

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
COMMITTEE MINUTES

OLYMPIAN-LINCOLN SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 10, 2010

**Brookens Administrative Center, Lyle Shields Meeting Room
1776 East Washington Street, Urbana**

11:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lorraine Cowart, Greg Knott, Ralph Langenheim, Alan Nudo
C. Pius Weibel (Chair)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Astrid Berkson (County Board Member), Jeff Blue (County Engineer),
Kat Bork (Administrative Assistant), Deb Busey (County
Administrator), Brendan McGinty (County Board Member), Mike
Munson (Urbana Mayor Chief of Staff), Dave Speicher (IDOT), Libby
Tyler (City of Urbana)

CALL TO ORDER

Weibel called the meeting to order at 11:33 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Bork called the roll. Cowart, Knott, Langenheim, Nudo, and Weibel were present at the time of roll call, establishing the presence of a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Knott to approve the October 19, 2010 and October 28, 2010 minutes; seconded by Langenheim. **Motion carried with unanimous support.**

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDUM

MOTION by Cowart to approve the agenda; seconded by Knott. **Motion carried with unanimous support.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Weibel reminded the public to keep their speeches within the five-minute limit.

Jason Barickman spoke on behalf of some landowners involved in the Olympian Drive discussion to uphold their private property interests before governments of the Cities of Champaign and Urbana and Champaign County. He was retained on their behalf as an attorney, but assured the

committee he was not here as a threat. His purpose was to represent the best interest of his clients who have concerns about a very public proposal that appears to try to balance the needs of the public versus the individuals' private property rights. He would do his best to ensure his clients are well counseled through this process. He was aware emotions have been high during this process and he trusted the committee members understood the burdens placed on his clients as this development proceeds. He has counseled his clients to present reasonable alternatives to the committee. It is thought by some that decisions have been made and he wanted the committee to give the landowners the comfort that their minds are open, which is difficult when County resources appear to be moving full speed ahead in a fashion that has not been authorized by the County Board. He wanted to be sure the County Board's resources are being spent at their direction and that staff is not just moving forward without the Board's guidance and direction. Barickman has encouraged a number of the landowners to present to the committee the tremendous burden that will be placed upon them by some of the proposed directions of the project. The landowners have retained an engineering professional who could talk through some of the alternatives. He emphasized that we are all part of the community and understood the needs of the community. His clients did not want to be viewed as obstructionists.

Mary Atkinson stated that the State took land from her husband's business to widen Neil Street several years ago. The State informed her husband it would take the land and later inform him the amount of the payment. In early 2000 or so, the University of Illinois took her house and built a welcome center on the site. If the Atkinson's land is taken for this road project, it will be the third time in their lifetimes that eminent domain has been used against them. She thought this would be a fact of interest to the committee.

Joe Behrends described how he built a new home at 3609 North Lincoln Avenue seven or eight years ago when the university took his home. When he came to the Champaign County Planning & Zoning Office to obtain a permit, he was shown a map with several proposed routes for the extension of Lincoln Avenue. He claimed he was told it was highly unlikely this would ever happen because the City of Urbana had rejected a proposed road project at one time and it was unlikely they would ever be able to raise the money to build the road. He has new neighbors, Pat and Cindy Gayer, who have indicated they did not want to sell, although they were described at the last meeting as willing sellers. Pat Geyer told Behrends that he would want to be given at least two acres for any one acre taken from him. Cindy Geyer said her name is on the property too and she would not sell.

Bill Cope said twenty-three landowners affected by the project have joined together in a well organized fashion to oppose the project. They have put their own money and resources into this opposition and now have an attorney and an engineer representing them. He spoke about the community support for their group. He emphasized the group was not opposed to road development or some of the objectives behind the development, but they wanted a compromise. He viewed the current plan as old and noted the group has invested in one alternative design. Their engineer is thinking through other alternatives. They would be quite happy if the road was not built, but if it is built then he felt there has to be a compromise. He thanked the committee for this process because Board members have listened to the group.

