



**FARMERSVILLE CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES
For
July 17, 2019, 3:00 P.M.**

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- Mayor Rice called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m. Council members Craig Overstreet, Jim Hemby, Dwain Mathers, and Mike Hurst were all present. Council member Donny Mason was not in attendance. City staff members Ben White, Sandra Green, Paula Jackson, Rick Ranspot, John Williams, Kevin Lisman, and Kim Morris were also present.
- Prayer was led by Rick Ranspot followed by the pledges to the United States and Texas flags.

I. WORKSHOP

- A. Discuss the proposed U.S. Highway 380 alignments and any issues and concerns related thereto with TxDOT and other officials.
- Mayor Rice stated that Council was holding the meeting in the middle of the afternoon to accommodate TxDOT staff.
 - Ben White introduced TxDOT staff Mo Bur, Ceason Clemons, Stephen Endres, Brenan Honey, Commissioner Hale and Clarence Daugherty from Collin County.
 - Craig Overstreet read a statement to the audience and TXDOT. That statement was copied and attached to the minutes.
 - Mike Hurst stated since the legislature has taken away the city's annexation rights the southern route would be outside of our Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). He stated if the city was home rule ETJ limits would change from ½ mile to one mile. He indicated the city may be close to home rule status since the state has changed the wording to inhabitants instead of going by the census. He stated it was a proven fact that when a highway goes around a city the businesses go with it. He explained as a Council, we feel like going around the city would not in the best interest of Farmersville. He explained that TxDOT took the Sam Rayburn Tollway from several lanes and then narrowed it down when it came into Highway 5, so he knows it can be done in Farmersville. He feels it would be advantageous for TxDOT to take another look at the route. He

indicated the city has not experienced growth yet, but we are on the threshold of that. He does not want as many red lights as Princeton, but he does want the lanes to narrow down after you cross the lake. He explained that he does not want to deter the city's growth and most of our growth is coming from the south. He stated maybe there would be a way to incorporate the Outer Loop with State Highway 78. He also asked TxDOT if there was a possibility of making the roadway a one way street and then pick it up on the southern route on the way back. He explained the preservation of the downtown is very important to this town.

- Dwain Mathers stated he was going to take the other side of the equation. He stated that as the City Council we have to look ten to twenty years down the road. He stated that he believes that most citizens agree with the southern alignment. He indicated that U.S. Highway 75 was about 1.4 miles from downtown McKinney and it would not be any different from the southern route to downtown Farmersville. He believes the southern route would not have a negative impact on the downtown area. He stated that he respectfully disagreed with the other Council members.
- Mayor Rice stated that he was very much against the route being on the current U.S. Highway 380, because of business concerns and safety concerns. He stated the city will eventually have three major thoroughfares and we will be only two of the cities in the area to have that. He explained we are working with the Main Street to make our Main Street a destination. He stated that people right now do not get off of U.S. Hwy. 380 to come to downtown Farmersville.
- Mo Bur stated they have spent a lot of time working on the feasibility study along with millions of dollars. He explained that it is projected that Collin County will be larger than Dallas County. He explained it is TxDOT's responsibility to be good stewards with the tax payer's money. He indicated the proposed roadway was not a freeway for one town, it would be a regional freeway. He explained that land and businesses would be impacted less on the southern route and that was very important to them. He explained that TxDOT was not thinking about the present, but two or three decades from now. He stated they are not extending the toll way, just the freeway. They asked the cities not to make a decision or resolution back in October of last year because they wanted to present all the facts first. He explained that overall, the feasibility study is a starting point and they are going to get more studies done. He indicated that at this point the southern alignment is the front runner, but it could change over the years. He stated that today the traffic is not in Farmersville so they will probably start the roadway on the west side of Collin County first. He urged the Council to consider what Farmersville would look like twenty to thirty years down the road. He explained that TxDOT has to plan for the future and he urged them to not think about a freeway that will happen today.
- Ceason Clemons stated they received over 15,000 comments throughout the process and that was unprecedented. She stated that hopefully it was a transparent process the whole way through.
- Commissioner Hale stated he could see both sides of the argument. He explained that he does not want the freeway to discourage business revenue for

the city. He indicated that you have to preserve the cohesiveness of the city and not push it into the county area.

