

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
COMMITTEE MINUTES

OLYMPIAN-LINCOLN SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

Highway Department Building, Meeting Room

1605 East Main 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: Jeff Blue (County Engineer), Kat Bork (Administrative Assistant), Deb
Busey (County Administrator), Alan Kurtz (County Board Member),
Brendan McGinty (County Board Member)

CALL TO ORDER

Weibel called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m.

ROLL CALL

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDUM

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Knott suggested opening public participation to allow interaction between the committee
members and appropriate persons when engaging in discussion, specifically Laura Huth of Do Good
Consulting. Weibel said the committee would cover that and again asked if there was any public
participation. Laura Huth said her public participation depended on the decision about interaction.
Weibel explained the committee could not discuss anything during public participation. He announced
public participation was closed.

Cowart entered the meeting at 11:36 a.m.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications.

REVIEW OF PAST STUDIES

Weibel announced there had been a request from Huth to participate in certain committee discussions as an “at the table type person”. The County Board Rules and Robert’s Rules allow Weibel as Chair to grant Huth permission to interact with the committee during its discussions, but Weibel wanted to delegate this to the body to let the body ultimately make the decision. If the committee approves, Huth would be allowed to speak after the committee members had spoken. Huth said she also wanted to be available for questions if anyone has them. Weibel agreed.

MOTION by Knott to allow Huth to participate at the table. Motion failed due to the lack of a second.

Nudo entered the meeting at 11:38 a.m.

Huth asked for the motion to be recalled or to have her public input now. Knott asked Nudo to second his motion. Weibel explained to Huth that she should not be verbally participating in the meeting at this time, per the rules.

Busey asked for a point of clarification because she thought both she and Blue were appointed to the committee, but they are not listed as members. Weibel confirmed Busey and Blue were not appointed as members. They are participating as County staff.

McGinty asked about the motion allowing Huth to speak. Nudo noted they have said they wanted those directly affected involved in the discussion and is not that what they are trying to do here. Weibel agreed and suggested looking at it on a per item basis so he could use his authority as Chair. The committee agreed that was fair. Weibel reminded them the body could appeal his decision.

Langenheim wanted to go on record as opposing the inclusion of a lobbyist on the same footing as a member of the committee in the deliberations of the committee. Lobbyists should be confined to public participation and to respond to direct questions by members of the committee with appropriate suspension of the rules. Nudo thought that was what Weibel was doing.

Blue explained all the past studies are available on the Olympian Drive website. A review of all the past studies is a broad topic and he asked for more specification regarding what the committee wished to review. It was Weibel’s impression that the committee would review the Lincoln Avenue aspects of the project. Blue asked if the committee was still discussing the alignment of Olympian Drive or were they are focusing on the alignment of Lincoln Avenue and the intersection of Olympian and Lincoln. Weibel thought the committee was focused on the later part. Knott asked Blue a hypothetical question about the white lines on a map showing the future Lincoln Avenue. Blue explained that was the preferred alternative that came out of the design study for Lincoln Avenue. Knott asked if it was known as the sweeping S. Blue answered no. Knott wondered if the proposed road could be moved to a more northerly course. Blue distributed a sketch copied out of the Olympian Drive study report. In looking at the design, the high vertical curve is where Olympian Drive needs to cross the railroad tracks. The route over the railroad tracks is approximately forty feet in the air. The road needs to be sufficiently east to avoid the big fill section coming out of the vertical curve for the bridge over the railroad tracks. Knott asked if that was the minimum. Blue stated the point where the

right-of-way comes back together is where the fills come back together to get out of the vertical curve. Weibel inquired if Option E was rejected because it was too difficult to make the curve. Blue said that was exactly the reason. Blue showed the multiple different alignments that were considered on a wall screen. A portion of Lincoln Avenue Option A has been built. The other alternatives looked at in the location design study were coming off of Lincoln Avenue south of where Lincoln Avenue is currently built. The only viable alternative option out of the ones that were originally studied is the alternative which is show as Option A. Blue explained they do not want trucks coming down a slope or meeting a roadway coming up a slope or to build an intersection on a vertical curve. It does not make sense to have intersections too close together because north Lincoln Avenue already exists going north off the proposed Olympian Drive. Nudo asked if they were talking about a three-way intersection. Blue said it would be a three-way intersection now. He is also looking at the long-term impacts of intersections on future extensions. Access guidelines say interactions should not be closer to each other than a quarter of a mile. Langenheim said that could be avoided with access roads, but that would take more space.