Janet Scharlau talked about the Jeff Blue's description at the last meeting regarding the impact of the proposed alignment on individual landowners. Scharlau argued about what really constituted impact. Her house would not be taken in the proposed alignment, but the road would be located feet

from her home. She said this would intrude on her privacy during family gatherings and decrease the land's and home's value. Scharlau wondered where the \$30 million would come from at a time when federal, state, county and city governments are in financial trouble and what other needy projects will be left behind. She claimed the option presented by the landowners will impact no one and will meet the travel needs on the road. The alternative route bisects Squire Farms from the north and south, but the impact is less to the surrounding homeowners. She felt the issue for this committee is whether the project is approved since the issue of where the road will go is for the engineers. If the project is approved it must be realigned to not impact 26 people.

Harold Scharlau said the landowners wanted to participate in the committee discussions later in the meeting beyond public participation. He referred to a handout from the landowners opposed to the project, which described the impact of three different designs to a business located in the area. He felt the underlying assumption was that the road project would encourage industrial development in the area. He introduced Brian Bradshaw, a licensed engineer and land surveyor from BKB Engineering who has been employed by a group of landowners opposing the project.

Brian Bradshaw explained that he had been hired as an engineer by a group of landowners to perform a review of the Olympian Drive and North Lincoln Avenue location studies. He has identified a possible compromise route for North Lincoln Avenue shown in orange or red on the handout. He described the proposed route and its impact on the residential properties.

Ken Mathis, the Somer Township Supervisor, was present to represent the Somer Township Trustees and its Road Commissioner. He spoke in support of the Olympian Drive and Lincoln Avenue project. The township wants a bridge over the railroad tracks to help with emergency vehicles and the switching delays caused by the railroad. The township feels the industrial areas of Lincoln Avenue and Mercury Drive needs to be serviced with new infrastructure. This road project would relieve the township roads of some truck traffic. He did not want to stall the project and risk losing available funds.

John Dimit, CEO of the Economic Development Corporation, voiced the EDC's strong continued support for the Olympian Drive project, with the understanding that the AX option is the appropriate first phase of construction. He has received a great deal of input from EDC members on the North Lincoln and North Market business roundtables, some of whom are relying on this project being completed.

After determining no one else wanted to speak, Weibel closed public participation.

COMMUNICATIONS

Weibel announced Alan Kurtz could not make the meeting due to family commitments.

REVIEW OF PAST LINCOLN AVENUE STUDIES

Blue introduced Jim Moll and Matt Heyen from Hanson Engineers. Moll was largely involved in the original Olympian Drive and Lincoln Avenue location studies and Heyen has been involved with the current project. Moll explained he worked on the Olympian Drive location study in the mid-1990's

and the Lincoln Avenue location study in the late 1990's. The Regional Planning Commission anticipates that the Lincoln Avenue area will grow and have additional industrial development. The purpose of Lincoln Avenue was to improve access to the land projected for development north of Urbana. Some of that development has occurred since the study began in the late 1990's. The purpose was also to improve the north Lincoln Avenue alignment to better accommodate increased traffic. There are a lot of bad curves and narrowness on north Lincoln Avenue that need to be improved to accommodate the anticipated industrial development in the area. They also wanted to improve traffic circulation in conjunction with the new Olympian Drive and US-45 to provide for the anticipated industrial growth. A number of studies have identified the importance of Lincoln Avenue to accommodate the industries, reduce traffic impacts, and to eliminate the roadway deficiencies. Moll reviewed how roadways and development are interrelated. He showed a series of slides revealing what has happened in Champaign as development has occurred and the roadways that have been constructed since 1940. Moll stated the most important things that drive development are roadway and utility connections. Ideally, a roadway network is in place prior to the occurrence of development because it is so difficult to build a roadway network after development had happened.

