

**Minutes
Cheney Planning Commission
Regular Meeting**

March 11, 2019

Commissioners Attending: Rick Mount, Vara Lyn Conrath, Dan Turbeville, Brian Mangis and Daniel Hillman.

Commissioners Absent: (two positions vacant).

Staff Attending: Brett Lucas, Todd Ableman, Mark Schuller and Susan Beeman.

Councilmembers Attending: None.

Call to Order: Chairman Mount called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes: Minutes of the February 11, 2019 regular meeting were approved with a minor grammatical correction on the third page.

Citizen Participation: None.

Election of Officers: Mr. Ableman suggested that we amend the agenda to move 'Election of Officers' to the top of the agenda. So moved by Commissioner Turbeville, and seconded by Commissioner Hillman. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Mount explained that the election of officers is needed because of Commissioner Barthels' appointment to City Council. Commissioner Turbeville nominated Commissioner Mount to serve as chair; seconded by Commissioner Hillman. Commissioner Hillman nominated Commissioner Conrath to serve as vice-chair; seconded by Commissioner Turbeville. The motions carried unanimously.

Chairman Mount explained that he is recusing himself from any discussion on the development on Alki, since he is a partner of Stanley Schwarz, who acts as the City of Cheney's attorney. He added that he is mindful of any appearance of fairness issues that might arise from his participation in discussions and voting on this issue.

NOTE: Commissioner Mount stepped down from the dais at 6:10 p.m.

Public Hearing: #2019-01

Ordinance X-58 Development Moratorium South of Alki ST & Work Plan to Consider Mitigation of Impacts

Vice-Chairman Conrath opened the public hearing at 6:10 p.m.

Mr. Ableman gave an overview of the night's agenda. He explained that we have been working with our traffic engineer to look at impacts of additional development on

Cheney-Spangle Road and Cheney-Plaza Road. The City reached out to the Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission to coordinate some grade crossing operations, and the UTC referred us back to the public works managers at both Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe. The UP is interested in setting up a diagnostic meeting at the two crossing sites, and that will be done in the coming weeks.

We are gathering data right now on public safety and access issues. BNSF's traffic volume in 2013, the latest year for which data is available, was 20 trains daily between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and another 20 trains daily from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., for a total of 40 trains per day. For the UP, the most current data was from 2016, and their 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. volume was 5 trains, and from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. was 5 trains, for a total of 10 trains per day.

Mr. Ableman added that we are going to review some conceptual drawings and look at the traffic impact process. He hopes to come back to the Commission with additional data with possible traffic mitigation and road improvements, and possibly a draft ordinance, in April. By May, he hopes to be looking at baseline data and potential impact fee and rate schedules. We're trying to move the process along as quickly as possible, but understanding that this is a public process, and the comments received may impact the direction we go, so it may take a little longer.

Mr. Ableman introduced Bill White, traffic engineer with Morrison Maerle, and explained that he performs transportation consulting services for the City of Cheney, and worked on our last Comprehensive Plan update.

Mr. White explained that we are currently seeing 5 to 7 instances daily of vehicles backing up onto 1st Street while waiting at rail crossings at Cheney-Spangle and Cheney-Plaza Roads. His task is to analyze these crossings in terms of vehicle safety and capacity to queue cars.

Mr. White explained the concept of Transportation Impact Fees (TIFs) as authorized in the RCW and WAC: a payment of fees on new development to pay a proportionate share of costs associated with street improvements. Funds collected for this purpose must be used for design and construction of improvements that reasonably add vehicle capacity to the City street system, as programmed in the Capital Facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan, and also in the 6-year Capital Improvement Program. These funds cannot be used to correct existing deficiencies, or to address issues unrelated to new development, or for improvements outside the street right-of-way. He added that they see the most success with these fees when they are used as match for grants through State or Federal sources.

Mr. White reviewed what he considers issues for the City: the TIF monies must be utilized within 10 years, or they must be returned to the developer with interest. There must be a commitment toward making "good faith" progress in CIP street projects that benefit development.

He added that for the developer, an issue might be that costs are more ‘front-loaded’ than the developer might like. However, in contrast to the SEPA mitigation process, TIF costs are more consistent throughout the development process. With SEPA mitigation, there can be a ‘break and buy’ issue, where the costs are only assessed on the portion of development that pushes Level of Service (LOS) past the point of what is acceptable.

If the City were to adopt TIFs, one benefit to the City is that it secures funds to build the capacity of street system. It also simplifies the development review process for staff by establishing a clear and consistent system of transportation impact mitigation.

For developers, adopting TIFS provides an efficient and predicible process. And all developers share in the cost, not just the last developer in the door whose project ‘breaks’ the LOS.

