

SPECIAL SESSION CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Hall Conference Room
109 E. Olive Street, Bloomington, IL 61701
Monday, December 19, 2016; 5:00 PM

1. Call to Order

The Council convened in Special Session in the Council Chambers, City Hall Building at 5:00 p.m., Monday, December 19, 2016. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Renner.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Renner directed City Clerk, Cherry Lawson to call the roll and the following members of Council answered present:

Aldermen Joni Painter, Amelia Buragas, Mboka Mwilambwe Scott Black (5:19 PM), Kevin Lower, Jim Fruin, Karen Schmidt, and Mayor Tari Renner.

Staff present: David Hales, City Manager; Jeff Jurgens, Corporation Counsel; Steve Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager; Cherry Lawson, City Clerk; Brian Mohr, Fire Chief, Nicole Albertson, Human Resource Director, and Betty McCain, ASC.

3. Public Comment

Reserved until the start of the open session.

4. Consideration of approving the minutes of the Special City Council Meetings for December 12, 2016. (*Recommend that the reading of the minutes be dispensed and approved as printed.*)

Mayor Renner requested a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Motion by Alderman Painter seconded by Alderman Lower to approve minutes of the Special City Council Meetings for December 12, 2016.

Ayes: Aldermen, Painter, Mwilambwe, Lower, Buragas, Schmidt, Hauman, Sage and Fruin.

Nays: None

Absent: Alderman Scott Black

Motion carried.

5. Motion to Enter into Closed Session

Mayor Renner requested a motion to enter into Closed Session.

Motion by Alderman Painter, seconded by Alderman Hauman to recess to Executive Session per Section 2(c) (12) of 5 ILCS 120/2, Section 2(c) (12) of 5 ILCS 120, and Section 2(c) (12) of 5 ILCS 120.

Mayor Renner directed the Clerk to call the roll which resulted in the following:

Ayes: Aldermen, Painter, Buragas, Hauman, Schmidt, Mwilambwe, Lower, Sage, and Fruin

Nays: None.

Absent: Alderman Scott Black

Motion carried.

6. Motion to Adjourn Closed Session.

Mayor Renner requested a motion to Adjourn Closed Session

Motion made by Alderman Painter, seconded by Alderman Hauman to return to Special Session.

Motion carried (viva voce).

7. Return to Special Session Meeting.

Mayor Renner requested a motion to adjourn the Special Session Meeting.

Motion made by Alderman Black, seconded by Alderman Schmidt, to return to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

Ayes: Aldermen Mwilambwe, Black, Schmidt, Painter, Fruin, Buragas, Black, and Lower

Nays: None.

Motion carried.

3. Public Comment

Marty Seigel
Dan Holder
Rita Mikel

Mayor Renner closed the meeting to Public Comment.

7. Consideration of an Ordinance Reducing Speed Limits on Hershey Road, Fort Jesse to Rainbow Drive. *(Recommend that the That the Ordinance Amending Ordinance 2015-15, and City Code Chapter 29, Section 156.5, which provides Altered Speed Limits on certain City streets, be approved to reduce the speed limit to 30 mph on Hershey Road from Ft. J Jesse to Empire (Rt. 9), and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents. (Presentation by David Hales, City Manager and City Staff 10 minutes, and Council discussion 20 minutes.)*

Mr. Hales stated, staff has been trying to do some catchup by bringing forward items that staff has worked on for several months. One of which is the proposed speed limit reduction on Hershey Road and the proposed Linden Street Widening project. The City felt it would be best to treat this as a Special Meeting to provide Council the opportunity to have discussion and vote on this matter if it desire. The City is not trying to insinuate that the Council could not take other action on these items, i.e. no action, receive additional input, or delay.

The City Council is ultimately the final policy making board to change speed limits from the current state statute requirement of 30mph. It is referred to in the materials and alternate speed limits. Not only has Alderman Painter, but the residents of Spring Ridge and others requested that the City consider reducing the speed limit on the north portion of Hershey Road to G.E. Road south, and to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 35mph or lower speed limit. The City has been assisted by Public Works Director Jim Karch, City Engineer Kevin Kothe, Assistant to the City Manager Melissa Hon, and others who have been involved in bringing these items forward.