Moll brought up the Champaign County Land Use Management Plan (LRMP) developed by the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) through a long and arduous process to determine where and what types of development should occur in Champaign County, specifically around the Champaign-Urbana urbanized area. The LRMP shows the west of the proposed Lincoln Avenue is primarily intended to be an industrial area. The area east of Lincoln Avenue is primarily intended to have industrial/light commercial/residential use. Development has occurred along existing Lincoln Avenue. The original study anticipated the road would be built in stages. The Lincoln Avenue and Olympian Drive projects are specifically designed to support the type of industrial development that the RPC has determined is appropriate for that specific location.

Some alternatives were considered when the Lincoln Ave study was begun in 1996-1997 by working with the city. The choices were narrowed down to three specific alternatives, which were then shown to the public at a public informational meeting held in January 1997. The southern alternative was eliminated after that meeting, primarily because its design contains a large number of curves. It is more complicated and dangerous to locate intersections on curves. The middle alternative was eliminated because a large portion of it would run adjacent to a creek's flood plain. This alternative also ran close to houses along Lincoln Avenue and would have affected the most parcels of the three options. The final, northern option was supported by most of the public who made comments at the public informational meeting. This road is the furthest from the houses and provides good access to the areas west and between the creek, as well as the railroad tracks. Some further modifications were made based on the engineers' discussions with the public and subsequent meetings with the city. The third alternative route was shifted a little to the south to eliminate banking two very tight curves or constructing an intersection along the curve in those locations. The shift also better utilized the existing Lincoln Avenue right-of-way and minimized the amount of property that would be taken for the project. This is how they ended up with the Lincoln Avenue alignment as it exists today. This alignment was displayed at a public informational meeting held in September 2007. An environmental assessment was prepared and submitted to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for review along with the Olympian Drive location study. These documents were also sent to the Federal Highway Administration. Both agencies reviewed the reports and provided comments. The engineers finalized the report and held a public hearing in June 2008 to receive comments. The

final report was compiled and submitted to IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration, who then approved this as the alternative for Lincoln Avenue. This approved alternative allows the city and the County to apply for funding to actually begin land acquisition and construction. The project has proceeded in stages as anticipated. The south segments of the project have already been built and the project is moving along, maybe a little slower than was planned. Moll reiterated that the project was intended to provide for the anticipated industrial development. Moll showed a slide of the various property owners who are affected by the project and how much right of way would need to be acquired. Moll offered to answer any questions about the Lincoln Avenue study process.

Weibel asked Moll to share more about the reasons why the curves would be a problem on Alternative #1, the northern most alternative. Moll said the curves have a sufficiently tight radius that requires they would have to be super-elevated or banked. The speed limit of 45 mph and banked curves complicates the intersection construction and produces some safety concerns. It was felt the preferred alternative was a better alignment because it has slightly flatter radiuses and does not require the curves to be super-elevated. This would also produce less of the roadway on a curve, allows more straightaway, and allows better locations for intersections. The proposed alternative also reduced the area of floodplain impacted by the project. Weibel inquired if costs were considered. Moll answered that costs were a factor in the comparison. He thought there was a slight difference in the costs of the alternatives primarily because this alternative was a little shorter and used a little more existing right-of-way. There was not a dramatic difference in costs amongst the three alternatives. Weibel asked about the cost difference of the original eleven options. Moll said some of those alternatives were more expensive, specifically the alternative that was on a completely new alignment because it would involve building a lot more new road and buying more land.

Knott questioned if Moll had any comments on Brian Bradshaw's statement of the grade. Moll had not had the chance to study that Bradshaw's alternative, but he would recommend staying with a flatter slope and avoid a 6% slope. A 6% slope is a steep slope for a truck and there are safety concerns about icing at that slope. Moll said they would be better off to stay with 4% or 5% slopes. Regarding Bradshaw's comment about the location of the intersection, it could be moved to intersect with Olympian Drive west of the current intersection. Even with the slopes designed on the Olympian Drive project, there would still be enough room to drive down the slope and get a truck stopped on a flat spot before reaching the intersection. He cautioned they would not want to have two intersections. A major criterion to consider in road design is widely spaced intersections. Knott did not think the current proposal had enough votes to pass the current County Board. He wondered how far west the road would have to go to miss all the landowners outlined on an earlier slide. He does not see a great groundswell of support for this project. He wanted to figure out if there was a way to engineer the road to move the intersection to the west.

