially. Mr. Julius advised that EPA and DOH will present the rule changes and will hold a series of hearings throughout the State. In the past, there have been funding sources available; however it may be different in today's economy. Mr. Julius explained that there are a number of possibilities for the vibration. Mr. Sheldon said that staff is asking for direction from Council to find out whether the vibration is related to the construction project or not. If it is not, then an estimate to repair will be forwarded to the Council. Mr. Julius advised that the cost to remove the pump could be \$10,000 - \$15,000 or a lot less based upon the actual cause of the vibration. Councilmember Caylor asked if there is any insurance coverage for this. Mr. Julius advised that if it is from something other than construction, insurance may be a source. Mr. Sheldon advised that the City's insurance has paid for some well repairs. Mr. Julius advised that staff and representatives from Gray & Osborne will be onsite with the contractor. Mr. Sheldon cautioned about running the well more than normal because the contractor may say that we made the situation worse.

It was Council's consensus to allow the contractor to proceed forward, but the Council needs to know the projected costs.

MARIJUANA GROW

Police Chief Dunnagan explained the phases for growing marijuana and how improvements have been made over the past 30-50 years to grow higher THC marijuana. He showed two videos about growing marijuana and gave more information about factors involved in growing marijuana. Councilmember Johnson noted it was important to have State Representatives hear this discussion because of the new state legislation that was passed relevant to collective marijuana gardens.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Wilson made the following announcements:

- Adams County Fire District #5 is having their second bi-annual meeting on Tuesday, October 11th at 7:00 p.m., during their regular Commissioner meeting.
- The first three budget committee meetings are this week: Contracts – Wednesday, October 5th; Street Fund – Thursday, October 6th; Solid Waste – Friday, October 7th.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to discuss, Mayor Wilson adjourned the workshop at 8:55 p.m.

By: _____
TIM WILSON, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: _____
DEBBIE L. KUDRNA, City Clerk