

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
COMMITTEE MINUTES

HIGHWAY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, April 5, 2007 – 9:00 a.m.

Lyle Shields Meeting Room, Brookens Administrative Center
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cowart, Beckett, Jay, Knott, Melin, O'Connor

MEMBERS ABSENT: Carter, Langenheim

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeff Blue, John Cooper, Pius Weibel, Barb Wysocki,
Susan McGrath, Don Archer, Jason Barickman

Call to Order

Chair Cowart called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. A roll call confirmed a quorum present.

Approval of Agenda/Addendum

MOTION carried to approve the agenda. There was no addendum for the meeting.

Approval of Minutes – March 9, 2007

MOTION by Jay to approve the minutes of March 9, 2007; seconded by Beckett.
Motion carried.

Public Participation

Jason Barickman spoke on behalf of the Henderson's who own property at the south east corner of Mattis and Windsor. He put together a short timeline of events as they know them to have occurred with this property and he conveyed their willingness and hope to continue working with everyone. He explained that for the Henderson's this is an extremely emotional issue because this land has been in their family for years and they have an extreme interest in maintaining it, although they do understand what is happening with the growth in the city and they do not want to obstruct that. He explained they feel they are being bullied in that they are not looking at this with the urgency that others are, especially those from the city. They are frustrated with the series of letters and calls that have occurred and they feel there are probably some options out there that haven't been explored. The city, formally, has offered money as a solution, but for people who own farm land and unique real estate like this money isn't always the answer. He believes there is an offer for about \$53,000 from the city to take almost 4 acres of land to build a ditch through their entire 60 acre parcel. Another area of frustration they are feeling is that the city has been working on this project, in regards to this piece of land, for a length of time and the first communication with the Henderson's didn't occur until late December. He stated the Henderson's understand they are just one piece of the puzzle but they would like to send a message that all the parties need to sit down and try to come up with a solution that works so the quick take is a last resort.

Monthly Reports

County & Township Motor Fuel Tax Claims – March 2007

MOTION by Jay to receive and place on file the County & Township Motor Fuel Tax Claims for March 2007; seconded by Beckett. **Motion carried.**

County Engineer

Resolution awarding of contract for the replacement of a bridge located ½ mile North and ½ mile East of Royal on County Highway 22 – Section #06-00923-00-BR.

Resolution awarding of contract for the replacement of a bridge located ½ mile South of Penfield on County Highway 22 – Section #06-00924-00-BR.

Mr. Blue stated the first two resolutions are part of one bid project awarding contracts for the replacement of bridges located on Highway 22. This is part of the Economic Development Project in order to get road and bridges ready for construction and production of ethanol at the plant in Royal. These projects were bid on March 8, they are the first piece of the pie and the road project will be bid in June and will be bid through the State of Illinois process in Springfield since it is a federal aid project. These bridges were the largest of the five on the bid list that day; typically our bridges on township roads are relatively simple. These projects are steel beam and 80,000 pound load bridges and they had only one bidder, O'Neil Brothers out of Danville. He passed out a bid tab showing the first project near Royal; the Engineers estimate was \$332,000 and the bid came in at \$416,000. The second project estimate was \$560,000 and the bids came in at \$695,000, both 25% over the estimates. These projects are of a very timely nature.

O'Connor arrived at 9:20 a.m.

The road project will be bid in June and awarded in late July, early August which means that the roadway will be under construction in the September, October timeframe. If they re-let the bridges and tell the contractors they can't build them until after the roadways are built, it won't do much for the cost of the bridges. He explained they have worked with O'Neill Brothers and they have agreed that they will construct them next spring to not conflict with the road work; they will hold their prices until that time. These are part of the economic development program grant received from the state of Illinois which is 50% of the total cost of construction on the bridges and when he applied for those funds he did put in for more money than he estimated the bridges would cost. Based on the bids they received and estimate on the roadway there will still be enough money in that grant to pay for 50% of the bid price on these bridge projects. The state would be paying for \$208,000 on the first and \$300,000 on the second and we would pay the same. He would recommend, even through they are over, due to the timeliness and the fact that we have funds to cover them, we go ahead and award the contracts.

MOTION by Beckett to recommend County Board approval of the Resolution awarding of contract for the replacement of a bridge located ½ mile North and ½ mile East of Royal on County Highway 22 – Section #06-00923-00-Br and the Resolution awarding of contract for the replacement of a bridge located ½ mile South of Penfield on County Highway 22 – Section #06-00924-00-Br; seconded by Bensyl.