Nudo inquired about the plans for north Lincoln Avenue above Olympian Drive. Moll replied their location study only went to Olympian Drive and did not extend north of the intersection. He was not sure what the City of Urbana's or the County's long-term plans were for Olympian Drive. Libby Tyler from the City of Urbana said the area north of Olympian Drive was being viewed as a place for future agricultural growth. The city is concentrating on future development south of Olympian Drive. The next comprehensive plan from the city will likely have to look further north. Nudo wanted to know why there is a necessity to connect Lincoln Avenue above and below Olympian Drive when it impedes on the lifestyles of some homeowners. He did not understand why Lincoln Avenue

businesses would want to go east to get to I-57 or what the impetus was to connect to a road when the future is unknown. Moll explained there are two fundamental problems associated with bringing Lincoln Avenue up to Olympian Drive, staggering the road, and then taking Olympian Drive further to the north. The first problem is the introduction of two intersections. Intersections are always places where traffic slows down and where accidents happen. Reviewing any accident map along a roadway will show accidents clustered at intersections. Intersections with left turns are especially dangerous. One of the tenets of the Olympian Drive project was that it would be a roadway to move traffic and one of the necessities of achieving that was to make the intersections spaced about a half a mile apart. Staggering the road would introduce an additional, closely spaced intersection. The other problem with having the roadway staggered is that all the traffic going north and south on Lincoln Avenue also has to drive on and combine with the traffic on Olympian Drive. This increases congestion on Olympian Drive.

Knott asked why drivers would continue traveling north on Lincoln Avenue when there is nothing up there except farmland. Moll indicated he is trying to take into account how the area will look in 25, 50, or 75 years. Nudo said the City of Urbana has no future plans for that area at this time and the logic about the increased number of accidents due to intersections applies to every street in Champaign and Urbana. His point is that if they are trying to avoid interfering with people's lifestyles, plus they want to cut costs for commercial properties that want to travel west to I-57. Nudo did not understand the logic of the alignment and asked why they could not make a concession to make the project work. He wanted Olympian Drive to attach to Lincoln Avenue, but he thought they were coming up with reasons why they have to go with the 1997 project. Moll thought there were concessions that could possibly be made on the location of Lincoln Avenue, but a staggered intersection is probably not a concession they want to make because it would saddle the future Urbana and Champaign County with a problem. All the cars that just want to travel straight north or south on Lincoln Avenue for any reason would have to go through an intersection, turn onto Olympian Drive, and make another turn to continue north or south. Everyone traveling on Olympian Drive would then have to travel through two intersections. Knott asked about abandoning the current Lincoln Avenue right-of-way south of the two houses on the map. Moll said that approach would be similar to the alternative they were just talking about where Lincoln Avenue would continue up to the north and tie in north of those houses. This would eliminate that intersection and would be a more viable compromise from an engineering standpoint than introducing two intersections on Olympian Drive.

Knott understood Moll's point about the two intersections and that is why he wanted to explore moving the road to the west. There would be some inconvenience on drivers coming from the north because it would not be a straight shot because there would be a curve slightly west abandoning some of the right-of-way. This is the only way he could see to make it work. Moll explained the problem associated with shifting to the west involves acquiring more right-of-way at a greater cost and the property owners who are impacted will simply be shifted from the current landowners to others. The other question was about coming one way on Lincoln Avenue and returning to I-75. Moll stated when they looked at the area fully developed and did traffic projections, the traffic was heavier on Olympian Drive west of Lincoln Avenue but there was still significant traffic east of Lincoln Avenue. He anticipated there would still be a lot of vehicles coming into the area from the east or coming out of this area and going off to the east to access Route 45 or whatever may develop in the east part of the county. Once Olympian Drive extends further to the east, connects to Route 45, and the area develops, he thinks having the curve going the recommended way is not a disadvantage.