Kurtz said no study had been done on part of Lincoln Avenue and referred to a document provided by Huth. Blue explained the option was considered in the original review. They are trying to get Olympian Drive north of the major railroad crossing, where the railroad crossing is one-third of the width at another location. A wider railroad crossing means a longer bridge will have to be built and the place suggested by Kurtz would involve putting a bridge on a curve. Hanson Engineers had advised that there was no curve that would fit a 45 mph road design that could sweep through and come around to meet Olympian Drive at that location. Weibel remarked that would mean a more expensive bridge that would restrict traffic flow compared to other parts of the system. Blue said the proposed bridge had an estimated cost of \$15 million and making it two to three times longer would substantially increase the cost.

MOTION by Nudo to suspend the rules to ask Huth, who is representing some of the landowners, to comment. Motion was seconded by Knott. **Motion carried.**

Huth said she wanted to point out that a map was in front of the committee that was created to show where the different parcels of property that her clients own are located. The yellow areas show farmland and the red squares shows where actual families are living. The sweeping S design would really impact seven different families and about fifteen different individuals. She wanted the committee to remember the lives and businesses that will be impacted with the design during their discussions. Her clients wanted this project to keep in mind the human impacts and allow more discussion of those lives and the alternatives that are possible with a more northern connection. Her handout proposed a road that would not go near her clients' homes and would only bisect one parcels of farmland. She thought this was an important consideration to keep in mind. All her clients are unwilling sellers and acquiring the land would include legal costs. She said the legal costs need to be taken into account in the overall project costs as well as the project timeline.

Nudo asked if Blue could respond to Huth's comments. Blue said he would need more time to perform an engineering analysis of the design proposed by Huth because he just received it at this meeting. Weibel stated Huth's design appears to interact with the proposed Olympian Drive west of where Option E was located. It could create a greater problem with intersecting the rise approaching the bridge. Huth said it was not an engineering spec drawing. Blue said Option E was eliminated

fairly early on during the design study because it would basically come off a bridge, down a hill, and having an intersection on a vertical curve. This would mean cars and trucks would be braking into the intersection and coming up to the intersection from the other direction. Trying to build an intersection in a fill section becomes costly and has obvious impacts on the traffic trying to move through the intersection. Kurtz asked if Blue was saying Huth's proposed alternative route was too close to the bridge section and asked about moving it further east rather than it being a sweeping curve. Kurtz asked if the road could move between sweeping S and L2 to come off the bridge and not cut through as many parcels of land. Blue explained the intersections would be less than 1,000 feet apart. He was concerned about having close intersections on 45 mph road. It would create troublesome driving conditions.

Nudo asked how both aspects could be accommodated. Since people are objecting to selling their land, he wanted to know how to get the Squire parcel involved and get what Blue wants to get accomplished. Blue said he was working off the design. He explained when the other alternatives were considered, the alternative closer to the railroad tracks fell out because of the slope coming into it. If one looks back at the early design study in 1999, not a lot has changed in the area. The parcels owners are similar. A bridge would have to be built if the road crosses a stream. ICC Railroad would not allow a road that 10,000 vehicles travel on a day to be built without a bridge. Once the traffic level reaches a certain point, a road cannot build through a railroad, it must go over. Aside from going west of the Squire house there is no way to get through there and have less impact on the people that currently live there.

MOTION by Nudo to suspend the rules to ask Huth a question; seconded by Knott. Weibel said he would use the Chair's privilege to allow Huth to speak.

Huth said the square parcel of property was listed for sale and has since been removed from the market. Huth did not believe it sold and thought Ms. Squire was still living there. Huth said it was her understanding that Ms. Squire was willing and interested in selling that parcel. Nudo suggested going right through it. Blue said the design was trying to avoid going through the middle of a property and a home. Weibel said it would also depend on the nature of the intersection. Langenheim said if the intersection was moved then it would be a situation that closely resembled the University Avenue/Highcross Road/the interstate east of Urbana.

Huth said she was not done speaking and pointed out that Ms. Squire, whose homestead she was talking about, was opposed to the project twelve years ago when the Lincoln Avenue study was done. Ms. Squire has now switched her position on the project and her farm is now available, so there is a difference between the thinking from twelve years ago to today.

Weibel asked Blue about looking at Alignments #1, #2, and #3. Blue brought up maps from the study on the wall screen. Alignment #2 and Alignment #3 started much farther south on Lincoln Avenue. A bridge has already been built over the Saline. Weibel noted Alignment #2 is primarily within the Squire property when compared to Huth's map. This might not be a problem if that owner agrees to move, but it is unknown what an owner might do. The alignment is further away from other landowners and has no problem of a rise over the railroad bridge.