Mr. Hales stated, Phillip Allen from Farnsworth who completed an Engineering Study of the speed limit issue in that report. He sees this recommendation has the potential for a resetting of the City's policy practice moving forward in establishing speed limits. From a policy standpoint, Bloomington City Council has given a lot of weight to the Engineering Study on the speed limit, especially if it is something more than 30mph. Hales stated that Mr. Allen in his recommendations suggest the speed limit be retained for the most part. A portion of the engineering analyses makes use of such things as the 85th percentile (what the speed is for the 85% of vehicles traveling the street). In the Farnsworth report, the City looked at the area in front of the Spring Ridge Subdivision, as concerns were raised by the residents—possibly cite distance was poor; hence, a need for speed reduction. The City wanted to ensure there were additional analysis on visibility.

There are other factors, too, that are taken into account. However, as Council review the City's recommendations, other issues that staff has brought forward for Council consideration: 1) Public safety, as the City begins to look at Complete Streets, into the everyday decisions that are being made by staff, and Council as well, should the City begin to give consideration to or greater weight to the other users of the road besides the motorist. Specifically relating to bicyclist or pedestrians. As the speed increases among motorist, as does the potential for injury or fatalities for a bicyclist or pedestrians.

Mr. Hales stated another concern that was mentioned is consistency with the Town Manager. He provided a brief meeting to ascertain the process of establishing staff recommendation to moving to a policy decision on speed limits. Town of Normal approach factors the same process as the City. They speak with the engineers to consider all of the factors, conduct a speed study if necessary, reviews all of the factors that go into a professional engineering analysis, then make a recommendation. However, in the case of Normal if you have driven in both cities, one would find the arterial and collector roads speed limits have been maintained at the state statutory level or at a rate of 30mph.

When you establish speed limits, speed studies and engineering analyses provides guidance and recommendations. Those reports do not mandate, according to the manual of uniform traffic, but it is not the end all. Recommendations are subject to City Council approval as the governing board, and it is ultimately the Council decision to set the speed limit. In Normal's case, they have traditionally maintained the speed at lower limits although, there are speed studies that could justify the increase in speed. Consistency is a critical principal as the City looks at speed limits or other use of traffic control devices. He asked whether it is Council desire to place a higher priority on Complete Streets at this time.

Mr. Hales stated the recommendation before Council can be formulated in a policy reset, assumingly Council approve it. As the City continues to develop complete street policies, principles and a plan of action, that along with consideration of consistencies between two cities in setting speed limits should go a long way in making a safer situation for multiple users of our streets. He recommends reducing the speed limit on the north end of Hershey Road to 30mph for public safety reasons, and to achieve greater consistency from Bloomington to Normal or vice versa. Mr. Hales asked Mr. Allen to provide a brief synopsis of his Engineering Study.

Mr. Allen stated, his company was hired to conduct a speed study for this segment of the roadway. They looked at three different segments between Rainbow to G.E. Road, G.E. Road to Jumer and Jumer to College. They did not study up to Fort Jesse. One thing that they found was there were integral speed limits in the community. Much of the traffic that was moving in that 85th percentile bracket did capture the speed at 40mph which is currently posted. The middle section between G.E. and Jumer was higher at 44mph, and south of G.E. Road to Rainbow was 35mph. He stated, they combined that with the upper limit of the 10mph pace (which is the 10mph of which most motorist are traveling above the posted speed.). In accordance with the IDOT Procedure, one of the nationally recognized methods by the FHWA which is about 5 of 6 put together by the states to set speed limits.

When those two factors (85th percentile and the upper 10mph motorist) together, you would notice that the adjusted upper 10mph speed south of G.E. and Rainbow was 36mph, which would indicate a 35mph posting as it currently states. From G.E. to Jumer the speed was 44mph, which would indicate a 40 to 45mph, and from Jumer to College was 38mph which would indicate a 40mph. Knowing that the section between G.E. up to College is more of a combined segment, although Jumer is there. In reviewing that as one complete segment, it had an adjusted speed at 38mph which would indicate the 40mph as posted.

Mr. Allen stated they looked at site distance. They looked at the traffic from the entrance to the subdivision on the side of Hershey Road between the two curbs, and were able to see the traffic flow from north to south, measuring the distance that a driver could see from the center of the lane that vehicles would be traveling. They found that site distance was adequate for a semi-truck to pull out to a distance corresponding to a traveling speed of 50mph. For passenger cars, according to IDOT tables and factors equating to 75mph. That means, for a vehicle (not traveling 75mph) leaving the subdivision, the distance a person traveling is far enough away to allow for a person to turn out of the subdivision.

