

COUNCIL CONFERENCE MINUTES

July 27, 2010

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a conference at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 27th day of July, 2010, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Atkins, Cubberley,
Dillingham, Ezzell, Griffith, Kovach, Quinn,
Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT: Councilmember Butler

ACOG RAIL CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS USING SURFACE TRANSPORTATION URBANIZED AREA (STP-UZA) FUNDS.

Mayor Rosenthal said the Regional Transit Dialogues concluded Phase I of the analysis on July 7, 2010, and made quite a bit of progress with respect to a governing structure for a multi-jurisdiction transit entity. She said Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, will report on another crucial step in that process because alternatives to the analysis will be critical in the City's ability to compete for federal funding for infrastructure improvements with respect to public transit. She said many Norman citizens have served on the Regional Transit Dialogues Steering Committee.

Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, said in April, 2010, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) had announced there was \$600 million in competitive grant money in a TIGER 2 Discretionary Grant Fund. She said last summer the Cities of Norman, Edmond, Midwest City, Oklahoma City, Moore, and Del City combined to put in an application under the TIGER 1 Grant Program for a transit system from Oklahoma City to Tinker Air Force Base which was not funded. She said representatives from each of these cities met on July 6, 2010, with the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) to discuss applying for a TIGER 2 grant. She said the Cities had hired a consultant to help with the TIGER 1 grant application and there had been a cost to each City to apply as well. ACOG identified a second option in preparing this Alternatives Analysis which would reflect the fixed Guideway Study lines allowing a request for an amendment to the 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program. She said there is approximately \$16 million left over and they are looking for projects that could use this money. She said 80% would come from the STP-UZA funds and the communities would provide the additional 20%. She said those present at the meeting identified this as a much better option than trying to go back through the TIGER application process because there was no way of knowing how successful they had been but they did not feel they had a very competitive edge. She said if this alternative was used by all of the cities involved, Norman's share of the cost would be approximately \$31,000 which would need to be identified in the FYE 2012 Budget. She said ACOG asked each city to submit a letter from the governing body indicating willingness to put in their share of 20% and the deadline for receipt of the letter was the first week of August and the ACOG Board would meet August 12, 2010.

Councilmember Quinn said the Transportation Committee had met and discussed this, those in attendance were in support, and the Committee had asked Ms. Connors to make tonight's presentation.

Mayor Rosenthal said without this Alternatives Analysis, the cities cannot compete for the grant. She asked Council if she had a consensus of Councilmembers to committing a letter to ACOG and Council agreed.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated July 23, 2010, from Susan F. Connors, Director, Planning and Community Development Department, to Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers
2. Memorandum dated July 15, 2010, from Hollie Massie, Special Programs Officer, Transportation Planning and Data Services, Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, to Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee

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UPDATE ON THE PORTER CORRIDOR PLAN.

Mayor Rosenthal thanked Councilmember Dillingham and Ms. Jim Gasaway, Chairman of the Porter Corridor Steering Committee, because they had put in a lot of hours, as well as Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, and Ms. Susan Atkinson, Planner. She also recognized Ms. Jeanette Coker, a member of the Steering Committee who was present this evening.

Ms. Connors said Staff had made changes to the Porter Corridor Plan document prepared by Ochsner Hare & Hare (OHH) approved by City Council on September 22, 2009. She outlined the original boundary of the Porter Corridor Study area. She said the purpose of this plan was to create a clear edge between commercial land uses; improve the appearance of the corridor; revitalize Porter's commercial tax base; stabilize and improve residential property values in adjacent neighborhoods; and improve pedestrian mobility and public safety throughout the corridor. She said throughout the process there had been 33 meetings including five public hearings of the City Council and Planning Commission; four community wide open house events; a walking tour; and meetings with individual neighborhoods. She said 13 of these events had included mailing notifications to everyone within the study area boundary. She said the 2009 Porter Avenue Corridor Study Plan included recommendations for transportation/traffic improvements; demonstration block recommendation; a broader Plan area now called the Study Area; a recommendation to do a Streetscape Plan; and funding recommendations which still remain. She said changes to the Staff Update is a revised plan boundary map which is narrower and primarily between Crawford Avenue and Ponca Avenue except in the northern end around the hospital. She said the extent of commercial development is a new line within the narrow boundary line; and the "Study Area" map includes the area originally included in the plan development. She said all street sections and recommendations for numbers of lanes and for roundabouts have been removed. Funding options for public improvements are included but there is no recommendation for a specific funding option and there is no specific scheduling of the implementation steps. She said Appendix D, Porter Avenue Plan for Public Streetscape, has been added which is the OHH schematic design work presented to City Council on April 27, 2010, which shows the appropriate improvements between the curb and the property line and when those improvements would begin.

