

**MINUTES OF A STUDY SESSION OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
SEPTEMBER 5, 2013, 4:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Mayor Paul Whitcomb called the meeting to order. Council members present were Thom Walker, Dick Dobson, Jules Zimmer and Victoria Hallin. Staff present was Administrator Mark Karnowski, Finance Director Steve Jackson, Community Development Director Carie Fuhrman, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Police Chief Brian Payne, Police Sergeant Joseph Backlund, Engineer Mike Nielson and City Clerk Shawna Jenkins. Absent was Liquor Store Manager Nancy Campbell

21st Avenue Extension Discussion with Industrial Park Owners

Karnowski reported that the Study Session topic of the day relates to the assertion that, if the city constructs a southerly extension of 21st Avenue to hook up with 19th Avenue (connecting to the Industrial Park), that there could be an unwanted mix of passenger vehicles taking a 'short cut' through the industrial park to get to the Rivertown Crossing shopping area.

Because there was some interest expressed on the part of the industrial park business owners, they have been invited to the Study Session to learn more about the proposal and to discuss their concerns.

Again, the intent is to discuss possible traffic concerns. As staff understands it, discussion about the crosswind runway will be held at an upcoming Council meeting and is not germane to today's conversation.

Background: The proposal to extend 21st Avenue to the south and connect up with 19th Avenue has been discussed at least since 2003 when the city began exploring the development of what is now known as Aero Business Park. While the beginning of that discussion pre-dates my time with the city, I understand that the original intent for considering that road extension was to achieve several objectives:

1. The first objective was to address the public safety factor. Currently there is only one way into or out of the industrial park (via 14th Ave. S.). For the safety of the industrial park employees, there needs to be a second access point for fire, police and ambulance should there ever be an incident that blocks the 14th Avenue entrance to the industrial park.
2. The second objective at that time was to find a way to reduce the traffic bottleneck at 14th and Rum River Drive
3. The third objective was to reduce the "rush hour" traffic on Rum River Drive through downtown Princeton on weekday afternoons.

Issues: There are several issues regarding the proposed construction of a 21st Avenue extension to 19th Avenue.

As the city understands it, the only issue of concern to the Industrial Park Business owners is the theory that, if the connection between 21st Avenue and 19th Avenue is completed, that shoppers will go through the Industrial Park as a shortcut to the Rivertown Crossing shopping area and that the mix of passenger vehicles and semi trucks on the same streets would create a public safety issue.

Most would agree that the definition of a 'shortcut' would be an alternative route between two points that is both shorter and faster than any other route.

In this case the route between the Sherburne County Road 45 intersection with Rum River Drive is, indeed, about nine tenths of a mile shorter than going from that same intersection and using TH169 to TH95. But, our police department advises that the 'shortcut' through the industrial park actually takes about a minute and a half longer to drive. So whether the route from Sherburne Co. Rd. 45 to Rivertown Crossing is truly a 'shortcut' is speculative at best.

Further, City Engineer Mike Nielson advises that if the connection of 21st with 19th does generate more thru traffic in the industrial park, the city can make traffic adjustments within the industrial park to discourage that traffic. Those adjustments could include the addition of stop signs and the posting and enforcement of "**No Thru Traffic**" or "**Industrial Park Traffic Only**" signage at both entrances to the industrial park.

Roxbury reported that the Princeton Fire Rescue Department provides protection to the city of Princeton and all or parts of 5 townships with a total of 175 square miles of area.

Princeton Fire Rescue Department is a paid on call department. This means that there are no full time members sitting at the station. The members have to come from home or work when we get a call.

Of the 35 members on the department, 8 work in the industrial park area and 10 live in the area south of the industrial part area.

With the completion of 21st Ave. it is .7 miles from the station to the industrial park. Without the completion of 21st Ave it is 3.6 miles from the station to the industrial park.

With the completion of 21stAve, a call in that area would be a .7 mile drive to the station and a .7 mile drive back for the Industrial Park employed Firefighters Without the completion of 21st they have to drive 3.6 miles to the station and 3.6 miles back with a fire truck to the park area. That is a total of 7.2 miles.

At 30 mph in town if traffic is not bad that difference of 5.8 miles makes a difference of 11.6 minutes in the response time. Also with the completion of 21st Ave for many calls we would not have to go through the residential and downtown area with red lights and siren. A big safety factor to us .With the fact that a fire can double in size every 2 minutes and the fact that every minute makes a difference in the outcome of some of the medicals. He said he believes that the need to complete 21st Ave. is shown.

The distances and times also affect the members living south of town for getting to the station and may also effect the times for the police department to respond from the station to the south end of town.

