

**MINUTES
PIQUA CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2013
7:30 P.M.**

Piqua City Commission met in a City Commission Work Session at 7:30 P.M. in the Municipal Government Complex Commission Chambers located at 201 W. Water Street. Vice Mayor Vogt called the meeting to order. Present were Commissioners Terry, Martin, and Wilson. Absent: Mayor Fess. Also present were: City manager Huff, Law Director Stacy Wall, Finance Director/Assistant City Manager Cynthia Holtzaple, City Planner Chris Schmiesing, City Engineer Amy Havenar, John Cruse, Brad Boehringer, Frank Barhorst, Cindy Pearson, Steve Stiefel, Jon Vessel, Jim Vetter.

Moved by Commissioner Terry, seconded by Commissioner Martin, to excuse Mayor Fess from the February 14, 2013 City Commission Work Session. Voice vote, Aye: Martin, Terry, Vogt and Wilson. Nay: None. Motion carried unanimously.

City Manager Huff gave a brief overview of the rules and regulations for conduct at the City Commission Work Sessions.

WOOD STREET, GORDON STREET & COVINGTON AVENUE PROJECT (DISCUSSION)

City Manager Huff stated this is an opportunity to provide information and have discussion on the proposed plans for the area; nothing is set in stone and no decision has been made at this time. The reason for the change is to improve the flow of traffic through the city, stated City Manager Huff.

Discussion items included the demolition of the west point building, improve Wood Street and Gordon Streets, receive suggestions and comments, and discuss options to be considered.

Mr. Schmiesing stated 14,000 cars travel down Route 36 on a daily basis. There are four options being considered at this time, and provided drawings of each of the options. Mr. Schmiesing stated Police Chief Jamison is also present to offer his input on traffic.

1. Close Wood Street off to traffic.
2. Eliminate the westbound traffic on Wood Street, add Stop sign at Gordon.
3. Close both Wood Street and Gordon Street and use Route 36 only.
4. Close Wood Street, move Gordon St. out to Wood St. and flow traffic on to it.

Chief Jamison stated that he and Mr. Schmiesing have reviewed and discussed some of the issues and concerns with all of the options.

Chief Jamison gave a few examples of some of the issues they have witnessed in the area of Wood Street, Gordon and Route 36, further stating there have been 14 accidents in the area in the last 2 years. They have had trucks taking mirrors off of parked vehicle and speeding, as it is hard to control and enforce truck traffic on Wood Street.

Questions were raised concerning the trucks driving down Wood Street and making the turn on College at the 4-way Stop instead of staying on Covington Ave. /Route 36 to the traffic signal at Covington and College. There was discussion on how the traffic would be rerouted in the area. City Planner Chris Schmiesing explained how they plan to reroute the traffic pattern in the area with the different options.

Commissioners voiced their concerns about the traffic on Wood Street versus Covington Avenue, the number of trucks traveling down Wood Street daily, the possibility of leaving Wood Street open for cars only no trucks, the enforcement of truck traffic on Wood Street, concerns about the traffic signal at Covington and College backing up traffic.

Public Comment

Brad Boehringer, Mound Street voiced his opinion on the options stating he prefers Option 2 stating it is similar to the traffic area on the north side of town at the Broadway Point.

Jim Vetter, S. Downing Street, President of the Southview Neighborhood Association provided a copy of a neighborhood survey the Southview Neighborhood Association passed out to 43 homes in their area asking for their input on what they would like to see happen in the Wood Street/Gordon Street/ Covington Avenue area. The survey outlined some of the issues and concerns the Neighborhood Association has with the area in question and asked for public input. One of the major concerns was for emergency vehicles to be able to get into the area as needed.

Cindy Pearson, Wood Street, voiced her concern over the traffic situation at the corner of Wood/Gordon, and Covington streets. Ms. Pearson stated she did not think the option of taking truck traffic off Wood Street would work, as it would be hard to monitor and enforce.