When asked about the difference between the engineers estimate and the breakdown of bids, Mr. Blue explained they did revise the Engineers estimate a week before the bids went out and, to be fair to the engineer hired to do the estimate, we haven't done a project like this in Champaign County in a long time and they believed our numbers were good. He stated this is not something that is only happening in Champaign County, some of the bridges on March 8th came in 50% over the estimate. They have one bidder in Champaign County that tends to keep all of the other bidders honest and they were not able to be included on these.

When asked about the timeframe for this work, Mr. Blue explained that the plant is due to start construction August to September of this year, looking at next fall to start production of the ethanol. With these projects it is a 6 month turn around time just to get steel, so even if it was ordered right away it would be October before the steel would be in. They have said they will wait until March of 2008; these are 4-5 month projects so that still puts them at August of 2008 to get these bridges done. If we hold off they have said their prices will not go down, in this project, this is the best thing to do.

Mr. Bensyl asked if both bridges will be done at the same time and if the road will be shut down. Mr. Blue stated that yes, the road will be closed and most of the construction stuff will come in on rail. Mr. Bensyl stated that is a concern of his.

Motion carried.

Review of Bridge Bids from March 8, 2007

Mr. Blue stated this information is on the other bridges that were bid on March 8th. There are three included: Champaign/Piatt County Line, Champaign/Ford County Line and Champaign/Douglas County Line. These are all County line structures on township roads and the Champaign/Piatt bridge was the single bridge that Newell construction bid on. The estimate for that one was \$202,000 and they came in at \$196,000, 3% under the estimate so he awarded that project since it was within 10%. They had two bidders for the other bridges, both over the engineers estimate, and because there is no timeliness on these issues they can wait and he asks that the committee reject the last two bids.

MOTION by Beckett to reject the last two bids; seconded by Jay. **Motion carried.**

East Washington Street Improvement

Mr. Blue explained that Menards has purchased the majority of the property on Highcross Road and they plan on improving a good portion of it with the Menards building being proposed to go just to the south of the existing Walmart. The City of Urbana is looking to upgrade Washington Street to the East and West of Philo Road and put in a signal at Washington and Philo. They have, in conversations with Menards, talked about who is going to pay for what and the reason this is here is because the City of Urbana is requesting that the County be party to this project and take on some financial responsibility with it.

Bill Gray from the City of Urbana explained that at the north end is US 150 and at the south end Florida Avenue, extended. There are 4 tracts that Menards purchased which account for about 300 acres. They have had a variety of discussion in the planning of this acreage, the proposed store is at the northeast corner of Washington and Highcross Road, that tract is proposed to be split in half. There are no plans for the tract going to the West of Highcross, south of Washington, the west half of that would be extension of single family residential and the east half of that tract would be retail. The last tract is surrounded by Stone Creek and that tract would have access off of Florida Avenue extended and would have large lot sizes. Menards planning engineers have spent time trying to figure out how much traffic would be generated, IDOT has been involved and the study has revealed that this portion of Highcross Road will need to be 4 lanes, 2 lanes in each direction and at the intersections there would be turn lanes. Signals will be necessary starting at the north end and they would be extending Florida Avenue to tie into Highcross Road. We are looking at 10 million dollars worth of work; IDOT has zero dollars targeted for this work even though we are doing these major improvements on their road. Menards is willing to do improvements as they feel are necessary but the challenge is that not all properties on both sides of Highcross Road are willing to develop. The property owners on the south are paying 1/3, the property owners on the north side are paying a 1/3 and the City is paying 1/3. East of Highcross Road is entirely in the county at this time; they are looking at turn lanes which would extend east to a north south road, the intent is to upgrade and widen Washington Street which is currently about a 20 ft. wide chip and seal road. The number listed is very preliminary and he asks that the county share be 1/3 of the cost. He looked at similar projects the City and County did in the past and he knows Menards is projecting around 30 million in sales and there is talk of strip retail between Walmart and Menards so the County and City will be seeing sales and property tax generation from this work. The timeframe is that Menards would like to break ground later this year, and they would like to have the Florida Avenue work start later this year as well.

Mr. Jay stated he is excited for Urbana but he is puzzled because they went through this with the fringe road problems we face and it was laid out that we are in serious problems with our fringe road funds. They have made a commitment with the board and themselves that we are not going to enter into any further fringe road agreements until we get a better handle on where we are headed. He is suggesting that even a 1/3 at this point isn't a realistic figure for us to commit to.

Mr. Blue asked about the 5 million dollars to redo Highcross Road, and who would be paying for that.

