

The Cannon Falls City Council met in a special session on Tuesday, March 10, 2015, at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Present were Mayor Robby Robinson and Council Members Bill Duncan, Morris Mattson, Rodney Holst, Kathy Gallups, and Merlyce Johnson. Council Member Jay Sjoblom arrived at 6:46 p.m. Also present were Ron Johnson, City Administrator; Lanell Endres, Assistant City Administrator; Dave Maroney, Community Development Director; and Greg Anderson, City Engineer.

Call to Order Mayor Robinson called the City Council Special Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance Mayor Robinson led in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Purpose The purpose of the special meeting was to discuss the Highway 52 safety study concerning possible right-in and right-out accesses at the old County 24 intersection and to potentially decide how to move forward.

Highway 52 Discussion Regarding Intersection and Right-In, Right-Out Mayor Robinson provided background information with regard to the results of the safety study. He reviewed the predicted accident rates with the addition of right-in and right-out access versus right-out only access. He discussed recent accidents along Highway 52. The City Engineer had been asked to provide cost estimates for right-in and right-out access, which came back at more than \$2 million. In addition, federal and state approval would be required along with an updated environmental assessment. He also stated that the construction of an additional interchange would also be cost-prohibitive.

Mayor Robinson reviewed the original project plan, which called for an overpass at the intersection of Highway 52 with old County Road 24. This plan was approved by Cannon Falls, Goodhue County, MnDOT, and the Federal Highway Administration. Letters of support have been received from both Goodhue and Olmsted Counties. The interchange portion of the project was constructed as a result of grant funding. However, no funding for the overpass portion of the project was currently available.

Council Member Duncan stated that right-in and right-out access, from a financial perspective, was not currently feasible, as the City could not take on this responsibility. He discussed the overpass option, which would require state or federal bonding assistance. He reviewed a potential third option, which would entail a half clover-leaf intersection, similar to the intersection of Highway 52 and Highway 19.

Council Member Mattson added that, if right-in and/or right-out access lanes were to be constructed, MnDOT would have the right to close off this access if it was deemed to be unsafe.

Mayor Robinson commented on safety concerns and recommended moving forward with completion of the overpass portion of the project. Council Member Duncan discussed the estimated two-to four-year time frame for completion of any additional construction project in this area. He commented on the potential economic impacts to local businesses in the interim. He recommended concentrating on either the overpass or a possible half cloverleaf design.

Council Member Johnson agreed that the right-in and right-out access option did not appear to be a practical solution. She inquired with regard to a possible re-location of a half cloverleaf intersection due to the close proximity of the interchange. The pros and cons of the half cloverleaf design were discussed. Mayor Robinson reviewed the fact that planning for an overpass had already been conducted and could be requested as part of a transportation bonding bill. Council Member Duncan inquired regarding the possibility of constructing an overpass and later converting this to a half cloverleaf design.

Jeff Vlaminck, District Engineer from MnDOT, stated that the Environmental Assessment (EA) and other project planning activities were based on the overpass option and that an engineering study would need to be conducted. Council Member Johnson inquired with regard to the possibility of adding an interchange later on, if the overpass was constructed as originally planned. Mr. Vlaminck replied that this option could be studied, adding that the overpass bridge design would possibly need to be altered to accommodate a future interchange. The two-lane design of the Highway 19 interchange was discussed. Mr. Vlaminck stated that a traffic analysis would be needed to see if this would meet current design standards and access guidelines.

Council Member Johnson asked whether the interchange exit signs would be numbered and whether informational signage would be erected. Mike Schweyen, District Traffic Engineer from MnDOT, provided additional information with regard to general motor service signage, adding that businesses were not required to pay for this type of signage. He indicated that a work order to add exit number information was in process. He also discussed the signage plan for the upcoming County Road 86 interchange. It was clarified that construction of this interchange had been re-scheduled for completion

in 2016. Council Member Duncan commented with regard to non-local motorist confusion in the area of the roundabouts. Mr. Schweyen discussed issues and concerns related to signage in the area of the frontage roads and roundabouts along with a plan to address these.

Mayor Robinson stated that another reason to pursue overpass construction would be to connect businesses on the east and west sides of Highway 52 along with facilitation of public safety vehicle response. He commented on economic development activities. Council Member Duncan recommended pursuing funding to complete the overpass at this point.

Dick Peterson, a local area resident, compared the overpass option to the so-called "bridge to nowhere" at Pine Island, stating that this would not provide much help to local businesses. He stated that the roundabouts were easy to navigate and advised against spending taxpayer funds on an overpass. He suggested that the City instead pursue lighting and signage improvements.

Larry Dammer, a Cannon Falls resident, cited safety concerns related to entry and exit speeds with the current road configuration along with motorist confusion. He discussed economic impacts and the importance of signage. He commented on the distance of a full mile between the new interchange and the old Highway 24 intersection. He suggested removing the southbound exit ramp and the northbound entrance ramp and constructing a new interchange to service this area.

Council Member Gallups inquired with regard to the possibility of removing one of the roundabouts. It was clarified that the roundabouts were designed for optimal traffic control at the interchange.

A motion was made by Council Member Johnson, seconded by Council Member Duncan and unanimously carried, to pursue funding for construction of the final overpass portion of the project.

Mayor Robinson commented on ongoing efforts to assist local businesses and promote economic development in Cannon Falls.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Cannon Falls on the 7th day of April, 2015.

Lyman M. Robinson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Ronald S. Johnson, City Administrator