Langenheim asked how one would drive to Route 45 from the intersection at the projected Lincoln Avenue. Moll said that once Olympian Drive is constructed and Lincoln Avenue is completed, one would go north on Lincoln Avenue, turn right on Olympian Drive, and drive right over to Route 45. Langenheim said that would only happen if Olympian Drive is extended and Moll concurred. Their assumption when the Lincoln Avenue location study was done was that Olympian Drive would eventually be extended over to Route 45. Langenheim agreed with the logic of the maps and that assumption is shown by the commercial zoning for the area south of Olympian Drive.

Knott wondered what the process is to select a new alignment. Moll said the County Board would have to go back through the location study and environmental document process. This is called a Phase I Study by IDOT. Weibel asked about time factors. Moll estimated it would take 18 months to get the study done, assuming it is not a controversial project. They would have to start at the beginning and redo data collection, an environmental inventory, check the environmental consequences, study the various alternatives, hold a series of public informational meetings, do cost estimates for the alternatives, and develop mitigation plans for any environmental impacts. This information would then be submitted to IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration for review and comment. Knott asked for a ballpark cost. Moll could not ballpark a cost without reviewing the matter. Knott asked if it would be plus or minus \$1 million or \$2 million. Moll said it would be less than \$1 million.

Langenheim asked if the current funding for the overpass could be preserved during this delay or if it would be lost. Moll said they would possibly lose that money because the Illinois Commerce Commission programs money in specific years. If the County Board was unwilling to proceed with Olympian Drive until this issue was resolved and missed the years in which the bridge is programmed with ICC funding, then the ICC would throw the money back into their pool. The County would have to go back through the application process in an attempt to secure the funding again. Weibel asked Blue to comment on the possibility of losing the funding. Blue asked Dave Speicher from IDOT to comment. Speicher was not able to answer if the ICC money would remain available while the County goes through a potential 18-month Phase 1 Study. That would be an issue for the ICC, but anything is possible. The ICC money is specifically for Olympian Drive, not Lincoln Avenue. IDOT's biggest issue from a department standpoint will probably depend on whether they are willing to go ahead with the extension of Olympian Drive without a definitive decision to move forward very quickly with Lincoln Avenue afterwards. IDOT would be very concerned about an agency moving forward with the Olympian Drive construction and stopping it at the existing Lincoln Avenue without connecting it to something.

Knott said a key point was whether the ICC would preserve the funding and IDOT could maybe connect Lincoln Avenue. Speicher said the extension of Olympian Drive from Apollo to Lincoln and the extension of Lincoln up to Olympian could be a viable improvement for the time being. Weibel asked if the County Board should talk to the ICC first about possible changes to the alignment. Speicher concurred they could talk to the ICC about whether or not they would be willing to move their funding. Agencies that have tried that approach have been told to reapply for funding when their projects are ready to move forward. Those projects have been significantly delayed.

Blue added some background on the ICC money. This money was originally applied to be used for Olympian Drive. When it became a community decision to make Curtis Road a higher

priority than Olympian Drive, they asked and were given the approval to move that money to build the overpass east of First Street on Curtis Road. There was another shift and Olympian Drive became the priority project in Champaign-Urbana. They again asked the ICC to move the money back to Olympian Drive. Blue believed another such inquiry would be met with resistance. The ICC receives \$27 million per year and one-third of that amount (\$9.6 million) was being taken for this project. A request to move the money would mean the ICC would have to find other projects to fund with the \$9.6 million during the same year, move projects ahead, and then put the Olympian Drive project in two years down the road. That is a lot of money to move around.

