



MINUTES
RICHLAND PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING No. 5-2014
Richland City Hall – 550 Swift Boulevard – Council Chamber
WEDNESDAY, May 28, 2014
7:00 PM

Call to Order:

Chairman Utz called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

Attendance:

Present: Commissioners Berkowitz, Boring, Clark, Jones, Madsen, Wallner, Wise, Vice-Chair Moser and Chairman Utz. Also present were City Council Liaison Phil Lemley, Public Works Director Pete Rogalsky, Transportation and Development Manager Jeff Peters, Development Services Manager Rick Simon, Senior Planner Aaron Lambert and Recorder Pam Bykonen.

Approval of Agenda:

Chairman Utz presented the May 28, 2014 meeting agenda for approval.

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Utz presented the meeting minutes of the April 23, 2014 regular meeting for approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Boring and seconded by Commissioner Madsen to approve the meeting minutes of the April 23, 2014 regular meeting as written.

Commissioner Berkowitz requested clarification in the minutes to reflect her absence.

Commissioner Jones requested the inclusion of a point of order made during Mr. Woodward's comments.

Vice-Chair Moser suggested the inclusion of Ken Harper's comments in regard to the point of order.

A motion to amend the minutes was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Madsen to include the above items.

AMENDMENT CARRIED 9-0.

MOTION CARRIED 9-0.

Public Comment

Chairman Utz asked for public comment on any item not on the agenda. He pointed out that any comments on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) should occur during this portion of the meeting.

A question was raised about the presence of a Council member during the public comment period due to the potential of comments related to the ongoing Clearwater Creek closed record hearing. After some discussion, it was determined that separating the Clearwater Creek issues from the Transportation Improvement Program would be extremely difficult. Council Liaison Lemley decided to remain in the meeting.

The following people spoke against the Rachel Road extension in the Transportation Improvement Plan:

Robert Benedetti, 400 Broadmoor Street
Jim Deatherage, 8907 West 6th Avenue, Kennewick
Nancy Doran, 1516 Johnston Avenue
Scott Woodward, 480 Columbia Park Trail
Therese Howe, 2777 Rue Court
Darren Merrill, 2909 Kentbrook for Heidi Eden, 134 Rachel Road
Dirk Peterson, 2107 Rainier Avenue
Karen Sowers, 227 Sitka Court
Laura Caslin, 8720 West Falls Avenue, Kennewick
Laurie Ness, 2253 Davison Avenue
Bobbie Bull, 1928 Meadows Drive North
Kathy Dechter, 113 Bebb Court
Paula Butterworth, 97004 East Clover Road, Kennewick
Tom McClelland, 39507 East Ridgecrest Drive
James Noyce, 9419 Vincenzo Drive, Pasco
Chuck Wojnowski, 223 Lasiandra Court
David Orcutt, 2632 Eastwood Avenue
Mike Lilga, 317 Fuller Street
Pamela Woodward, 480 Columbia Park Trail
Alexandra Amonette, 1939 Marshall Avenue
Brad Evans, 3605 South Bermuda Road
Dorthea Ferris-Narum, 224 High Meadows Street
David Harvey, 1931 Harris Avenue
Patrick Paulson, 2253 Davison Avenue
Arthur Klym, 10411 South 952 PR SE, Kennewick

Generally, the individuals who spoke against Rachel Road being included in the TIP cited the following reasons:

- Construction of Rachel Road across the preserve area would significantly damage the preserve and eliminate important wildlife habitat;

- The preserve is a valuable natural area, unique in the Tri-Cities, containing rich habitat, great opportunities for education and supports a widely used trail system;
- The value of protecting the preserve is more important than the value that would be gained from the construction of Rachel Road;
- People are willing to spend a couple of extra minutes travelling to their destination, knowing that the preserve has been protected;
- The Kennewick School District could consider other options for the location of a future elementary school;
- Tapteal Greenway has spent considerable time and resources in securing the Amon Preserve and want the City to honor its agreement that called for the preservation of the Amon Preserve;
- Rachel Road should be eliminated or routed away from the preserve to maintain the integrity of the preserve.