She highlighted the old boundary map showing the study area and the original commercial limit line and then compared it to the revised boundary maps with the new Commercial Development Line/Zoning Overlay District boundary. She said the line was needed to identify that area where neighborhoods would have a clear boundary to any further commercial encroachment and this was also needed for the businesses providing a line to show how far they can expand to the east or west. She said the line was based on a reasonable amount of space, 250 feet of depth for critical mass and on-site parking in the rear. She said the plan was designed to try to maintain, where possible, three residential units per street but that it is not possible in all areas and that a significant number of houses in the corridor, particularly adjacent to existing commercial uses, are non-owner occupied.

She provided examples of areas between commercial and residential that do not provide very much protection or give any sense of a strong boundary and then showed OHH's concept of potential edge solutions such as a masonry wall between the home and business with a landscape buffer.

She said the Schematic Streetscape Design presented by OHH focuses on the design of the area within the public right-of-way, from the back of the existing Porter Avenue curb line to adjacent property lines; explores aesthetic enhancement of the corridor through the use of landscape, hardscape, site furnishings, amenities, and recommends how to create a signature look for Porter Avenue; and establishes clearly defined safe travel paths for pedestrians, enhanced by crosswalks, crossing signals, and planning for American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility. She said Schematic Streetscape Design is important because it is the first step in implementing the Porter Avenue Corridor Plan, demonstrates the City's commitment to making streetscape improvement in the Porter Corridor; and allows understanding of the cost of the design and construction of streetscape improvements in the Porter Corridor.

She said there were eight primary goals identified for the Porter Corridor and the Schematic Design concentrated on two of these goals, managing the edge between the residential and commercial property owners through a variety of transitions and enhancing aesthetics and image of Porter Avenue by providing a sense of place and community. She said the Streetscape Design was based on Phase I of the Porter Avenue Corridor Study and OHH explained Streetscape Design to the Steering Committee and Porter Avenue merchants; analyzed Access Management issues; developed Streetscape Design Alternatives; interviewed property owners along Porter Corridor about their plans/aspirations; reviewed the Access Management Diagram and Streetscape Alternatives with the Steering Committee and staff; revised Streetscape Design Alternatives based on committee and property owner comments; conducted a public open house on design alternatives; and prepared the final Public Streetscape Concept Design document which was presented to Council on April 27, 2010. She highlighted drawings that OHH had prepared showing examples of stamped concrete used as sidewalk area, locations of trash receptacles, types of lighting, ornamental art deco street buffer, landscaping to provide safe areas for pedestrians; and locations for crosswalks and bike racks.

She said a Zoning Overlay District (ZOD) Ordinance would be presented to City Council on August 10, 2010, which would apply specifically to commercial properties that touch the "extent of the commercial development" line and which are adjacent to residential land uses and on the Porter side of that line. She said design standards of the ZOD will affect new construction on a lot; demolition and reconstruction on a lot; expansion of a parking lot; and rezoning for commercial land uses. The ordinance will establish a requirement for an opaque masonry wall separating commercial and residential land uses which must be two-sided masonry construction and the walls will tier from four feet as the street side property line to six feet as it extends across the back yard to provide additional privacy for residential. She said it would require a ten-foot landscape buffer along the commercial side of the buffer wall and screening of parking lots consisting of trees and shrubs as well as ground cover with no structures allowed including trash receptacles. If there is an overhang on the landscape, then the requirement is twelve-feet. It would specify lighting standards for parking lots with a 20-foot light pole height requirement and poles would be located within the medians where possible with a concealed light source.