Knott asked a hypothetical question of how the committee would move forward if they came up with a new alignment. He wanted to know what the process would be with the various funding sources and if it was even doable. Blue said they would have to go back through the design study approval process through IDOT and FHWA. The committee cannot just come up with another alignment and build the road. They have to go through the process to reach a recommended alignment. Knott wanted to know if the committee could ask the politicians to redirect some money towards an alignment study. Blue explained \$15 million is mark that has been discussed to build Olympian Drive. Adding in all the money from the ICC, the Illinois Jobs Now, and the \$2.5 million from CUUATS is enough to build Olympian Drive. If they start taking money away from the Olympian Drive to Lincoln Avenue project, then the money must be replaced from somewhere else. Knott questioned if there was a process for the County Board to direct a study proposing different alignments, including engineering and everything else that is needed. He wanted to understand what approval process would be involved.

Nudo did not think the County Board would pass a project that touches some properties. Nudo asked how they would go about a project that could go through one parcel that is individually owned, accomplish what the project is trying to achieve, and attach Lincoln where it should be attached within the current political reality. Nudo said Huth has pointed out a different alignment that is a feasible. He did not think this will pass the County Board unless they take advantage of what they can.

Blue said the proposed alignment had been approved through FHWA and IDOT. Getting this approval takes about a year or more to obtain. Weibel asked if they could go back and look at one of the other alignments. Blue explained none of the other alignments met the need. None of the other alignments come off where the existing Lincoln Avenue has been built that intersects Olympian Drive. Weibel asked if they can look at Alignment #1 again. Blue said Alignment #1 still intersects Lincolns Avenue. Whatever is done to vary what is produced in the documents will reopen the process. Nudo asked why there were objections to reopening the process. Weibel said it would add some time. Langenheim said it would add a year to process.

Weibel asked Blue to comment on the effect of asking for another alignment in addition to the current approved alignment. Blue said the effect was time and money. Knott asked if the existing dollars could be used to study a new alignment instead of being spent elsewhere. Weibel knows the IDOT money Urbana received will do peer reviews of certain aspects of the planning. He asked Blue if it was possible some of Urbana's money could be used to research another alignment. Blue said the email he saw indicated the peer reviews had been done by FHWA and IDOT and the money would not be allowed to be used to do outside peer reviews because IDOT and FHWA have the expertise to do the peer review. Weibel asked if the money could be used to look at a modification of the design. Blue could not answer the question because Urbana would be the body to decide. Nudo said the County Board could ask Blue to approach Urbana about requesting that use of the money. Weibel wanted to be sure the County Board asked for things that are doable. Knott asked if the committee could ask Blue to ask his peers if it could be done. Weibel thought that could be done if the committee could provide Blue with a concise, understandable statement.

Weibel recognized Huth. Huth said she understood this was a difficult decision, but they were talking about time and money impacting whatever decision will be made. Whether it is using time and money to study new routes or time using time and money to stay with the sweeping S design, time and

money would be spent. She said staying with the sweeping S design could add enough more time and money onto the project because there will legal issues.

Blue said whatever he or anyone believed to be appropriate in engineering, a design has to go through FHWA and there may be something that prohibits another design, but he could not say.

Kurtz thought Alignment #1 had already been set up in planning to go through the single property. Blue said no and showed him where Alignment #1 would approximately be on the map. Kurtz indicated moving the alignment a little bit west would have it just go through one piece of property while still getting to the same point to have one intersection. Blue said another homestead would be impacted if the alignment was moved farther to the west. Huth said that property owner has not shown up to any of the meetings. Blue explained the location design study did not want to displace a person from a home. That location should not be considered until an agreement is in place that states the home displacement will not adversely affect the project. Weibel said the house could become pretty expensive if a road is designed to go through it. Blue said, regardless of the house's market value, the County would have to hire a review appraiser to assess a value of displacement. This includes the value of the home, what it costs to move the people and get them into a home of similar size. There are other things involved beyond the price of the house.

Kurtz stated trying the sweeping S design will end up in litigation with three or four pieces of property that will cost time and money anyway. Changing the design will avoid going to court with owners who do not want to sell. This could be avoided by changing the design to go through a single property. Blue explained there was a hierarchy when a design is reviewed by the appropriate bodies. Home displacement is the first thing they do not want to be done. Kurtz said it would be okay if that person wanted to sell. Blue did not disagree.

Weibel asked why only some of the homes were outlined in yellow on Huth's document. Huth did not show anyone who was not one of her clients. There are more homes on the map than what she is highlighted as represented. The ownership of the Squire property was discussed. Kurtz wanted to move east through the Squire property instead of using several different pieces of property. Huth said if the road was moved it would be in the front yard of another individual. Huth offered to answer an earlier question from Langenheim regarding what properties would be impacted under the sweeping S design. She believed seven of her clients may be involved in litigation if the sweeping S design is used.

