

District III Advisory Board Minutes
Feb. 7, 2011
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The District III Advisory Board meeting was held at 7 p.m. at the Wichita Water Center at 101 E Pawnee; six District Advisory Board members were in attendance; three City staff and 47 members of the public were present (11 did not sign in).

Members Present

Teresa Cook
Judy Dillard
Charlotte Foster
Jim Gulick
DeWayne Kitchen
Bill Ward
Council Member Roger Smith

Brian Nelson
Billie Tucker

Staff Present

Jim Armour, City Engineer Public Works
Gary Janzen, Design Engineer Public Works
Janet Johnson, Neighborhood Services

Guests

Listed on the last page

Members Absent

Joann Hartig

ORDER OF BUSINESS

At 7 p.m. **Council Member Smith** called the meeting to order. Minutes from the Jan. 5, 2011, meeting were approved.

NEW BUSINESS

South Broadway Bridge at 34th St. South

City Engineer Jim Armour, Public Works, presented several options for the reconstruction of the South Broadway Bridge. The Capital Improvement Program adopted by the City Council includes funding to replace the Broadway Bridge at 34th Street South. The bridge was built in 1938 and has been rehabilitated several times over the years. In August, 2007 the bridge was closed to through traffic for emergency repairs after inspection revealed significant structural problems. Since that time traffic has been limited to two through lanes and to lighter loading.

A neighborhood meeting was held on March 29, 2010, to discuss preliminary options and to gather information from adjacent property owners. Additional meetings with property owners on either side of Broadway, south of the bridge were held on April 28, 2010, to discuss specific issues related to updated options. On May 5, 2010, the District Advisory Board recommended approval of an option to place the new bridge west of the existing alignment.

Since that time, staff has continued exploring all options and has found a possible east location that would result in a significant cost savings, while still limiting the estimated Broadway closure time. Another neighborhood meeting was held on January 24, 2011, to discuss updated options and cost estimates.

The new bridge will provide a four-lane roadway with 6' wide sidewalk on both sides of the bridge. Staff has developed and analyzed bridge replacement options that consider project cost, right-of-way impact, and estimated length of closure time for through traffic on Broadway.

Armour said he was recommending the East alignment Option A. He explained the next steps would include presenting to City Council for approval on Feb. 15; approval by KDOT; environmental clearance with proposed construction beginning the first part of 2012.

Charlotte Foster said she had heard the City had already purchased some of the land; **Armour** said that was not accurate. **Foster** then wanted to know if **Armour** could control any of the railroad traffic; he said no.

Council Member Smith pointed out that even going with the lowest option, the City is still \$2.5 million short; he said the City Manager is trying to determine where the rest of the money will come from, but that something has to be done because it's a safety issue.

Jim Gulick had questions about the properties with an historical designation; **Armour** said one house is registered as an historic property and the other one "may have" some historical significance. He explained the State Historic Preservation Board would make that determination.

Mark Gietzen, 5575 S. Mosley, voiced objections to the photos that were presented by **Armour**. **Gietzen** contended that the photos showed the damage that existed in 2007 before the repairs were made and said the audience shouldn't be deceived by that; **Armour** said that was true and pointed out that's why the photos were labeled 2007.

Gietzen said he had inspected the bridge and it currently does not need to be replaced. He said the City should spend \$5 million and shore up the current supports. **Council Member Smith** asked **Gietzen** if he was an engineer; **Gietzen** said no, but he once worked at Boeing.

Phillis Allen, 3540 S. St. Francis, said she wasn't sure how the shoo-fly concept was going to work, especially because the trains often stop in that general area for very long periods of time – sometimes as long as an hour. **Allen** said she also had concerns about the construction adding to the drainage problems. She said the drainage problem in the area has gotten worse since the City did the levee and she's afraid this bridge work will compound the problem even further. She said she and her husband had been told by the railroad to expect the train traffic to double, which will make it even worse when a second track goes in.

Armour responded to her concerns by saying it will be a "very long time" before a second track goes in; he agreed drainage in the area is horrible, but noted that it has always been a problem. He said often times citizens mistakenly believe that when the City comes in to do a project, they are going to fix all the existing problems in the area. He said that simply isn't true; that the City will do everything possible not to make the situation worse, but it can't fix what's already occurring. He also explained the issue with the trains parking is that BNSF owns the tracks, but Union Pacific also uses them. When there are trains designated for the same area at the same time from both entities, Union Pacific has to defer to the BNSF train and let it go first. This can result in the Union Pacific train sitting in one spot for quite some time.

Dale Carter, 4810 S. Broadway, asked how long they expect the entire project to take; **Armour** said between eight and nine months.

Craig Gabel, 2131 S. Broadway, asked "are you guys trying to kill us?" He explained he owns a business on South Broadway and listed between 6 and 10 construction projects that either have occurred, or are scheduled to occur, and said these projects are hurting area businesses.

Lynn Campbell Behnke, 3565 S. Topeka, said the house she lives in has historical significance – that it was originally moved there for Buffalo Bill's daughter. In addition to that, she said the house has hidden areas that were used by bootleggers during prohibition and that five generations of her family had lived in the house.

George Ayres, 3121 S. McLean, said when the bridge was closed before, there was a big vehicular pile up almost everyday at the intersection of McLean and 31st. He also wanted to know how many trains a day run on the track that the shoo fly will cross. **Armour** said between four and seven in a 24 hour period.