The 40mph speed limit at G.E. Road is consistent with arterial roads, generally speaking. As referenced by Mr. Hales, differing town set speed limits for arterial roadways whose general purpose is to move traffic through an area.

Alderman Painter stated, she doesn't dispute the science of Mr. Allen's report. As a resident who lives in that area, she and other have been nearly struck by oncoming traffic flow as they attempt to leave the subdivision as motorist seems to travel at least 50mph. The great majority of the neighbors in that area of the community would like to see the speed limit reduce. The Council's responsibility is to review the comments of the community and take action accordingly. She thanked Mr. Allen for the work that he and Farnsworth had done in bringing it forward.

She would like to see the speed limit changed and for the City to established similar policies to the Town of Normal related to speed limits, as she views it as another way of collaborating with community partners.

Alderman Mwilambwe commented on the 85th percentile equating to more than 85 percent of the motorist traveling at 40mph. Mr. Allen stated the number would be less. An 85th percentile of speed would be 39mph, means that 85 percent of the motorist are traveling slower or equal to 39mph. Alderman Mwilambwe asked whether that could be a function of the posted speed limit. Mr. Allen stated to some extent it could be; however, the Federal Highway Administration have conducted studies and they have consistently shown that people tend to drive the speed that they are comfortable with on the roadway, which is where traffic calming measures come into practice.

Alderman Mwilambwe stated that he, too, is in favor of lowering the speed limit, although he is not challenging the science behind consistency.

Alderman Buragas stated, regarding the 85th percentile with the traffic studies that are perform, they are very helpful to have that scientific perspective, but it is not the complete perspective. These traffic studies take a very traffic centered point of view. It does not answer the question of how speed impacts quality of life on city streets for all persons who use the roadways. It is her hope that the Council does not show or indicate that they do create the impression that Council does not respect those professional evaluations, as the Council does so. However, there are other issues that the Council needs to consider brought forward. She has not heard or received any comments or concerns that reducing the speed limit on this roadway would make the road less safe. The consensus is that a reduction in the speed limit would provide some measure of safety for the residents and motorist driving in that area. She very much support the reduction.

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Buragas stated that the 85th percentile is the speed limit that drivers are most comfortable driving. Council supports a lower speed here, not just in terms of speed limit, Council needs to continue to look at the roadway and determine why motorists are comfortable driving substantially faster the posted limits, as well as look at ways to encourage them to drive a more reasonable speed.

Alderman Sage congratulated his Aldermen for bringing this item forward. He acknowledged Alderman Painter passion for bring the item forward as it primarily affects her community. He asked of Mr. Hales, how the community can become more proactive as the City moves towards its Complete Streets Policy, i.e. shared roadways with non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians. He is in support of this item as well.

Alderman Schmidt stated that she is very much in support of lowering the speed limit in this area, knowing that the Council has adopted a complete street policy approach. She asked, when the speed limit is changed on the roadway, what is the City doing to help motorist to adhere to the speed limit.

Mr. Hales asked Mr. Karch to provide comments as his department does a phenomenal job in helping motorist adjust to a change in speed on our roadways. This culture change in Complete Streets is a long-term endeavor. As the Council discuss this item, the City has acknowledge the fact the staff needs more training, and began to look closely at how this will affect the community through policies and practices. The Council can began to reaffirm that this shift will become standards by which the community adheres to when traveling Bloomington roadways.

Mr. Karch stated, it is a struggle and a challenge for his department. As Mr. Hales stated, the roadway was designed for a specific speed limit. His department can put up message board signs, flags, and signage to draw attention to that change. Long-term change will likely result when there is street resurfacing or when reconstruction needs to be done, the City needs to look at different standards for our roadways. With Complete Streets, nothing has yet been finalized. There is the ability to make changes as needed moving forward. He stated, this is likely a challenge for the police department in handling a decrease in the speed limit.

Alderman Lower stated, he supports Alderman Painter action in bring this forward to reduce the speed limit within her community. However, he does not support Complete Streets, because he reacts to what his constituency ask for; they have not asked for this. He is not hearing from hundreds of bicyclists or pedestrians who walk the streets to meet the compatible requirements. There is a negative impact in terms of economics, when the City moves to slow the pace of traffic down. He acknowledge it is probably safer for reduced speeds, but stated it is not reality. He stated that staff and Council stop trying to make Bloomington into other communities as the infrastructure is different for Bloomington and may have a negative economic impact. He will not support a Complete Street Policy for Bloomington.