Frank Barhorst, S. Wayne Street, stated he never uses Wood Street when traveling west, and always travels east down Wood Street, further stating most drivers want to use the 4-way stop. Mr. Barhorst commented he would like to see Wood Street as a one-way street.

Commissioners discussed their concerns on the various options, and asked for further information on the ones they would like to pursue further at this time. No truck traffic on Wood Street was a favorable option. Commissioner Wilson proposed an option of:

One-way east from Covington to College Street
Parking on south side of street only
No Stop sign at Wood Street
Keep Gordon Street open

The Commissioners continued discussion of the options offered voicing their concerns. Mr. Schmiesing explained they would take the information provided and review it and bring back to the Commission for further review.

LOONEY ROAD AND GARBRY ROAD INTESECTION (DISCUSSION)

City Planner Chris Schmiesing and City Engineer Amy Havenar provided a brief video on Modern Roundabouts.

Mr. Schmiesing gave a brief explanation of the Garbry and Looney Road intersection, also providing a drawing of what the proposed Roundabout would look like at that intersection. Mr. Schmiesing explained how Roundabouts work and how they control the traffic flow much better than stop signs or signals.

Ms. Havenar gave a brief overview of the safety factors with the use of the Roundabouts as they slow traffic down coming into the area of the Roundabout.

There was discussion by the Commissioners concerning the use of the Roundabout versus 4-way and 2-way stops, traffic congestion, pedestrian and bicycle safety in the area, cost of the Roundabout, and if there are problems merging traffic down to one lane to go through.

Frank Barhorst, S. Wayne Street voiced his opinion on the use of Roundabouts stating he is in favor of them.

Jim Cruse, Co Rd, 25-A stated there are plans for a Roundabout to be built at State Route 41 and Route 235 in the near future, and he would like to wait and see how it functions first before the city moves forward with one at Looney and Garbry roads.

City Manager Huff stated if the Roundabouts are not designed right they will not be effective.

Several questions were raised concerning the reason for building the four lanes of traffic on Looney Road, why motorists do not stop at the stop signs, information was provided stating trucks prefer roundabout versus stop signs. Commissioners stated they would like to see more information on the use of the Roundabouts and other statistics on traffic patterns and crash related statistics utilizing the Roundabouts.

City Manager Huff stated the intent is to get Commissions input and discuss what they would like to see happen in the future, as this is just a conceptional project at this time.

PANHANDLERS (DISCUSSION)

Police Chief Bruce Jamison gave a brief history of Panhandling in Piqua. Chief Jamison stated he asked and received several copies from other communities of their rules and regulations regarding Panhandling in their communities. Chief Jamison cited some of the types of problems the city is having with panhandlers in the area currently, and how the Police Department is working on controlling the problem. Law Director Wall provided information on some of the legal issues the Police Department faces in enforcing the current legislation on Panhandling.

There was discussion concerning where and when they can panhandle, how long they can be in one area, the time of day they can be on the streets, how they can approach people, the need to have them register in the City of Piqua and wear an identification badge, the need to provide information to help with providing shelter if needed. Chief Jamison stated he receives a lot of calls concerning the panhandlers, but it is not his top priority as enforcement is hard to prove sometimes.

It was asked if it would be possible to have the panhandlers provide community service if they do not obey the City codes in lieu of imposing fines on them when they do not have money to pay the fines, and if it would be possible to post signs stating no panhandling in certain areas and on private property.

Chief Jamison stated the Police Department and the Law Director are looking at various options to eliminate the situation, or at least reduce the number of people panhandling in Piqua.

City Manager thanked all for attending the work session, stating they received a lot of worthwhile information to review on all of the subjects discussed.

Moved by Commissioner Martin, seconded by Commissioner Terry, to adjourn from the Piqua City Commission Work Session at 9:25 P.M. Voice vote, Aye: Wilson, Vogt, Martin, and Terry. Nay: None. Motion carried unanimously.

WILLIAM D. VOGT, VICE MAYOR

PASSED: _____

ATTEST: _____
REBECCA J. COOL
CLERK OF COMMISSION