Nudo recalled at the public meeting held at the Urbana Civic Center that this could be done if all the municipalities agreed with the changes and the political entities of Frerichs and Jakobsson agreed with the changes. Blue asked if Nudo was talking about the Illinois Jobs Now money because that was totally different from the Illinois Commerce Commission money. He believed there was some flexibility with the Illinois Jobs Now money that the City of Urbana received. The ICC money is taken off the top of the Motor Fuel Tax Funds and set aside specifically for safety improvements at rail/highway crossing. It is controlled by the ICC and there is no legislative authority per say in that money. Nudo asked what the ICC would feel if all the governmental bodies involved agreed to take the extra 18 months to see if there was an alternative to the alignment. Blue said they would have to ask the ICC. Weibel questioned if asking the ICC would hurt them. Blue did not think it hurt to ask, but he did not know what the ICC's reaction would be.

McGinty did not think there had been an issue with the need to continue to move Olympian Drive to the east. He felt the issue was just how to do it. He believed the concept of doing Olympian Drive in phases and keeping it in long-range plans makes sense. But for now, he wondered how to make Lincoln Avenue happen. He urged everyone to take the landowners' concerns into consideration. He has heard the sweeping S is the only way to go because it has been in the plans for a long time and there is no other way to do it. A lot of people are questioning whether that is truly the case. There are other potential routes to consider, even though they involve jumping through some hoops. McGinty would prefer the Lincoln Avenue project and loop done with the extension to Route 45 stay in the long-range plans. He recommended focusing on the logistics and realizing the engineering perspective is only one of the elements. Traffic north of Olympian Drive is irrelevant for this lifetime. He suggested having a stop sign and one intersection west of the alignment to avoid the objecting landowners. He would like to get past the notion that there is only one way to do the project and work creatively without blowing the money that is already there.

Knott asked if Barickman or Bradshaw might have a question or input at this point. Weibel said he had another question for the engineers present. He asked if Phase A of the project could be completed and then have Phase X completed. Speicher explained that once the project is let, where the project moves to construction, IDOT will want to see Phase A connect to something before moving forward. This usually involves having a comfort level with the local agencies that the next project is going to move forward soon after. An agency restarting Phase I is not going to give IDOT comfort that Phase X is going to move forward anytime soon.

Blue wanted to ask the committee a question because they are trying to build the project incrementally and it seems to him that some headway has been made through the committee process. He wanted to determine if he was on the right page in understanding that the committee as a whole

sees a purpose and need for Olympian Drive to go over the railroad tracks and sees a purpose and need for Lincoln Avenue to get up to Olympian Drive. He believed the committee wants to look at the project that Olympian Drive will sometime in the future extend to Route 45. It better helps focus their efforts if those are three things the committee has moved past and they are now talking about where Lincoln Avenue will come up and meet Olympian Drive. Blue thought this was a good direction in which to head, but he wanted to understand where the committee was in this process. Nudo thought everyone on the committee wanted to connect Lincoln Avenue and get the bridge built. He felt that, beyond the committee, they did not have the political willpower to take and displace a number of people. If they could compromise to that degree and get a road attaching Lincoln to Olympian with that in mind, then the votes would be on the County Board to support it. He wanted to connect the road without taking pieces of property from so many owners. Nudo advised looking at the political reality and getting this done with some concessions. So far what they have been shown is from 1997 or 1998 and he wants to get beyond that to make compromises.

Blue stated the shifting of the alignment as shown in Bradshaw's engineering design basically puts the entire project on Squire Farms. He asked if shifting the alignment in this way would be desirable for the owners of Squire Farms, since there was a Squire Farms representative present who was one of those asking to shift the project. He was concerned about the County putting in months of work trying to shift the alignment to accommodate the landowners' request only to hit another roadblock in acquiring the property. Weibel asked Barickman if he represented Squire Farms. Barickman stated there are multiple parties involved in Squire Farms and he represented some of those parties. It was safe to say at least some of those parties would be open to that discussion and would start with a positive foot forward. He noted the devil was in the details of anything they would come up with, but those people he has spoken to would keep an open mind towards an alternative alignment. Nudo said it was a two-way street in making concessions because the County has certain timelines to consider. He would expect the other side to make concessions if the County is making concessions to get things done. There needs to be a timeline to logically do this, otherwise he would not put his political capital into something that would not be met with a positive reaction from the other side. Barickman wanted to respond without speaking for his clients. Weibel asked what he meant by that statement. Barickman said that, when he first had conversations with some of the Squire Farms parties, their views were that they did not want the extension of Olympian Drive to occur. Barickman thought the tone heard from those who spoke in public participation today was that they recognize the community benefit and they would like to be a part of it. They would not like to be a part of a public benefit driven through their front and back yards.