- Clarence Daugherty who works for Collin County Development Services, stated he sees the City of Farmersville in a beautiful situation right now. He has seen growth before and they looked at different factors back then with regards to roadways. He indicated that none of those factors impeded growth. He explained it was just a matter of time before the growth really begins. He stated that Farmersville has time to plan unlike some cities where growth came too fast for them to keep up. He explained the city has time to develop a vision and come up with plan of what the Council wants it to be like. He stated that if the city would take advantage of the time now to plan what is coming, then it would be in a good position for the growth. The annexation legislation has changed somewhat, but it will not stop growth, he stated. He stated that developments are voluntary coming into the cities because they want city services. He explained that if the city did not plan now, it would likely be surrounded by Municipal Utility District's (MUD's). He indicated that working with the land owners and developers was the best way to avoid that.
- Mike Hurst stated that everyone on the Council wants to see the city grow. He stated the city held off on the resolution like TxDOT asked. He stated to become a home rule city we have to have any election. He stated the Council is pro-growth and pro-city. He explained that he spoke to TxDOT members at the meetings in Princeton and Mr. Endres reiterated to him that once they decided on the routes they would have to conduct environmental studies which would take another five years. Then right-of-ways would be purchased. He stated the city was looking at twenty years before the roadway would ever get built. He indicated Princeton still does not have home rule status, even though they have tried several times.
- Craig Overstreet stated he wanted TxDOT to take another look at the business displacements on U.S. Highway 380 currently, because some of the businesses are vacant.
- Mo Bur stated he does not want to wait too long to purchase the right-of-ways for the freeway. He stated he would rather have as many options for the roadway today then to not have the right-of way later.
- Clarence Daugherty stated the bulk of the county bond was to acquire right-of-ways for roadways that have not been identified yet. He explained that only after environmental studies are cleared do right-of way acquisitions begin. He stated land prices are going up so having an agreed route would be pertinent to them going out and acquiring the land before the prices go up any more. He explained they are moving very quickly in Prosper and Frisco because development is going up constantly. He indicated the prices of land will be higher later. He stated there is an advantage to resolving the alignment issue quickly in order to save money. He explained there are a lot of options regarding right-of-way acquisition and he indicated that some people would still continue their business or live at their residences for years before the roadway was built.

- Mo Bur explained the road could be built without the frontage roads at first. He said there were a lot of things that could be done so that when the city wants to grow south it would be possible.
- Clarence Daugherty stated he was hearing two different things from Council such as having a freeway as opposed to not having a freeway at all.
- Dwain Mathers asked if narrowing down the lanes on the current U.S. Highway 380 alignment was an option.
- Mo Bur stated their studies have shown they need a freeway from county line to county line.
- Dwain Mathers stated that TxDOT selected the southern route and he is concerned that without an absolute decision on the location businesses will not want to come. He stated that he believes the southern route is the option to choose. He said the city is on hold until a decision regarding the roadway is made so that we can plan for the future. He would like to know the final alignment now.
- Mayor Rice stated he is at a point similar to that. He stated he wanted to know from TxDOT which route the roadway would go and the city would have to adapt to that.
- Mo Bur stated TxDOT is finishing the feasibility study. He stated that if the city and TxDOT were all in agreement things would move faster. He explained if we are on opposite sides then it will all be in limbo and then businesses and others will not want to develop.
- Mayor Rice asked how much of an influence the City Council really had on TxDOT's decision.
- Mo Bur stated if both entities are together they can move forward, if not it could take longer for a decision.
- Craig Overstreet stated that the southern route would split up land and large parcels.
- Mo Bur stated they wanted to minimize the effects on the least amount of property as possible. He explained that you cannot have everyone agree on an ideal location.
- Craig Overstreet asked if they were aware of anything the Paris Office was going to do to expand U.S. Highway 380.
- Ceason Clemons stated Hunt County is interested in doing a feasibility study now.
- Mo Bur stated that Denton County is now jumping on board to build a freeway.
- Mike Hurst stated the city is currently having to fight for things to come into the city that are in the ETJ. We want to be sure that we have something in our pocket to annex those properties. We have to politicize it in the right way so that people will understand that home rule is the way to go.
- Mo Bur stated that TxDOT picking the southern alignment actually put a lot of faith in Farmersville ability to grow.
- Mayor Rice stated we are at the point to start marketing the home rule again.
- Craig Overstreet explained that the overarching concern is that the growth is coming from the south and State Highway 78.

- Commissioner Hale stated that one of the main reasons the north-south roadways were put on hold was because they were waiting until the US Highway 380 study was done. The southern route is through the county and not Farmersville, but if the Commissioner's Court wanted to do something today, even if we acquire all the right-of-way, nothing would be touched for fifteen or so years. He agrees the north-south route has to be dealt with.
- Clarence Daugherty stated the Outer Loop has been on the county's radar since 2001. They started working on it but discussions of other roadways came up so it was placed on hold. He indicated they have done some technical work for the north-south route. He said they could drop the freeway anywhere along and it would fill up with businesses. He explained the north-south routes are as much on their radar as U.S. Highway 380.
- Dwain Mathers stated that the intersections of the southern route are going to grow. He does not see that those areas being in the ETJ are a problem. He stated that everything he read from TxDOT indicated that the southern route would be more profitable than the current alignment.
- Jim Hemby stated his concern was the southern route being in the ETJ because we cannot annex those businesses in. He explained if there is a possibility we could attract those business to come into the city then that would be good. He stated that either people are going to come downtown or not, but it will not matter where the road is. He indicated growth is important but if the city loses the tax dollars then that affects the city.
- Mo Bur said he wanted everyone to not think of this project today, but several years in the future. He stated you do not want future generations to say why did they not embrace this and plan for the future.
- Mayor Rice stated he wanted to encourage the citizens to let their local representatives know their opinions.