Mike Nielson gave an overview of the possible extension of 21st Avenue. An additional route was looked at, but it will cost about three times as much because it would involve wetlands. He has heard that some are concerned that the entire township will use the road, but he does not foresee it being an issue. He feels with the extensive truck traffic, drainage ditches, stop signs and other industrial park traffic, it will not be conducive to residents using it to get to 1st Avenue. While it has been discussed for over a decade, the Council began looking at this more in depth in 2007, because at that time the economy was better and sometimes there was a 15 to 30 minute wait to get out of the area after work.

Karnowski stated the Airport Board talked about it briefly at their meeting and were discussing any ways to mitigate traffic. One suggestion was to put signs up that state "Industrial Park Traffic Only". He said it also needs to be clarified that the discussion to extend 21st Av-

venue was talked about long before the site for the Public Safety Building was chosen. Actually the reason that location was chosen, was because of the long term plan to punch that road through.

Jeff Hammer from Crystal Cabinets said this road extension has come up many times and wonders why people have not expressed their opinion on it when it was first discussed many years ago. He said the Fire Department can go thru the Airport and get to the Industrial Park by moving a few fences and/or barricades.

Nielson said eventually 19th Avenue would become a southern connection to the county road to the west. We are trying to minimize the cost by doing it in phases. He realizes they may feel the first phase alone would not be ideal, but the future phases would be a great benefit to the area.

Jeff Watkins from Inline Packaging says he is hearing it is for the safety and convenience for the Industrial Park users; none of which want this road extension to happen. He feels it would be a detriment to the area and a bad idea to have any residential traffic going thru the area. He added that as an employee driving to and from work daily it can be dangerous. Nielson replied in his experience residents will stay out of the area because of the truck traffic and because it will take them much longer to go that way then it would to go either highway 169 or up Rum River Drive to 1st.

Nielson asked how the industrial park residents would feel about doing phase 1 and phase 2 3-4 years later, or do they prefer to see it done all at one time. Several responded they would prefer it all be done at once. Nielson said that would probably be the preferred method, but the city does not have the funds to do the whole project at once. The hope was with more industrial lots opened up they would help fund phase 2.

Dean Powell from Anoco said his building would be the most impacted. He said he believes Nielson's estimate of 100-200 cars per day more are very light. Even when he comes to work at 4am he has to negotiate his way around trucks and it is worse during the day. He added at night, they have to lock their vehicles now because of mischievous behaviors they have seen and thinks it would be worse with a second access in and out of the Industrial Park. He understands another access is needed but asks the council to find a different solution. He said they don't want to put people in harm's way and that they are industrial and want to stay that way.

Sharon Sandberg of Kruse Aviation said this would also directly affect them. Just this past Friday when they had the WWII bomber out at the Airport that they were responsible for, they found people out there doing timed running at 9pm at night. She feels extending the road would just bring more people to the area that have no reason to be back there.

Jared Osborn from Jewel of Minnesota stated they have been robbed twice from their location. The second time they were caught, because someone stayed there overnight and called the cops right away. They are in the back on 16-17th Avenue corner so there shouldn't be any reason for people to go back there. Adding a second access provides another way for people to get in and out without being caught. He's not against a second access, but is against it because of the potential theft problems he feels it will create.

Joe Glenn from Industrial Coatings said safety is also an issue to him and mentioned the trucks that have to back in off the road. In terms of theft, he has a lot of valuable scrap that is locked up behind a chain link fence that could be gotten to if someone really wanted to. He is lucky that he has people working 24 hours a day, so people are always around. He is also in support of having a second access, but would prefer to have it skirt the industrial

park. He is in favor of looking at the bigger picture and longer term solution instead of doing just one phase at a time.

Guy Miller from Biomatrix said he currently only has about 55 trucks per year, but they just installed some new equipment that will triple that amount within the next month. If we compound increased Industrial Park Traffic with outside residents trying to get through, it will be a real issue.

Jeff Nelson from D & N Trucking agrees that an alternate route should be looked at.

Todd Geisness with USDP said he agrees with many of the comments that have been made by others. He asked about the delayed response in terms of an emergency that has been brought up. They have 2 buildings and we have people going across the road all day long, so any emergency vehicles coming through the Industrial Park would have that to watch for as well. Roxbury explained the delay in response time. Using USDP as an example as there is a Princeton Volunteer Firefighter that works there, for him to leave to go to the station and come back with a fire truck and crew it would take approximately 11 minutes longer going around than it would if the extension was done.

Jeff Nelson asked if something short term could be done. Roxbury replied that the FAA may not be comfortable creating an access thru the airport. There are barricades there that could be moved if there was an emergency, but doesn't feel it is a great option.

Sandberg suggested talking to the FAA, as the Fire Station in Mesa Arizona is right at the Airport and they approved that. Whitcomb added that he sees an issue with going thru the hanger area if there was an emergency, as there would be planes in the way or pedestrians that could be injured. He said this road extension has been in the works for 20 years.

