

MINUTES OF SPECIAL TOWN HALL MEETING
SUGAR CITY COUNCIL
SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2020

Presiding: Mayor Steven Adams
Meeting Convened at 4:00 p.m.
Prayer: Joy Ball

Present: Mayor Steven Adams; Clerk-Treasurer Wendy McLaughlin; Councilors Joy M. Ball, Steve Davis, and Catherine Nielsen; City Engineer Dick Dyer; Chairman Dave Thompson of the Planning and Zoning Commission; City Building Inspector Cliff Morris; and several area and Sugar City residents. Councilwoman Connie Fogle was excused.

WELCOME: Mayor Adams conducted the meeting and welcomed everyone present. The meeting was also recorded and available live through the internet. The county recently took over Highway 33 north from Rexburg, through Sugar City to the East Highway 33 intersection from the state. Funds are available to complete 94% the S curve revision. The mayor is asking for citizen input during this meeting and the regular Council meeting Thursday, March 12. The county needs a decision from the city by March 18 on the S curve. A definitive decision for the East Parkway Corridor may take more time.

STRAIGHTENING OF S CURVE SOUTH ENTRANCE: City Engineer Dick Dyer explained the advantages of straightening the S curve entrance into Sugar City and bringing Hwy 33 onto Railroad Avenue from Front Street. Below is a summary:

- Railroad Avenue is built to state highway standards, Front Street is not
- Funding is available to the city to cover up to 94% of the \$450k - \$500k project
- Safety – several accidents have occurred; S curve creates blind spots
- Increased traffic flow directed away from a more dense residential area
- Public Works Director Arlynn Jacobson letter indicated the project is shovel ready
- City has good relationship with county to maintain roads
- Possible Third South connection to Rexburg's N 2nd E and Walmart

Challenges:

- Residences on Railroad Avenue now live on a major highway with increased traffic flow
- Market pressure to sell homes for commercial enterprises
- Increased traffic speed
- Emergency vehicle response time

EAST PARKWAY CORRIDOR: City Planning and Zoning Chairman Dave Thompson gave a brief history on the East Parkway Corridor summarized below:

- Sugar City Council chose Option E several years ago which would build a new road to take traffic east away from the high school and existing homes
- Corridor could mitigate flood plain
- Government funding available to help build up roads

OTHER ROAD ISSUES RELATED TO HWY 33: The mayor asked for public comments on other road issues related to Highway 33 and East Parkway Corridor.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Dennis Birch (city resident) – against straightening the S curve. The curve naturally slows down traffic and gives semi-trucks room to turn.

Walter Deitz (city resident) – against straightening the S curve. Feels there is more of a safety hazard sending upwards of 200 semi-trucks a day onto Railroad Avenue. Would like to see round-a-bouts in the city.

Trevor Ricks (city impact area) – against option E and straightening the S curve. Keep East Parkway Corridor on existing roadways (Moody Highway and Digger Drive) and away from farm ground and existing homes. The flood plain is not an issue for farmers.

Bruce King (city resident) – explained why the council made the decision to choose Option E. The road was first planned to be five lanes and keep traffic moving at 45-50 mph. He will submit more information in writing later.

Galen Lusk (city resident) – against Option E. Keep East Parkway Corridor on existing roadways (Moody Highway and Digger Drive) and away from farm ground and existing homes to minimize impact to properties. He owns much of the ground east of Digger Drive. Growth is west of the city.

Ray Barney (city impact area) - against Option E. Keep East Parkway Corridor on existing roadways (Moody Highway and Digger Drive) and away from farm ground and existing homes. Option E would take out his house and ground and land lock 25 acres. He wanted to know when the road would be built.

Mark Oliphant (city resident) – for straightening the S curve. He feels it is in the best interest of the city. He is against Option E. Keep East Parkway Corridor on existing roadways (Moody Highway and Digger Drive) and away from farm ground and existing homes.

Linda Jex (city impact area) - against Option E. Keep East Parkway Corridor on existing roadways (Moody Highway and Digger Drive) and away from farm ground and existing homes to minimize impact to homes and livelihood.

Mike Withers (city impact area) - against Option E. Keep East Parkway Corridor on existing roadways (Moody Highway and Digger Drive) and away from farm ground and existing homes. Bringing another intersection to E Highway 33 would compound existing problems.

Dan Porter (city impact area) - against straightening the S curve. Speeding is a problem on Railroad Avenue and the semi-trucks need two lanes to turn.

Jeff Luthy (city impact area) - against Option E. Keep East Parkway Corridor on existing roadways (Moody Highway and Digger Drive) and away from farm ground and existing homes. He felt traffic would move west toward Rexburg instead of East out of town.

Linda Johnson (city resident) - against option E and straightening the S curve. Could

city still get the money to straighten the S curve to use on road maintenance instead?

Deicy Beltran (city resident) – against straightening the S curve. She is concerned about safety with two parks and traffic not observing the 25 mph speed limit. Didn't see commercial value in her property located on Railroad Avenue.

Jeff Nelson (city resident) – He lives on Front Street and works on the ambulance crew. He is against option E and straightening the S curve. Emergency vehicles have direct access to Sugar City addresses from Front Street and would not have direct access from Railroad Avenue.

Elaine King (city resident) – is against more traffic from Old Farm Estates. She read from minutes on August 9, 2018 that the city should never abandon a state road. She understood that the East Parkway Corridor was a 50 year process.

Sheree Palmer (city impact area) – against Option E. Keep East Parkway Corridor on existing roadways (Moody Highway and Digger Drive) and away from farm ground and existing homes.

Neva Tailbert (city impact area) - against Option E. Keep East Parkway Corridor on existing roadways (Moody Highway and Digger Drive) and away from farm ground and existing homes. She is from Alaska where the road dykes were built 8 feet high. Would roads need to be 8 feet high on the Moody Highway where she lives?

Grant Johnson (city resident) – He was concerned about the meeting being held in such short notice and during the Sugar Salem boys basketball game at state.

County Commissioner Brent Mendenhall – promised to take care of folks in Sugar City. The county's takeover of Highway 33 will benefit the city. They will work with the city in maintaining the roads. The county has asked input from the city. The road dykes will not be 8 feet tall.

Dennis Birch (city resident) – The East Parkway Corridor concept is dead and doesn't make much sense.

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Signed: _____
Steven Adams, Mayor

Attested: _____
Wendy McLaughlin, Clerk-Treasurer