Nudo asked what would be a logical timeline for the Squire family to meet and for the County to get some answers. Janet Scharlau said she is a one-third owner of Squire Farms with her brother. There were three siblings and each sibling got a third of the interest in the farm. No single family member owns any designated acreage within Squire Farms. Scharlau wants some sort of compromise. She has one aunt who died a week ago, who had five siblings. Scharlau is the Squire Farm manager and she has not yet called a meeting of the owners. Her other aunt has been in favor of the entire project going across since the beginning and Scharlau has not had any conversation with this aunt because they are "at discourse". Scharlau has been the holdout person who did not want to sell the property. If an alternate alignment does not go next to her house and is behind her house so it not something she visually has to deal with, then she is open to at least discussing the matter, but the devil is in the details. Scharlau wanted to see the exact alignment that Bradshaw drew used for the project.

She felt the project did not need the next stoplight over on Lincoln Avenue or the road from where it stops to Lincoln Avenue because Lincoln Avenue is a useless road right now. She also wanted the road to stop and then for the governmental entities to wait and see what develops. Scharlau's short answer was that she would do her best and she thought the Squire Farms owners could come to a consensus. Nudo wanted to know how quickly a consensus could be reached. Scharlau asked how quickly the committee would like to see it. Nudo said the committee has given Blue the directive to work with the parties, so a reasonable timeline needs to be developed. Scharlau said she would get back to the County as quickly as possible.

Knott said there have been some major breakthroughs via conversations today and now comes the details which are beyond this committee's scope and ability.

MOTION by Knott to ask Blue to interact with the various parties and come back to the County Board, perhaps by February 1st, to report his progress to see if there can be breakthroughs on some of the details.

Weibel asked Knott to define the various parties. Knott said Blue should interact with the landowners or their appointed representatives on the legal or engineering side, IDOT, ICC, and his colleagues with the Cities of Urbana and Champaign.

The motion was seconded by Nudo.

Langenheim, in response to Janet Scharlau's comments that north Lincoln Avenue was a useless road, commented that there had been no discussion today concerning the goat farm. This farm is a destination on north Lincoln Avenue that could grow into something like Curtis Orchards.

Blue noted Scharlau indicated she would hold a Squire Farm meeting to discuss openness to this project. Something else that could really stretch out the length of this project is condemnation. Blue hoped that Squire Farms understood there is a fair process to come up with a value for that property and hopefully condemnation is not something the County would have to enter into to stretch out the length of the project.

McGinty asked if there should be an agreement with Squire Farms in place before too long so the Board would know if they need to re-enter into a Phase I. He encouraged the committee to ask the owner of the goat farm, who was present to comment on Langenheim's question directly. Leslie Cooperband stated she and her husband owned Prairie Fruits Farm and Creamery. She does not see this project as having a negative impact on her farm's accessibility if the project proceeds in the direction it seems to be moving. She pointed out people are currently able to reach her farm just fine.

Nudo said his purpose for establishing a timeline was to allow the Board to come up with a political solution and it does not serve them any further to go into any more public negotiations. He concurred that February 1st is a good deadline. He thought there was the political will on the County Board to get something done to connect Lincoln Avenue and Olympian Drive and the clock is ticking, so they want to get it done. The Board wants to be fair and on the other hand he does not want a delay be used as a tactic. He thought the negotiations with Blue and the landowners should be private.