Alderman Fruin stated, it is clear that Spring Ridge has come out in force for this item, as they are definitely impacted by the curvature in the roadway. He stated that Hershey stretches through a few Wards. Council made a decision regarding Hershey Road at one of the previously Council

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Meetings, and will be deliberating on Linden Street during this meeting. Council will need to strike a balance between community desires and staff abilities and time. He is in support of the item.

Mayor Renner asked for a motion on this item.

Alderman Painter motioned, Alderman Buragas seconded that the Ordinance Amending Ordinance 2015-15, and City Code Chapter 29, Section 156.5, which provides Altered Speed Limits on certain City streets, be approved to reduce the speed limit to 30 mph on Hershey Road from Ft. Jesse to Empire (Rt. 9), and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Ayes: Aldermen, Painter, Mwilambwe, Lower, Buragas, Schmidt, Hauman, Sage, Black and Fruin.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

8. Consideration of a proposal to widen Linden Street from Locust to Empire, from 26 feet to 30 feet, producing two 12-foot traffic lanes plus an 8-foot parking lane on the west side of the street. *(Recommend that Council approves the proposal to widen Linden Street from Locust to Empire, from 26 feet to 30 feet to accommodate two traffic lanes and one parking lane. (Presentation by David Hales, City Manager and City Staff 20 minutes, Council discussion 10 minutes.)*

Mr. Hales provided a brief overview of this item stating, the recommendation is to support the engineers proposal to widen Linden Street, from Locust to Empire from 26 feet to 30 feet, producing two (2) 12 foot traffic lanes, plus an eight (8) foot parking lane on the left side of the street. He commented on the extensive public outreach that was initiated by Public Works Department through surveys, and open meetings. This street was scheduled for resurfacing last summer, and was put on hold due to concerns being raised as to whether the street should be widen, and to what extent.

There has been some great input into this process. From the survey, there is no unanimous agreement by the property owners in terms of what they may want. However, there is a majority of the residents on Linden Street that favored the widening, as per the survey. As provided, there is a critical need to replace the curb and gutter, which is an excellent time to proceed if the street is going to be widen. It is the City's hope that by making a decision to widen within the next 30 days, the engineers could ensure that this is one of the first streets to be addressed during the upcoming summer street resurfacing in 2017.

Alderman Buragas stated that this is her Ward, as Mr. Hales indicated, there is no clear consensus from residents and stakeholders in the area. It has been difficult, because there are some considerations that are at odds with each other. There is a clear consensus that this portion of the

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roadway is in very poor condition. Everyone agrees that it is in desperate need of resurfacing. Everyone also agreed that when the street is resurfaced, the curb and gutters also need replacing as they, too, are in poor condition. Everyone agrees that the turning radius at Locust is an issue and needs to be addressed, so to make it easier for traffic to turn.

The only question that we are dealing with, is widening the road appropriate or necessary, and addressing the parking issue. The residents and business owners on that street have stated very clearly that they would prefer that parking remains on that street, even if the street was widened. There are a number of residents have expressed concerned that widening the street would have a detrimental impact to that particular portion of the neighborhood, as it would seem more as a drive through area, than a residential community. Resulting in a changed look and feeling to the area. She is very sympathetic to that concern, as it is a very real and valid concern.

Alderman Buragas stated there are also residents and businesses that believe that current nine (9) foot lane (which is the recommendation of staff) is below the minimal acceptable standards for a residential street that is a collector. She has struggled with the decision on this; at the end of the day, based upon the information received and competing interest, the best outcome would be to scale back lightly from where we are. Alderman Buragas asked for clarification as the council memo indicated 12 foot traffic lanes; that it should state 11 foot traffic lanes. Mr. Karch confirmed.

She had done some research across organizations and communities including Bloomington, and most traffic lanes for a residential streets that are collectors should be 10 feet. She proposed that the plan slightly to do two (2) ten foot lanes, and a seven (7) foot parking lane; scale back the widening, alleviate some of the concerns, but still make the street comfortable for the motorist driving down the roadway. Assuming that her proposal meets the acceptable Bloomington minimal standards for the lanes.