Michael Blake, 3348 S. Walnut, wanted to know why the City doesn't just do an at grade crossing – he said the higher you go, the more dangerous it gets. He also wanted to know what the current rating of the bridge is. **Armour** said it's slightly higher than it was before the 2007 repairs.

Gene Campbell, 4701 S. Ida, who owns the green houses in the area said, even if you get federal dollars, “it still comes out of your pocket.”

Connie Klassen, 1614 Alta, said she didn't understand what the big fuss was, while Broadway is temporarily closed, motorists can still use Hydraulic to get through. She said she believes that South Wichita is going to become an important entrance into the city. She said between the future development of the area around 47th Street and the casino going in down south, it wouldn't surprise her to see Broadway become a four-lane road all the way between Wichita and Sumner County. **Klassen** said businesses may be hurt for a little while, but in the long run, they will end up with a lot more traffic than they ever had previously.

James Moore, 3313 S. Gold, said anyone who wants to do away with the bridge and have an at grade crossing needs to listen to the news about all the people being hit by trains. He said he felt like the railroad should be contributing financially to the bridge construction.

Jenny Morris, 338 W. 35th St. S., said she would appreciate having a meeting with Public Works and the Wichita Police Department when it gets closer to the time for the bridge to be closed in order to discuss how to best handle neighborhood traffic. She said the City absolutely has to do something about the bridge – she said it's “our” problem to fix, not our children's or our grandchildren's. We shouldn't leave them messes like deteriorating infrastructure.

Sandra Novatny, 3333 S. Broadway, asked if the Topeka entrance off of Broadway could be improved and made less dangerous; **Armour** said yes, it will be extended so it's less steep and the entrance will be paved.

Paul Davis, who owns a business at 2865 S. Broadway, said he has served on the South Wichita-Haysville Improvement Plan committee for a number of years and he used to always hear complaints about how South Wichita was ignored and the City never made any investments in infrastructure in South Wichita. He said he couldn't believe it tonight when he started hearing people actually complaining about the improvements that are being made in the area. **Davis** said he appreciated the fact that **Armour** and his staff have tried very hard to work with area residents and business owners to make the process as least painful as possible.

James Clendenin, 1420 E. 31st St., asked if Public Works considered a tunnel; **Armour** said yes, but it simply wasn't feasible.

Tim Campbell said he owns the greenhouses in the area, and there's a lot of history in that area and the bridge is a monument. He said the bridge needs to be kept and the City should spend whatever it takes because “we're worth it.”

Hoyt Hillman, 3705 E. Mt. Vernon, said this is an important project and the bridge construction and associated property purchases need to be done right.

Tony Garlick, 3360 S. Broadway, said it's always better to spend more money and do it right.

Council Member Smith asked for a straw vote on of all the options presented, how many people supported the City's recommendation to replace the bridge; approximately a dozen of the 50 present raised their hands. The majority of those present wanted the existing bridge repaired (which was not an option presented).

Jenny Morris, 336 W. 35th St. S., said while she supports the City's recommended option, she wants to make sure that the people who live at 3565 S. Topeka are dealt with appropriately.

Stan Allen, 3540 S. St. Francis, said he liked the West Alignment B option the best; **Armour** said the downside to that option is the increased cost and the fact it takes out 3 or 4 businesses.

DeWayne Kitchen asked Armour for clarification on what had been presented to ensure he understood the associated costs and closure times; **Armour** confirmed Kitchen had the information correct.

Craig Gabel, 2131 S. Broadway, said there is always money in the budget and made reference to a number of “bailouts” that would be presented at tomorrow’s City Council meeting.

Phillis Allen, 3540 S. St. Francis, said the City should try to get back all the money it foolishly spent on the Kice building and use it to repair the bridge.

Judy Dillard (Ward) made a motion to recommend to City Council the East Alignment A Option with the West Alignment B option as a backup plan.

Action: Motion passed 4-2.

DeWayne Kitchen said he would have felt better about the situation if the DAB had a ruling on the house with questionable historical significance if the Historic Preservation Board had already made a decision. **Armour** said it was a catch 22 situation – that he can’t take something to the Historic Preservation Board without having a decision from the DAB and City Council, and it makes it difficult for those entities not knowing how the HPB will rule.

Council Member Smith emphasized that the City doesn’t like taking people’s property and he didn’t know of anything else the City could possibly do to make this situation any better.

Meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting for District Advisory Board III will be held at 7 p.m., March 2, 2011, at the Water Center at 101 E. Pawnee.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Johnson, Neighborhood Assistant – District III

Guests

Paul Davis
Connie Klassen
James Clendenin
Hoyt Hillman
CJ Roeder
Wilma Grise
Jenny Gholson-Morris
Daniel Morris
Stan Allen
Phillis Allen
Tai Van Le
Terry McLachlan
Dale Carter
Cullen Campbell
Michael Blake
H. Reddick

Tony Garlick
Toni Oliphant
Linda Carter
Dave Cooley
Frank Bisle Jr.
Gene Campbell
Mark Gietzen
Lynn Campbell Behenke
Binky Behenke
Brian McDaniel
? Alcorn
Paul Crease
Matthew Cooley
Bob Previterra
James Moore
George Ayres
Mrs. George Ayres
Sandra Novatny
Evan Campbell
Tim Campbell