II. ADJOURNMENT


Meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

APPROVE:



Jack Randall Rice, Mayor

ATTEST:


Sandra Green, City Secretary



CRAIG OVERSTREET
SPEECH TO TXDOT OFFICIALS CONCERNING US 380 ALIGNMENTS – DATED 7/17/2019

OPENING

On behalf of the Council and this community, thank you for the work you have done to date. Your decisions regarding transportation mobility have long-lasting effects on population growth, and you face decisions which will not please everyone. We appreciate your attendance today, and your willingness to listen to the concerns of this Council.

We apologize for the 3:00 timing, but it was due to TxDOT availability. We want to go on record once again that we are not looking to displace any historic churches in the Neathery-Marble Addition, period. There has been a lot of misrepresentations and Facebook gossip, so the record needs to be set straight. We would prefer to keep a green route that narrows down through town since we are at the end of the line of this project, but we are also open to a modified pink/purple route that stays closer to our downtown core and keeps it in our ETJ.

PITCH

Should the Red alignment continue, Farmersville will have over 700 feet of east-west ROW less than a mile apart. The almost one mile drop of the proposed route to the south significantly cuts into large tracts which have potential for new employment centers and future subdivisions, which would have greatly contributed to the tax base. In the case of Farmersville, it appears you took the path of least resistance to achieve an option with fewest impacts, but this may not be the best for growth of our town.

Variations of the Pink route just 400 feet south of the existing 380 corridor keep it in the City's ETJ, affect mostly rental houses which are owned by out of town investors (not residents), keeps a transportation corridor close to downtown, provides for possible new growth south in closer -in business centers, spares the historic Neathery neighborhood and churches and allows that specific area an opportunity for appreciation, as opposed to limited growth opportunities when the road moves further south under the proposed Red alignment. This route would affect more out-of-town land investors instead of long term local land owners.

Based on the half mile limitation of the City's ETJ, Farmersville stands to lose sales tax and property tax revenues from development in the corridor along the Red route alignment. Absent any development agreements with these landowners, the City may be faced with reduced tax collections resulting in the reduction of services should existing businesses move to the south or worse, go out of business upon construction of the route. Those property owners on existing US 380 will see their rents and sales capped at then present levels when the bypass route is opened, as Business US 380 would become simply a linear route to local retail areas. Going concern valuations of businesses already operating on 380 would be adversely affected due to the decline in traffic count patterns.

Present design drawings stipulate up to a 450 foot ROW, possibly 5 lanes per side plus an access road on each side. Farmersville will be on the eastern edge of the widening of 380; thus, the route will return to its present total of four lane divided highway at the Hunt County line. That reduction appears drastic in

nature, as there is no indication the Paris office of TxDOT has any plans to widen US 380 on to the city of Greenville.

PROCESS

For several months, this political body was asked not to pre-judge the process while hearings were being held, and thus wait to formally announce its position. This Council did honor that request . We were asked to attend an elected officials' meeting in May, 2019, at TxDOT headquarters, at which the preferred route was announced and later released to the media that afternoon. Representatives of TxDOT were seemingly not aware of Council's position, though at least two TxDOT officials had attended a Council meeting where our consternation with the Red alignment was publicly shared. TxDOT officials at the May public officials' meeting seemed perplexed with the Council's proposed resolution supporting the Green line or variations thereof, declaring, "That's not what your mayor and City Manager are telling us".

PLEA

While TxDOT was only tasked with studying the mobility associated with US 380, a complete Strategic Roadway Plan will need to be done for eastern Collin County. At this point, you have almost a blank slate to create a coordinated plan. Addressing it singularly will result in what you created with the widening of US 380 14+ years ago – a road no longer viable in terms of mobility.

Plats will be filed in the next few months and years which will impede future transportation solutions. With the majority of eastern Collin County growth coming from the south, SH 78 will be widened from Highway 6, likely all the way to SH 121 north of Blue Ridge. As it pertains to Farmersville, it cannot be widened on its present route through Farmersville, so again an alternate route to the east or west around the City will be selected. When you also consider the placement of an Outer Loop (either Hwy 78 or within 1-2 miles to the east of Farmersville), you are creating a lattice work of roadways resembling a Dutch apple pie crust which will have a chilling effect on development because of the confluence of freeways and limited access roadways in such a restricted area. In essence, instead of a four corners scenario available for development, it could balloon to 12 and result in a chopped up quadrant.

We urge you to develop a coordinated plan. The singular Red Alignment will swallow significant portions of land available for employment centers and residential development and will NOT be in the City's ETJ. It also creates significant distance between Farmersville's most unique characteristic – its vibrant historic Downtown district. No other community in eastern Collin County has the vibrancy of a downtown business district like that of Farmersville.

From a "future growth" standpoint, Farmersville has more potential than any other city in Collin County, even by your population estimates. While the Lake Lavon bridge to Hunt County line segment of the proposed limited access roadway is perhaps the least populated at present, the very future of Farmersville is at stake in terms of quality development. Our community deserves more than to have this thrust upon them without significant dialogue or study of what other regional east-west and north-south roads will have on its Thoroughfare and Comprehensive Plan.