Jeff Watkins said Walmart is going to increase a lot of thru traffic. Whitcomb said they may start that way, but they are going to not keep going thru that area once they find out it takes much longer. Nielson said they had also looked at some possible offsite parking for the trucks waiting, and said it would probably greatly reduce the truck traffic and be a big benefit for the Industrial Park.

Jared Osburn said if you open up access thru the Industrial Park people will take that short cut. Karnowski, Hallin and Nielson as said people will usually take the quickest route, and winding thru the Industrial Park and dealing with the trucks will not be the quickest route.

Troy with Rum River Auto stated that the people that this is supposed to protect are saying they don't want this and there has to be a better option and mentioned removing the cross wind runway zoning would be a detriment.

Walker said the cross wind has nothing to do with jets or bigger planes coming here for business purposes, those need a longer runway and not a cross wind as that is for the light sport aircraft.

Lee Steinbrecher stated he is a past Council Member and Planning Commission and feels the extension would be a relief to the Industrial Park traffic. He doubts they would ever have 100 cars a day once they drive thru it once. He also did some research on the cross wind runway and there is a very slim chance of it ever happening with the FAA.

Dean Powell said anyone here can come and sit in their building to watch the traffic problems. Just today, he had 6 turnarounds in his driveway. He knows this has been talked about at least since 2007 and there are budgetary concerns. He suggested going just north

of Sylva and cutting over, which would go around the Industrial Park. Nielson said the extension of this road was originally discussed to alleviate that pressure and take the traffic off Rum River Drive. Dean Powell added that the new Walmart is a game changer and the plan that may have worked in 2007 isn't going to work now.

Walker stated is inclined to sympathize with the Industrial Park residents but he does think that truck traffic would be improved with a second access. He asked about putting something like a radio controlled gate that the Fire and Police could use to get thru the Airport in case of an emergency. He added that even if the City decided to go a bit north with the route, the cross wind runway zoning still needs to be removed.

Dobson said the agreement from 2005 was that if the FAA was going to assist in the costs, the pilots were going to come up with funds for it as well. It was probably a great idea when it was planned, but that is now hampering the growth of the city and he is no longer in favor of the cross wind.

Payne commented that as the Industrial Park gets busier it will become a bigger problem which will not go away until there is a second access. In terms of ticketing on a "No Thru Traffic" sign, he will have to read up on the law. Karnowski said he has seen it done in other communities and it would not take long for the word to get out that people are being ticketed. He added that the City staff and Council have spent a lot of time evaluating the roads and what is needed.

Zimmer asked when the Council had decided to put the new public safety building at the location on 21st. Karnowski replied that the road extension has been talked about since he started with the City in 2003. Hallin added that she expected this road extension to have been completed by now.

Karnowski mentioned that the Airport Board has also talked about putting a fence around the Airport, which is something the FAA has recommended. That could be done along the side of the road with signs that say "no parking" and "no stopping".

Hallin and Dobson both stated that they felt the crime would likely go down with cops routinely traveling in and out of Industrial Park.

Whitcomb asked Fuhrman if it would affect the City negatively if we went forward with the road extension. Fuhrman replied that it could come off as negative if a prospective business talked to the current businesses to find out how the Council and Staff were to work with.

Karnowski stated if the Council so chooses, a Resolution could be drawn up showing all the positive and negatives so their reasoning behind the decision was clearly on the record.

Walker commented that currently the businesses say it's tough to get in and thru the area with the trucks, yet these businesses are also stating they are increasing their business and the truck traffic will be increased. Nielson said that is why he suggested the off-site parking, to get the trucks off the road into a holding area. He also added that to allow expansion to the Industrial Park we need to provide more roads.

Karnowski stated that the 21st Avenue extension and the Cross Wind Runway zoning will be on the Agenda for Thursday of next week as well.

Dobson suggested putting the signs up now. Karnowski responded that he feels they should wait to put the signs up until the road is done. He also suggested dead end sign on the south side.

National Assisted Living Week Proclamation

Karnowski reported that Ann Jungas from Sterling Point is asking if the City can recognize National Assisted Living Week September 8th thru September 14th, 2013.

HALLIN MOTIONED TO PROCLAIM SEPTEMBER 8 – SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2013 AS NATIONAL ASSISTED LIVING WEEK IN PRINCETON. WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Request for Council Approval for Trinity Church in regards to the City's parking lot adjacent to the church

Karnowski reported that Trinity Church would like to have a small petting zoo for on Sunday September 8th. For the petting zoo, they would like to block off a small portion of the City owned parking lot adjacent to the church for a few hours.

WALKER MOTIONED TO APPROVE TRINITY CHURCH'S REQUEST TO BLOCK OF A SMALL SECTION OF THE CITY OWNED PARKING LOT ADJACENT TO THE CHURCH FOR A FEW HOURS ON SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 8TH, 2013. DOBSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURN

DOBSON MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:53 PM. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawna Jenkins

ATTEST:

Paul Whitcomb, Mayor