Mr. White explained the ‘Tier One’ projects which would add queue-stacking lanes at both Cheney-Spangle Road and Cheney-Plaza Road, at an estimated cost of \$1,088,000.

‘Tier Two’ projects would provide Front Street improvements, Alki Street improvements, and an Easy Street connector, which would improve circulatory routes, at an estimated cost of \$3,409,000.

‘Tier Three’ improvements would include widening both Cheney-Plaza Road and Cheney-Spangle Road to four lane roads, with an estimated cost of \$5,343,000.

Mr. White reviewed the methodology for calculating traffic impact fees. He explained that Cheney is not alone in looking at traffic impact fees; Spokane, Liberty Lake, Post Falls and Coeur d’Alene have some form of TIF in place right now, and his company is helping several other jurisdictions look at implementation of TIFs, including Airway Heights, Lewiston, and the West Plains Public Development Authority. Typical TIF costs range from \$500 to \$10,500 per single family unit in Washington, with ranges of \$700 to \$1,000 in the Spokane area. He said that developers are often supportive of TIF fees if it corresponds to a reduction in the development review process.

Mr. White offered to return to address questions at any time he is needed.

Mr. Lucas reviewed data on police and fire calls south of the railroad tracks from 2013 through 2017. He noted that the Cheney police handle 1200 to 1600 calls per year. That number includes many routine requests for service. The Priority 1 and Priority 2 calls are the most serious, and the call volume for those is in the range of 6 to 12 calls per year.

Mr. Lucas showed heat maps displaying call volumes, demonstrating an increase in call volumes in the Emtman developments along Alki & Blackhawk LN, and then showed similar maps depicting fire call volumes and response times to location south of the railroad tracks.

Mr. Lucas explained that the Level of Service for fire calls, which is identified in our Comprehensive Plan, is response within 3-4 minutes, 90% of the time, or as determined by City Council. He explained that there is a national standard for the organization and deployment of fire suppression operations, emergency medical operations, known as NFPA 1710. He reviewed the response times defined in NFPA 1710.

Mr. Lucas reviewed the Washington Surveying & Ratings Bureau (WSRB) allowances for railroad grade crossings, noting that the WSRB makes allowance for various conditions which may impact emergency response times. The WSRB ratings assigned to a geographic area have an impact on insurance premiums for the residents of that area. He then showed a graphic which illustrates time intervals versus products of combustion, and another from the American Heart Association which illustrates the survival rate of cardiac arrest in relation to the time it takes to treat.

Mr. Lucas said that for the EMS calls originating south of the tracks, approximately 25% are being met in the 0 to 4 minute timeframe, while 75% of the calls have a response time over 4 minutes.

Mr. Lucas showed heat maps depicting fire and police call volumes for areas south of the tracks, and compared response times to locations south of the tracks versus fire and police calls to the rest of the city.

Finally, Mr. Lucas showed a map depicting volunteer stations served by Fire District #3, which he considers to have 'rural response times' for all-volunteer stations. He noted that the study by Whipple Consulting suggested that Cheney is not too different from Spokane Valley, but Mr. Lucas feels that Cheney is really quite different. Spokane Valley has enough stations, with mutual aid agreements, that every street address is within 5-6 minutes of a station. The situation in Cheney is that we only have one station, and we are not really large enough to support a second station, probably not until we see a population of 15,000 to 20,000.

Commissioner Mangis asked about delays at Cheney-Spangle Road caused by the ADM mill using tracks for switching; how often does that happen? Mr. Ableman said that it is a frequent occurrence. He added that it is unusual to have an at-grade crossing in a rail yard like this.

Vice-Chairman Conrath called for public comment on this issue; hearing none, she closed the public hearing at 7:02 p.m.

NOTE: Chairman Mount returned to the dais at this time.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Conrath offered congratulations to Mr. Barthels on his appointment to City Council, and commented that he had served the community well during his term on the Planning Commission.

Staff Reports:

Mr. Ableman noted that we are preparing for our next significant snow event tonight. Development activities are lining up to begin immediately as soon as the weather breaks.

Mr. Ableman acknowledged the passing of Dr. Charles Mutschler in an auto accident last night, noting that Dr. Mutschler has served for many years on the Historic Preservation Commission, as well as being a driving force behind the 'Save Our Station' effort. Chairman Mount added that Dr. Mutschler has been an integral part of our community, and will be missed.

Mr. Lucas announced that our GIS intern has taken a position with Avista, the third Planning Department intern to go from our employ to that agency.

Ms. Beeman noted that we are starting to plan for the Cheney Clean Sweep, which will be held on Saturday, April 27.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved By:

Susan Beeman, Secretary

Vincent Barthels, Chairman