Councilmember Dillingham thanked the Stakeholder Committee and neighborhood representatives for working well with the neighborhoods by keeping property owners engaged and bringing new ideas forward. She said she felt that the problem that was intended to be solved had been solved although nothing is perfect. She said the safety issues at the intersection at Acres, Daws, and Porter were being addressed by flashers and signage through the Safe Routes to School Program and all of them had learned that traffic on Porter was a much larger problem than anyone had anticipated. In order to solve the north/south traffic movement

problem, a much wider traffic analysis would need to be done. She said she welcomed input because there is still work to do

Mr. Jim Gasaway, Porter Corridor Steering Committee Chair, said this had been a 2 ½ year process and everything had been examined and although not everyone had agreed on everything, he felt the committee has a good mix of business people and property owners able to tell the Committee what they agreed or disagreed on. He said although this process was to allow businesses to grow, it was also to encourage the area to become more owner-occupied.

Councilmember Kovach asked Ms. Coker how the neighborhood was responding. Ms. Coker said the neighborhood was not very happy because the businesses cut out a lot of the neighborhood. She said the study stated that in order to have a viable neighborhood, there should be three homes on each street facing each other which does not exist on several streets. Ms. Connors said had been the case at the beginning of the study, the line has not been moved in those areas, and possibly should be looked at. Councilmember Kovach asked Ms. Connors to show the areas on the map that have less than three houses and Ms. Connors highlighted some of the areas. He asked Councilmember Dillingham if there would possibly be more support from property owners who were in these affected areas, if adjustments were made. Councilmember Dillingham said it might be possible in some areas.

Councilmember Atkins asked if the actual property owners had been surveyed. Ms. Connors said the property owners were notified through many processes very early in the plan but they were not asked on an individual basis if they wanted to be included in the line or not.

Councilmember Ezzell asked if Staff was defining reconstruction as anything that requires a building permit. Ms. Connors said it would have to be a total demolition and reconstruction of a new building. Councilmember Ezzell asked if this would apply to modifying the façade of a building or adding awnings. Ms. Connors said it did not apply to interior renovations, façade changes, and awnings.

Councilmember Quinn asked how business owners on the corridor had responded to the ZOD. Ms. Connors said OHH had met with property owners at least twice during Phase I of the study and that some were willing to meet and some were not but they were included in every mailing.

Councilmember Kovach asked if the ZOD ordinance was being brought forward as a component of the overall plan. Mayor Rosenthal said it was a separate agenda item. Ms. Connors said the full Zoning Overlay District Draft is included at Attachment B in the packet included for tonight's meeting but the committee is not recommending approval of it until the City has available funding. Councilmember Kovach asked if Council chooses to approve the ordinance, how difficult would it be for a business to encroach beyond the line. Ms. Connors said the only way would be if City Council approved an ordinance to change the line.

Councilmember Atkins asked if business owners had commented on the landscape buffer between the businesses and residential properties and if they were aware of this requirement. She said there had been no problems. Councilmember Dillingham said contact had been made with every business to make them aware of this.

Councilmember Cubberley asked if the owner of the commercial property on Main and Gray located where the line is but backing up to commercial have to comply with the buffer and parking requirements if they wanted to develop the lots that face Porter. Ms. Connors said the ZOD indicates that the property must be at the extent of the commercial development line and adjacent to residential land uses and would not apply.

Councilmember Atkins asked if any of the lighting requirements conflict with the proposed commercial lighting ordinance and Ms. Connors said no.

Mayor Rosenthal asked Ms. Connors to summarize the response of citizens at the public meeting on July 28th and the Planning Commission on July 8th. Ms. Connors said the Planning Commission recommended approval by a unanimous vote although one member did have a problem with the encroachment issue. She said Mr. Harold Heiple had requested some language changes which were made. She said the public meeting was not that well attended and only a few had attended the Planning Commission meeting.

The Mayor reiterated that this item will be considered by City Council on August 10, 2010.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated July 22, 2010, from Susan F. Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, to the Honorable Mayor Cindy Rosenthal and Councilmembers with Attachment A, Ordinance No. O-1011-2 with Exhibit "A," Porter Corridor Boundary Map, and Attachment B, Porter Zoning Overlay District Draft, July 20, 2010
2. PowerPoint Presentation entitled Porter Avenue Corridor Plan Staff Update dated August, 2010
3. Porter Avenue Corridor Plan, Staff Update, prepared by Ochsner, Hare and Hare, dated August, 2010
4. Public Streetscape Concept Design Document, Porter Avenue Corridor Study, Phase II, for City of Norman, Oklahoma, prepared by Ochsner, Hare and Hare, dated June 4, 2010

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor