

MINUTES OF
BOARD OF HARVEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
JOINT CITY/COUNTY MEETING

March 25, 2008

A joint Newton City/Harvey County meeting was held in the City Commission Room to discuss the traffic impact study with regard to the proposed Emerald City Ethanol Plant. Mayor Willis Heck and County Commission Chairman Ron Krehbiel called the joint meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Mayor Heck expressed his appreciation to the County Commission for meeting jointly with the City. He asked for an update on the both the ethanol plant and the Harvey County Waste-to-Energy project, and he also encouraged the two governing bodies to consider working together to promote a more “green” environment.

Suzanne Loomis, Newton City Engineer, explained that after discussions and permit approval for the Emerald City Ethanol Plant, which is to be located west of the Harvey County Landfill on 24th Street, both the City and County were in favor of conducting a traffic study on the impacted traffic area surrounding the plant. After consultation with the Kansas Department of Transportation, the City learned that there would be no consideration of funding assistance unless a study was conducted. Therefore, Professional Engineering Consultants, P.A., was hired to gather data and evaluate the results.

An overview of the study was presented by PEC representative W. David Hubbard, P.E., who is manager of the Transportation Division for ethanol plants and other developments in the state. He explained that a traffic impact study is a specialized study of the impact of a proposed development on the surrounding transportation system. It is basically used as a planning and working tool to evaluate existing conditions and development-related impact to all roadways within the influence area.

Derick R. Millican, PEC E.I., outlined the existing roadways that will be impacted by the development of the ethanol plant. These roadways were examined as to their design and ability to handle the increased traffic flow. The geometric design of the Highway 50 Interchange was also taken into consideration. Turn lanes and ramps were evaluated as to the acceleration and deceleration lengths in comparison to the lengths required. The standards used for the comparisons are from the American Association of Transportation Officials. Existing traffic volume field counts were also taken for at least 48 hours at 24th Street, Cory Road, Lazy Creek Drive, Cow Palace Road, and Hoover Road. Projections were made using a design year of 2027 to allow for future traffic needs.

The following recommendations were proposed:

- Paving of 24th Street within the influence area of the proposed plant.
- Providing intersections that will accommodate trucks at 24th Street & the plant access road, 24th Street & Cow Palace Road, and the new intersection at Cow Palace & Meridian Road.
- Access at Cow Palace Road & US Highway 50 should be removed and a cul-de-sac constructed at the northernmost end of Cow Palace Road.
- Stop signs should be installed at the plant exit, all three approaches of the intersection at 24th Street & Cow Palace Road, the Meridian Road approach to the intersection at Meridian & Cow Palace Road, and at the exit ramp terminals on Meridian Road.
- Regulatory signs should be considered along 24th Street to limit or prohibit trucks from traveling east on 24th through the 24th & Cow Palace intersection.
- Close access to US Highway 50 at Cory Road and the access drive on the south side of US 50 just west of Cow Palace Road.
- Construct a second point of access to the Westwood residential neighborhood from Split Oak Drive to Meridian Road.

It is recommended that the changes be completed prior to the opening of the Emerald City Ethanol Plant. It is unknown when construction of the plant would begin but the earliest completion date would be summer of 2009.

Mayor Willis Heck asked if there was information in the study relating to the train traffic on Cow Palace Road. Mr. Hubbard stated that they were given information from BNSF that there were only eleven trains per week on that track. Mr. Heck also asked if emergency services to that area would be in any way changed or impaired.

When asked what happens with the results of the study, Ms. Loomis informed the Commissions that a copy had been sent to KDOT.

Commissioner Westfall asked the representatives from PEC if they had talked to any representatives from either Harvey County or ICM. Mr. Hubbard indicated that they had not. Mr. Westfall informed them that the study was incorrect because the location of the entrance to the plant had been changed. Mr. Westfall also expressed concern that they had not talked with any of the businesses located on Cow Palace Road, that there was nothing in the study regarding the intersection of West Street and Highway 50, and there are no short term recommendations for traffic flow while the plant is being constructed. He stated that train traffic on Cow Palace Road is going to have more of an impact than the study suggests and he also questions the decision to close the entrance to Cory Drive.

Commissioner Roberson stated that the County was somewhat startled with the results of the study. What the County wanted and needed from the study is not what was provided, and the recommendations of the study would be extremely costly to implement. Mr. Hubbard indicated that when a study of this type is conducted, KDOT is specific about not considering the cost of the recommendations.

Commissioner Roberson and Commissioner Westfall both asked that the County be allowed time to do a more in-depth review of the study and possibly hold a public hearing to give the businesses affected by the recommendations of the study to have an opportunity to speak.

Chairman Krehbiel stated that the start date for the construction of the ethanol plant is unknown at this time. With regard to the Waste-to-Energy program, the developer of the system is still attempting to find financing for the project. Harvey County has also been contacted by Bio-Gold, a waste disposal company from California that is proposing an alternate process of waste disposal.

Chairman Krehbiel and Mayor Heck agreed that the two governing bodies should meet jointly again to discuss these issues.

The meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Commissioner Roberson, seconded by Commissioner Westfall. Motion passed unanimously.

BOARD OF HARVEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chairman

ATTEST:

Member

County Clerk

Member