Mr. Karch stated it is great that the Council is deliberating on this issue as this is the first opportunity for staff to process a modification, which is important to know. In general, staff has discussed those larger lanes, the City typically do especially with arterials and collector streets. Typically, they allow 11 foot; however, they reference 10 ½ on collector. It is not preferable to have 10 foot street on a two-way traffic road in general on a collector road. On average, 4,000 to 5,000 vehicles may travel that roadway. It is not something that would be difficult to make that change.

Alderman Lower stated, he recommends this item be tabled as the City Engineer was caught off guard with this proposal, and allow for them to study it further. Alderman Buragas stated, she has no objections to Alderman Lower's request, that way Council is assured that it is working from the correct information.

Mayor Renner asked for a motion on this item.

Alderman Lower motioned, Alderman Buragas seconded to table this item until time that... Alderman Sage interrupted with a question to Alderman Buragas asking for clarification as to whether it is the intent of the motion to allow staff to review the input of the 10 foot lane with the

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eight (8) foot parking. Alderman Buragas confirmed stating, it is no question that this roadway needs restructuring. The question is, what that roadway would look like.

Alderman Lower restated the motion, seconded by Alderman Buragas to table this item until time uncertain time frame by the Engineering Department to investigate the possibility of a 10 foot... Alderman Buragas added an addendum to Alderman Lower's motion to come back to Council no later than the first meeting in February 13. Alderman Lower accepted the addendum posed by Alderman Buragas.

Alderman Black asked how much staff time will be invested in this before the Council approves the widening of Linden. Some residents may be passionately opposed to the street widening. He asked whether Council is wasting time with the project if the interest is not there from the residents. He feels the roadway does requiring resurfacing and widening; however would defer to the Alderman that lives in that part of the community to make that determination. He restated his question asking whether there is a consensus to move forward with the proposal.

Alderman Fruin expressed concern over the lack of consistency in the size of the roadway, and stated he would like to see that occur, but is in favor of the widening.

Mayor Renner stated that there is a consensus of the Council to move forward with the proposal to widen Linden Street. He has for a vote of the Council.

Ayes: Aldermen, Painter, Mwilambwe, Lower, Buragas, Schmidt, Sage, Black and Fruin.

Nays: Alderman Hauman

Motion carried.

9. Presentation and Discussion on the Mahomet Aquifer Advocates. (*Presentation by Steve Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager 5 minutes, Council discussion 5 minutes*)

Mr. Rasmussen provided a brief overview of the City's participation in the aquifers stating, there are two (2) large aquifers that provide for this area. One is the Mahomet Aquifer; the City is not located in that area, the other is the St. Peter Aquifer of which the City is located within. The City has adequate water at this time in our two lakes; but as the City grows, the size of our two lakes do not grow. When we have close to a drought period, we have water difficulties. There are groups that are working towards long-term solutions with our water. He commented on the number of groups.

Mahomet Aquifer Consortium, the Water Department has participated in that group for a number of years. It is largely a group of technical experts who are looking to see how in the future the City and others are able to get water out of the aquifer to continue to increase the amount of water that we have. The Water Department pays approximately \$5,000 per year as a member of that group. The second group is Mahomet Aquifer Advocates, that group consists largely of mayors and city managers who are working to protect the aquifer from pollution of wells, landfills and other things. It has a political element to it such as promoting lobbyist, legal counsel, and technical advocacy.

The City has been attending those meetings, and that group has come together as the Mahomet Aquifer Advocates. He stated the amount of money they are asking for \$8,750 from Bloomington with a proposed budget of \$35,000 per year. The large cities includes Champaign, Normal, Decatur, Urbana, and Bloomington. There are also smaller cities, too, participating in this group. The amount is budgeted in the Administration budget; however, staff did not want to move forward without notifying Council of its participation. Once the City has been invoiced and it is paid, it then has the implication of support of the City. Therefore, it is the desire of the City to inform Council of this action before proceeding. Since this group protects the drinking water of the City, he recommends continued participation for the dollar amount provided.

There were no comments or questions by the Council

10. Adjourn

Mayor Renner asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Alderman Black motion, Alderman Schmidt second the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried: (Viva Voce).

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

ATTEST

Tari Renner, Mayor

Cherry L. Lawson, City Clerk