

MINUTES
Eveleth City Council Workshop Meeting
8:30 a.m., November 2, 2021
Council Chambers, City Hall, Eveleth, MN

Councilor Jim Perpich, Present
Councilor John Rauzi, Present
Councilor Brian Lillis, Present
Councilor Joseph Koivunen, Present
Mayor Robert Vlasisavljevich, Present

Also present: City Clerk Administrator Jackie Monahan-Junek; Deputy City Clerk Stephanie Friebe; City Attorney Karl Sundquist; Public Works Director Jerry Rosati; Alan Johnson, Benchmark Engineering; Deputy Police Chief Brian Ness (arrived at 9:10 a.m.)

Mayor Vlasisavljevich started the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

1. Alex Peritz, MnDOT Project Manager - Present results of MnDOT Highway 53 Intersection Study to-date

Alex Peritz, MnDOT Project Manager, presented the results of the Highway 53 Intersection Study. MnDOT has been in the process of going through and evaluating three intersections on Highway 53. With the new school being built, it is a good opportunity to look at intersections and traffic flow. Since August 2021, Peritz said MnDOT has held six public meetings to get input and determine the needs. Peritz provided maps to the Council and discussed the following concept plans for each intersection:

US 53 and Bourgin Road

- Concept A: Geometric Improvements
- Concept B: Continuous Green T
- Concept C: Traffic Signal
- Concept D: Roundabout or 3 Leg Roundabout
- Concept E: Reduced Conflict Intersection

US 53 and Progress Parkway

- Concept A: Traffic Signal
- Concept B: Roundabout

US 53 and Industrial Park Boulevard (Hat Trick Avenue)

Concept A: Traffic Signal

Concept B: Roundabout

Concept C: Reduced Conflict Intersection

Concept D: Offset Reduced Conflict Intersection

Discussion took place on the above concepts. Peritz indicated the State has set aside 1 million dollars for the intersections at this point. The State will be also looking to the County and possibly the City (depending on the intersection) to participate in the costs. Roundabouts are estimated at 3 million dollars.

Mayor Vlaisavljevich suggested taking out the highway crossing at the Bourgin Road intersection and utilizing the bypasses.

Councilor Perpich voiced safety concerns on roundabouts with boats, trailers, semis trying to maneuver the roundabout. Peritz explained that the State does have a model for those type of vehicles which would allow transports to get through with double wide haul trucks. If the roundabout option is selected it would be designed specifically for the area.

Councilor Koivunen questioned the safety of roundabouts vs. signals and j-turns. Peritz explained the biggest decision for utilizing a roundabout or j-turn is to take out the fatal conflict points in an accident. Roundabouts seem to bring down fatal collision numbers.

Councilor Lillis asked about the time frame for a decision. Peritz indicated that they hope to have a decision made in the next couple of weeks.

Mayor Vlaisavljevich pointed out that with construction of the new school, there will be more development in the corridor. Councilor Koivunen said if we slow down the traffic maybe they will stop at the businesses.

Jim Makowsky, General Manager at Super 8 and AmericInn, said that Super 8 and the other restaurants across Highway 53 (The Rink, Boomtown, etc.) need each other to survive. If the Hat Trick Avenue intersection gets too complicated, visitors will just drive by.

Bill Aho, owner of Super 8 and AmericInn, said the corridor is an opportunity for the City of Eveleth. He said we can make things happen more conveniently and safely. Aho said he was leaning on the side of the roundabout at Hat Trick. He asked everyone to think outside of the box and proposed the roundabout feature a giant hockey puck in the center or an enlarged hockey player. He said that would tell people of the uniqueness of Eveleth. He said, "Let's give ourselves some recognition." He suggested the City not get caught up in the cost, but to think about what the future is and look at the concept.

2. Update on 2020 State bonding project – indoor air quality, etc.

City Clerk Administrator Monahan-Junek updated the Council on the air quality project. Architectural Resources is finished with the drawings. The City will wait until the grant is finalized before going for bids. Monahan-Junek explained to the Council that part of the process is for the City to file a real property declaration which acknowledges the buildings (City Hall, Fire Hall, Police Department, Library, Hippodrome) will be encumbered and will not be sold without permission from the State.