The following people spoke in support of the Rachel Road extension in the Transportation Improvement Plan:

Dave Bond, Kennewick School District Superintendent, 3509 West 38th Avenue, Kennewick

Jeff Losey, Home Builders Association of Tri-Cities, 10001 West Clearwater Avenue, Kennewick

Renee' Brooks, Home Builders Association of Tri-Cities, 1201 West 14th Avenue, Kennewick

Generally, individuals speaking in favor of Rachel Road remaining in the TIP indicated that:

- The School District has depended upon the City's planning documents in making decisions for future school sites and that Rachel Road is necessary in order for the school site within the Clearwater Creek subdivision to be viable;
- Rachel Road had been included in the City's transportation plans for many years and that an east-west collector street in this portion of the City is needed to support future growth in the area;
- The City has an obligation to implement its longstanding plans as others have made decisions in reliance on those plans.

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing Explanation: Ms. Bykonen explained the public hearing notice and appeal process and asked Commissioners to identify any conflicts of interest, ex-parte contact or any other appearance of fairness issues.

New Business

1. APPLICANT: CITY OF RICHLAND (M2014-101) AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF RICHLAND TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM 2015-2020.

Mr. Rogalsky explained the state-wide Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program which is primarily used for financial planning between several levels of government and as a high level planning tool and not as a construction commitment. He discussed connectivity issues for motorized and non-motorized traffic, safety and quality of life. **Mr. Rogalsky** reviewed the following priority levels within the Transportation Improvement Program: Highest Priority, fully or partially funded, including the Duportail/Stevens Corridor; Second Priority, without funding, but identified as priorities in the City's Strategic Plan, including Swift Boulevard and Columbia Park Trail; Third Level Priority, emerging needs that are unfunded, including arterial collector streets in South Richland and non-motorized connectivity projects.

Mr. Rogalsky spoke optimistically about location flexibility for the Rachel Road extension and commented that school districts base their expansion plans on the City's traffic/connectivity plan and that additional work was required before the location of Rachel Road would be finalized. Using the document camera, he showed a map of the Collector/Arterial System and further described the background, topographical challenges and design features of that system. **Mr. Rogalsky** pointed out that when the Amon Creek Preserve was developed and funded, all parties were aware of the City's plan, including financial participation that was in part a means of securing the roadway feature through the preserve area. He reported the benefits of connectivity as protecting the quality of life for residents and fulfilling the City's commitment to provide adequate infrastructure for community growth.

Discussion:

Commissioner Moser inquired if the connector street between Queensgate Drive and Market Road would alleviate congestion from Badger Mountain South. **Mr. Rogalsky** confirmed that it would. **Commissioner Moser** discussed a segment of Rachel Road, located in the county, with driveways emptying directly onto it and wondered if those homeowners would be notified regarding the impact of an arterial collector street. **Mr. Rogalsky** confirmed that it was in the county and existed prior to the City's plan.

Commissioner Moser asked if the letter, mentioned by Mr. Benedetti, was received and wondered why it was not addressed by City Council. **Mr. Rogalsky** reported that the City Council received the letter. **Commissioner Moser** requested that the proposed neighborhood areas be pointed out on the displayed map; **Mr. Rogalsky** did so.

Referring to page 18 of the Transportation Improvement Program, **Commissioner Berkowitz** requested a status of the Logston Boulevard extension and if it still was needed with the Robertson Road extension. **Mr. Rogalsky** reported that a contract was

recently awarded for the Robertson Road extension so the Logston Road extension could probably be removed from the Transportation Improvement Program. He reported that the Logston Road extension had been redefined and did not use the corridor that would have gone through a wetland.

Commissioner Berkowitz liked the idea of a Queensgate pedestrian and bike path and asked if it would have any impact on wetlands. **Mr. Rogalsky** reported that the project was funded, but not designed and, like all such projects, would undergo an environmental review. **Commissioner Berkowitz** requested that the path avoid the wetlands and if the Commission could see the review when available. **Mr. Rogalsky** stated that the review would be published and reviewed through the public notice process.

Commissioner Berkowitz asked if Jubilee Street was on the Transportation Improvement Program last year and requested information on project impacts to Lawless Park. **Mr. Rogalsky** stated that Jubilee Street had not been on the Transportation Improvement Program and informed all that each project would undergo the normal design review process, public process and review.

Commissioner Wise discussed Transportation Improvement Program revisions made in an effort to reduce the carbon footprint and asked for a general status. **Mr. Rogalsky** had seen no state or federal requirements to change the Transportation Improvement Program process, but those elements were embedded in their planning efforts. **Commissioner Wise** suggested a yearlong 'time out' on road building in order to study other cities and interact with community groups. **Mr. Rogalsky** welcomed the suggestion and stated that it was a matter of prioritizing budgets and goals. He thought it could be a productive recommendation to Council that they leverage the public interest and energy in this issue to drive it to the best result and use some of our resources to assist. **Mr. Rogalsky** stated that it was reasonable to leverage the intensity and energy brought out by this new development now to come up with a good answer.

Commissioner Boring inquired if it was possible to create the extension in a way that would avoid the wetlands area. **Mr. Rogalsky** responded that they could, the organization had been and were currently working to preserve the wetlands portion of the preserve and may find the opportunity to elevate the roadway and provide paths beneath it.

Commissioner Boring reminded everyone that the Kennewick School District was there serving Richland students. She also reminded everyone that there have been other situations where the City worked hard to save wetlands in other areas of the city. **Commissioner Boring** does not want the preserve impacted, but there needed to be a balance including weighing the benefits of having homes near schools.

Commissioner Madsen requested what the exact boundary of the preserve, how it related to Leslie Road and suggested creating a connection at Reata Road rather than

Rachel Road. He expressed his belief that the parties involved ought to be able to find a workable solution for all.

Commissioner Clark requested clarification on collector streets and anticipated traffic. **Mr. Rogalsky** discussed the design details of an urban collector street as 36 feet of pavement with concrete sidewalks on both sides and the rural design of 32 feet of pavement with shoulders and a separate asphalt pedestrian path. Unique or challenging sites allowed for creative design. He reported that arterials were designed for 10,000 or more trips per day and 5,000 or more trips per day on collector streets.

Commissioner Clark asked if removing the Rachel Road project from the Transportation Improvement Program, as in a time out, would impact its funding or priority. **Mr. Rogalsky** did not believe it made a lot of sense to fund a study of a project that was no longer in the Transportation Improvement Program, but was open to the suggestion made by Commissioner Wise.

Commissioner Berkowitz noted that any road in that general area would have an impact on the preserve and expressed concern over the connections in the Hayden Homes' plat proposal. **Mr. Rogalsky** reminded all that plat conditions include a study that provides some flexibility to the alignment within the plat. He stated that there was nothing in the Transportation Improvement Program that secures a right of way or enforces a design and encouraged her to review the plat design documents which address that concern.

Commissioner Berkowitz expressed her surprise that the Kennewick School District was not aware of the previous years' recommendation by the Planning Commission to drop the Rachel Road extension from the Transportation Improvement Program and associated controversy. She spoke to an earlier statement that Public Works would avoid an arterial in an existing neighborhood and suggested that, while it wasn't a built environment, it was a dedicated environment with a preserve. **Commissioner Berkowitz** also expressed her concern for affecting the peace and quiet of the preserve by adding roads and stated that she believes the issue comes down to a judgment of value. **Mr. Rogalsky** stated that there must be some miscommunication because Rachel Road was not the primary Badger Mountain South access point, but it did not make sense to assume that no one out of 5,000 new homes would use that road.

Commissioner Moser commented on her concern, beginning in 2005, that although the Planning Commission recommended the removal of the Rachel Road extension last year, the City Council was the final decision maker and voted to keep the project in the plan. She also noted the passion of community members and the commitment to finding a common solution for this issue. **Commissioner Moser** spoke about context sensitive design which involves working with groups of people to find an acceptable alternative and suggested that as the urban boundary expands there would be an elevated need to work more closely with community partners.

Commission Moser also shared her concern that the voice of the advisory role of the Planning Commission would soon be lost due to a plan to institute a hearings examiner. She stated that thoughtful consideration that incorporated the voice of the public may be lost if that happened.

Commission Moser commented that there was no proven need for the extension and suggested there was still time to plan. She was elated to hear staff say they were willing to work to a better solution. **Commission Moser** stated that it still seemed incomprehensible to build a road through a natural open space, but there was probably a way. She hoped the Kennewick School District and Benton County were prepared to assist with funding. She asked the Kennewick School District why they would put in a big grassy field where there was a wonderful opportunity to use the preserve as an educational tool, suggesting they think outside the box. **Commissioner Moser** entitled the decision as a 'destiny shaper' that would affect residents for years to come.

