

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING, APRIL 24, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Rick Von Holdt with the following members present: Larry Janssen, Chris Kielblock, Chad Cummings, Amy Ernst.

Staff present: Steve Robinson, City Administrator; Hyunmyeong Goo, City Engineer; Angela Thiner, Assistant City Clerk; Mindy Eggers, City Clerk.

Others Present: Sam Martin, The Globe; Ryan McGaughey, Radio Works; Dennis Weber.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION

Troy Appel, Public Safety Director, said in August of 2022, City Administration requested changes to the Worthington Police Department Emergencies Policy (105-10), at the request of City Council and without input from the Public Safety Department. He said even though the Public Safety Department was not in agreement, the changes were made to begin paging the rescue squad to all accidents on all roadways, within the City Limits of Worthington.

Mr. Appel explained he responded to the city administrator with an email that he was not in favor of the change which he said he still feels the same today and why he is proposing an addition to the policy, to lower the number of rescue squad pages which are often times quickly cancelled by patrol officers who deem a rescue response completely unnecessary. He explained the vast majority of traffic accidents that occur in Worthington are fender benders without injury. Officers are trained to investigate and clear the accidents from the roadways as quickly and efficiently as possible to avoid further traffic issues. More emergency vehicles and personnel are not always beneficial and often simply complicate the scene. Dispatchers and officers are, however, trained to err on the side of caution in regards to emergency pages.

He said he would like to reestablish a sustainable procedure, a procedure consistent with our most comparable cities, Fairmont and Marshall. By changing "Accidents on all roadways" to "Accidents on roadways with speed limits of 40 or higher" the paging process would become much more efficient and enhance the safety on our roadways.

Pat Shorter, Fire Chief, said his idea was never to be paged to all calls. His concern is everyone is paged to a major collision as soon as you can. If it turns out to be nothing then you call them off. He said there is a huge liability letting people go without being evaluated by an EMT or a paramedic. Scene safety is also a concern and having a big fire truck can help block traffic and enhance safety for everyone involved. Mr. Shorter said he thinks the dispatchers should also be allowed to use their discretion as they are the first to get the call.

Mayor Von Holdt said that all resources should be paged to accidents. Council members agreed and having fewer personnel responding to accidents could pose a significant risk to residents of the

community. Council Member Ernst said she would rather have too many people at the scene than not enough and said the reason for the change of policy in 2022 was because of an accident that happened on Humiston and Ryan's Road and rescue personnel were delayed in being dispatched. She went on to say that she doesn't know why we are having the conversation again and doesn't see why the fire department, police department and EMS are not working together.

Council Member Kielblock said that there should be cross training between the departments with Members Ernst and Weber agreeing.

Mayor Von Holdt read a letter from Council Member Cummings that shared his thoughts on the topic. He shared that he thought all resources should be paged and all entities should be working together to provide a safe environment for our community.

The motion was made by Council Member Kielblock, seconded by Council Member Ernst and unanimously carried to approve the current protocol policy from August, 2022 remain in place.

FLOWER LANE RIGHT OF WAY ACQUISITION

Hyunmyeong Goo, City Engineer, explained the Flower Lane right of way from First Avenue Southwest to South Shore Drive does not go completely through and has a section that is private property primarily owned by the condominium association on the north end. There are two property owners with the primary landowner the condo association on the west side. He said the condo association is willing to transfer ownership as needed to complete the connection, however the other owner on the east side has not been contacted to date to determine their position on transferring a small portion of their land as well.

Mr. Goo explained the water service line that follows Flower Lane serves four properties. A private shared sanitary sewer service also goes through the private property to serve three of the four parcels that are connected to water.

To perpetuate the access to Flower Lane and provide for future utility access, it would be appropriate to acquire the property needed to connect the exiting right of way that is currently cut off by private property. To transfer the property, a survey would be needed.

Council directed staff to seek a consultant for the project.

FLOWER LANE RECONSTRUCTION FROM FIRST AVENUE SOUTHWEST TO GATEWAY DRIVE

Mr. Goo said the segment of the old highway from the railroad crossing at Flower Lane to West Gateway Drive (Plotts Avenue, County State Aid Highway 25) was turned back to the City as a

Municipal State Aid Street named Flower Lane. The turnback included funding for the reconstruction of the old roadway.

At a Special City Council meeting on March 18, 2020, Council reviewed the option to realign the existing roadway and approved moving forward with a concept study of the alignment options.

The City hired a consultant to study the possible alignment options to meet the state design standards that would have the least amount of impact on the future development of the properties.

A review of the area determined it would be better to construct a new roadway connection to West Gateway Drive that will better serve the development of the property to the south. This also allows for a safer street approach to the railroad crossing. The State will allow the Municipal State Aid Street to be moved and aligned to go through the Koepsell and South Shore Acres LLC Properties. The Koepsell property is currently outside the city limits. South Shore Acres LLC is within the city limits.

Mr. Goo explained to move forward with the proposed realignment project, the Koepsell property would need to be annexed into the City. The property required for the street would need to be purchased, or a land exchange done to transfer the old right of way to the owners for their use. There may be an option to purchase all the property and sell what is not used for the roadway.

The new street would include the installation of public utilities which are not costs that would be part of the State funding to reconstruct the street. The street reconstruction costs will be covered by State funding and Municipal State Aid Street funding with no assessments to the landowners, however, utility assessments would be required.

He said there are two options, the first option being to rebuild the old highway at the current location. This option will result in two roadways serving the properties since a roadway will be needed through the South Shore Acre LLC property to access the lots.

The second option would be to realign and build a new street through the property and eliminate the existing road which would no longer be needed.

Staff recommends using the second option to realign and build a new street to best serve the properties involved.

Council directed staff to move forward with consulting services to aid in property acquisition and road design.

RAY DRIVE BACKAGE ROAD EXTENSION ALONG STATE HIGHWAY 59 NORTH OF RYAN'S ROAD

Mr. Goo said with the proposed State Highway 59 (North Humiston Avenue) reconstruction there will be changes in land use that will impact the use and function of the existing frontage road. To better facilitate safe and efficient access to the businesses and the highway, an extension of Ray Drive north of Ryans Road and then east to State Highway 59 is being proposed.

The business access driveways would be off the backage road and the frontage road would be closed and turned back to the abutting landowners.

The driveway along the south side of Kwik Trip was constructed to city standards but the section of private driveway going north and south would need to be reconstructed to meet city standards.

It would be best if the backage road designation could be done prior to construction starting on the State Highway in 2027. The backage road would provide more efficient access to the businesses during and after construction and provide for safer traffic movement.

It is staff's recommendation to construct a backage road to replace the current frontage road.

Council directed staff to move forward with the extension of Ray Drive north of Ryans Road.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made by Council Member Kielblock, seconded by Council Member Weber and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 p.m.

Mindy L. Eggers, MCMC
City Clerk