Knott asked what specifics would be sufficient from the committee to enable Blue to go talk to IDOT, the cities, and landowners. Weibel suggested the committee give Blue a hypothetical path and have Blue find out what it would take to make it happen. Blue advised waiting to study the suggested alternative road unless it can be confirmed that the impacted property owner is willing to sell. FHWA will say displacing someone is a higher impact than cutting through farmland and would not allow the County to investigate it. Knott asked if the committee could request that Blue engage that parcel owner or owners. He wanted to find somewhere to start. Blue said the options were to go west or keep the alignment they currently have. There is no other way to avoid houses. Weibel suggested finding out if the County Board could have the intersection moved. Nudo said there were no objections to attaching Lincoln Avenue where it belongs, but he wanted to keep it on one property. Huth said there are three Squire Descendants on the deed to the L2 property and she represents one of

those owners. All three descendants have to unanimously agree to sell the property. Blue asked Huth if the property could be acquired without going through litigation if the road stayed totally within the yellow boundary on her map. Huth did not think she would be here with this image for the committee if she did not have pretty clear direction from her clients that this is what they want discussed. Huth stated her clients will want to see the final engineering drawings and have the process remain open for dialogue and for them to be treated with the respect and compassion they deserve in this process. As long as that is adhered to, she felt pretty good that it is something that can be accomplished in a far easier manner than current sweeping S. Nudo said this was the reason they needed to have someone at the table to answer these types of questions instead of hypothetical issues because Huth has the background in facts, which is much appreciated. Kurtz noted it eliminates the future possibility of litigation through a whole bunch of people and the committee can get accomplished what it needs to get accomplished. Huth added that the further west the road is, the happier her clients will be. Blue said the road should avoid crossing the water course multiple times. Nudo advised Huth to take the middle and look for a compromise. Huth said they were not at any sort of decision point.

Weibel summarized the direction to Blue from the committee as: To see the possibility of having offsetting intersections on Lincoln Avenue from present design west until it hits the rise for the bridge, between the touchdown and the current alignment.

Weibel said a variation of Alignment #1 is closest to what is being discussed. He pointed out Alignment #1 is more expensive than the other two alignment because it has another bridge crossing. Kurtz asked how much more expensive an extra bridge would be. Blue estimated the current cost of a bridge at \$1 million. Nudo asked who solicits an inquiry about land acquisition on the County's behalf in this case. Blue said it was him. He arranged the purchase of all the property on Monticello Road. Blue asked if the committee wanted him to inquire with Ms. Squire about the property. The committee directed him to do so.

Weibel inquired if Cowart wanted to say anything because she has not spoken during the meeting. Cowart said declined to comment.

Huth invited the committee to visit the area. She would happily give the committee tours of the area to show them where the properties are. Weibel remarked the individual committee members can visit the area on their own time.

TRAFFIC COUNTS & MODELING FOR FUTURE

Weibel opened the floor to any questions about the information provided as an attachment by Blue last week. This information was also presented at a County Board meeting by Rita Black. Nudo not that impressed with the increase in traffic counts in 2035 or that those equate to the traffic currently on Windsor Road and Duncan Road. Blue said once the traffic counts gets to about 10,000 then it triggers a four-lane type of facility. These numbers project twenty-five years into the future and indicate there is a good possibility a four-lane facility will be justified. The committee spoke about traffic counts. Nudo was concerned with the timing issue regarding when and if the road goes to US-45. He supported having an annual review by all three governmental bodies after Lincoln Avenue is finished is the appropriate way to ascertain what the trigger will be. Weibel asked if a traffic count costs money. Blue said it would not necessarily if it is done by CUUATS, but he could not say for

certain. Traffic counts are currently done every five years. Nudo would also like to see an analysis of job creation on Lincoln Avenue and connecting over to I-57 and those corridors. He was more open to connecting to US-45 when he sees the trigger is being pulled by developers. Weibel thought that could be tracked. Nudo said RPC staff could perform the assessment. He noted this goes back to Huth's clients and the need for leeway on both sides. He did not know if Huth's clients were more concerned with the Lincoln attachments touching their properties or the road eventually going to US-45, but there needs to be some consideration for them to understand what the County Board is trying to achieve in the long haul. Progress cannot be delayed that long if it looks like the road needs to go to US-45. Huth said her clients want to know exactly what this project will do.

OTHER BUSINESS

Weibel announced Blue will return with answers to the committee's two questions at the next meeting place. These items will be listed on the agenda. Nudo had submitted a list to Weibel that he may have to modify, but he wanted it as a discussion item. Weibel suggested Nudo modify his list first and Nudo agreed. Knott asked if the committee will report back to the County Board about what was discussed at the November meeting. Weibel said the committee could come up with a list, but he felt the meeting minutes will suffice. The next committee meeting will be held of October 28th at the same location.

ADJOURNMENT

Weibel adjourned the meeting at 12:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kat Bork
Administrative Assistant

Secy's note: The minutes reflect the order of the agenda and may not necessarily reflect the order of business conducted at the meeting.