Moll, at Blue's request, said he realized it complicates the discussion, but he thought it was only fair to let everyone know that the Olympian Drive project, as it is currently approved, includes the grades, slopes of the road, and intersection spacing along Olympian Drive. Any restudy of Lincoln Avenue would have to be based on those conditions along Olympian Drive; otherwise the Olympian Drive study would also have to be reopened. Weibel lives in an area of Champaign with offset intersections and stated they did not want offset intersections in Lincoln Avenue because these cause a lot of accidents and traffic problems.

Weibel asked Bork to read the motion, which she did, before calling for a vote.

Motion carried with unanimous support.

Weibel announced he would allow a second public participation session to be held at the end of the other agenda items.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion of Independent Needs Study

Weibel stated an independent needs study was proposed by Laura Huth, who was not present. He asked if the committee wanted to discuss this issue or where the money would come from for such a study. An independent needs study would likely be expensive and the County certainly does not have the money for such a study. Blue hoped the points he made earlier are true and that they have moved to the point where the purpose and needs of the project are understood. The purpose and needs are based on the 1999 Lincoln Avenue and the 1997 Olympian Drive studies and those purpose and needs still hold up today. Blue did not think anything had changed enough to devalue those purpose and needs and they are now looking for a solution in order to meet those purpose and needs. Weibel stated he did not disagree with Blue. McGinty suggested somehow formalizing the fact that those purpose and needs have been analyzed and those factors still apply. He said that would remove the sting from the accusation that the purpose and needs are old. He has never been a proponent of redoing all the work; it is a matter of tweaking for today's times and situation. He wanted to reaffirm that the purpose and needs still apply and have it be called the 2010 version.

Blue said if they move in the direction discussed today and there is a realignment of Lincoln Avenue, then a totally new study will be conducted, which will have a new purpose and need. He asked for the IDOT representative's confirmation on that statement. Speicher would not say they would have an entirely new study, but they would have to obtain another approval from IDOT and FHWA that the purpose and needs that is included in the study is valid for the date of that signature. Blue confirmed that was what he was trying to say. Weibel said there would surely be a partial study.

Langenheim wanted verification that the 1997 plans had been periodically reviewed by CUUATS on a five-year basis. Blue said he was absolutely correct. Langenheim noted the plans were not a fossilized, unchanged object since 1997. Blue said it had been updated and reviewed through the long-range transportation plan every time it is reviewed. The last review was in 2009. Langenheim stated they are viewing the 2009 plan, not the 1997 plan.

Weibel offered to entertain brief comments from the public.

Harold Scharlau said the Lincoln Avenue study had a projection that there would be 13,600 cars a day by 2018. He hoped the committee did not accept that projection.

John Dimit asked the committee to keep in mind that this project is also for businesses already in the community, not simply for businesses they hope might come. He thought this will become more apparent as things unfold in the next few months. He stressed this road is very important for a major employer in Champaign County. This employer has facilities on both sides of the railroads tracks and it is not about getting to I-57 or I-74, but it is about their business need and making sure they remain in Champaign County at their current employment levels. This is a major issue to the employer and the delays have been of significant importance to its corporate strategies.

Leslie Cooperband endorsed the need for independent needs assessment study. She did not concur with McGinty that the assumptions that went into the 1997 study were still valid. The fact that CUUATS approved the five-year plan in 2009 also does not mean the assumptions used to develop the scenarios for the road's development were updated in 2009. She said the landowners still wanted to have an independent body without a vested interest in the outcome of the project to undertake a needs assessment study.

APPROVAL OF CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

MOTION by Knott to approve the October 28, 2010 closed session minutes; seconded by Cowart. **Motion carried with unanimous support.**

ADJOURNMENT

Weibel saw no reason to schedule another meeting and declared the work of the committee to be over.

Weibel adjourned the meeting at 1:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kat Bork
Administrative Assistant