Commissioner Madsen shared his impression that City staff was very interested in and cares about this issue and still wants to see the boundaries of the preserve to gain a better visual of the proposal. He suggested that a road needn't go through the heart of the preserve; rather it might be at the tail end or edge of it. He desired clarity of the rationale behind dropping Rachel Road off the Transportation Improvement Program and reminded all that the Tapteal Greenway Association and the City Council signed an agreement that included a road through the preserve.

Mr. Rogalsky saw no value in removing Rachel Road from the Transportation Improvement Program because that would also remove it from the visibility of funding agencies. He suggested that it remain for funding purposes while a best possible solution is determined.

Chairman Utz reminded all that the Transportation Improvement Program is a planning document rather than a 'doing' document. He thanked all in attendance and suggested spending time and resources as needed to explore options that take all parties into account, including a no build option.

Commissioner Wise thanked the Kennewick School District and suggested that they may find a better school site. He also voiced concern that low-level frequency noise from the train tracks will have a negative impact on the school.

A motion was made by Commissioner Madsen and seconded by Commissioner Jones to concur with the findings and conclusions set forth in the staff report (M2014-101) and forward a recommendation to City Council to approve the 2015-2020 Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program.

First Amending Motion:

Commissioner Clark proposed and Commissioner Berkowitz seconded an amendment to the motion to delete the Rachel Road collector from the TIP and

direct staff to initiate a public process to seek an acceptable option for the right of way prior to putting it back into the TIP.

Discuss the motion:

Discussion ensued on the verbiage of the amendment.

Commissioner Moser asked if there were a funding source to work with citizen groups if removed from the Transportation Improvement Program. **Mr. Rogalsky** stated that there was no budget for the proposal, but Council could direct staff if desired.

Commissioner Jones discussed the risk of removing a project from the Transportation Improvement Program and stated that budget cycles, deadlines and a study process of the available project options were included within the Transportation Improvement Program. **Mr. Rogalsky** informed all that when a public road is built, there is an analysis process on a varied scale, but the obvious level of public interest would suggest the appropriateness of a broader based study.

Commissioner Wise recommended a 'freeze' rather than removal of the project and an enhanced study involving all of the interest groups.

Commissioner Moser believed their recommendation to Council should include a citizens' advisory committee so the voice of the community is not lost.

Commissioner Berkowitz recommended a study be done within the year.

Commissioner Jones reminded all that because the City budget was very tight, it wasn't likely that the study would be completed within a year.

Chairman Utz agreed with Commissioner Jones and suggested the recommendation be worded in line with the process rather than a timeframe.

Commissioner Clark wanted to ensure that the recommendation to City Council includes the concerns and recommendations of the public.

Commissioner Berkowitz reminded all that the Tapteal Greenway continues to put resources into the preserve and that it could be a lost investment.

Chairman Utz clarified his position that while he was neither for nor against the road at this point in time, there had not been sufficient studies to make a final decision.

THE FIRST AMENDING MOTION FAILED 1-8.

Commissioners Boring, Clark, Jones, Madsen, Wallner, Wise, Vice-Chair Moser and Chairman Utz voted against.

Second Amending Motion:

Commissioner Moser proposed and Commissioner Berkowitz seconded an amendment to the motion to recommend that Council instruct staff to initiate a broad based study process to determine the best option available for the right-of-way location. Such study shall:

- **Include context sensitive design**
- **Include a “no build” option**
- **Include a citizens advisory committee that would consist of stakeholders from all various interests**
- **The study should receive a high priority for funding**
- **No work on Rachel Road will be initiated until the study has been completed.**

THE SECOND AMENDING MOTION CARRIED 8-1.

Commissioner Jones voted against.

THE MOTION CARRIED 9-0.

Chairman Utz thanked all for their time, effort and energy.

A motion was made by Commissioner Boring and seconded by Vice-Chair Moser to move Item Number 2 under New Business – Public Hearings, City of Richland Z2014-101 to the next meeting in June.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.

Communications:

Mr. Simon

- Reminded the Commissioners that there would be a City Tour at 6PM on June 18th rather than the usual workshop.

Commissioner Berkowitz

- Requested a work plan schedule for the remainder of 2014.

ADJOURNMENT:

The May 28, 2014 Richland Planning Commission Regular Meeting 5-2014 was adjourned at 11:00 PM. The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission will be held on June 25, 2014.

PREPARED BY: Penny Howard, Recorder, Planning and Development

REVIEWED BY:



Rick Simon, Secretary
Richland Planning Commission