Mr. Gray explained that Menards will be paying for the largest share of that work especially between Washington and University Avenue. 1/3 cost from the County would go toward Washington east of Highcross Road, which is currently in the county. Their best estimate is \$750,000 and one third would be \$250,000, it's about a 2600 foot length to the east property limits of the Menards tract.

When asked if this proposal conforms to the long range study the committee just signed off on with CUUTS, Mr. Gray stated the Illinois 130 study that CUUATS did is complete and this is 100% consistent with it.

Mr. Blue stated this money would come from other roadway projects we would be doing out in the county, we have all our funds committed and looking at his 5 year projection if any additional money has to be spent on something else, it has to come from somewhere. There isn't money sitting out there that isn't committed to another project.

Mr. Beckett asked if the City would be willing to extend payment on other projects. Mr. Gray stated he would accept that and if they proceed that would be part of his response back to the Council and the Mayor.

Melin arrived at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Beckett stated there has to be something in writing which will give the difference of opinion that those on the committee have. He doesn't know what that something in writing is but the correct procedure way to do it would be a resolution to approve of it. Mr. Jay stated if we are going to go outside the dilemma we are in he would like to know where the money is going to come from.

Mr. Blue will look at the numbers and come back to the committee with more information. Mr. Gray will also come back to the committee with more information.

Ordinance for the establishment of an altered speed zone on 125E in Mahomet Road District.

Mr. Blue stated this ordinance is to reduce the speed from 55 mph to 35 mph as a result of the speed study requested by the Highway Commissioner.

MOTION by Beckett to recommend County Board approval of the Ordinance for the establishment of an altered speed zone in Mahomet Road District; seconded by Knott. **Motion carried.**

Economic Development Program Agreement for County Highway 22

They have an Economic Development Program Agreement for the bridges and this is the agreement for funding of the roadway portion of this project, before the committee just as information. This project runs from Route 136 to CR 20 at the intersection heading back into Royal. The roadway from Royal to Interstate 74 is an unmarked State highway and the state is going to upgrade their piece of the roadway there.

This EDP lays out the cost for the roadway; TARP money is \$525,000 to upgrade the road, the EDP money is 1,022,000 and the federal participation is \$394,000. Our local share is \$103,000.

MOTION by Jay to recommend County Board approval of the Economic Development Program Agreement for County Highway 22; seconded by Knott. **Motion carried.**

HRRRP Application

Mr. Blue explained they have applied for this grant for Monticello Road which comes through the federal government for rural roads that are at high risk, meaning a number of different accidents have occurred on those roads. There have been 56 collisions in the last 4 years on Monticello road and this grant will do a number of different things. Starting at 600E which is 2 miles west of the Rt. 57 Monticello Road interchange over to US 45 there will be shoulder improvements and lessening of the slope into the ditches. The majority of the cost will be right of way purchasing and engineering costs. They will know this summer if the project gets awarded but we are the only County who applied for this project this year.

County Highway 9 bids

Mr. Blue explained this item is for information only; it was bid on March 9th through the State letting project from Ludlow to CR 23. The estimate was \$1,500,000, Champaign Asphalt was the low bidder and the County Board does not have to pass any resolutions to approve the work which will begin in May or June.

Mutual Aid Agreement

Mr. Blue stated he would like to remove this item.

Authorization to file eminent domain lawsuits against property owners, if necessary, in order to acquire right of ways and easement for Curtis Road – Wynstone to Wesley – Road Project.

Authorization to request Quick-Take legislation against property owners, if necessary, in order to acquire right of ways and easements for the Curtis Road – Wynstone to Wesley – Road Project.

MOTION by Beckett to defer both items; seconded by Knott.

Mr. Beckett stated he appreciates the work that has been done but he doesn't think it's fair to receive information for an issue like this via email then hear from the property owners. He feels like we are sending the wrong message if we do it this way and he wants to give some respect to the property owners, he doesn't feel a months delay will cause an issue.

Ms. McGrath stated the problem with delaying this item is that the legislature has a timeline by which we have to submit our request to them for their proceedings and we will miss it if we defer.

A friendly amendment to the motion was made by Mr. Beckett, deferring the items to a special meeting at 6:00 p.m. on April 19th, accepted by seconder.

Mr. Blue stated they have a meeting scheduled with the land owners on April 18th. **Motion carried.**

Other Business

There was no other business.

Determination of Consent Agenda Items

Committee consensus to include items 6 A, B, E and F on the County Board consent agenda.

Adjournment

Chair Cowart declared the meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tiffany Talbott
Administrative Secretary