

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL WORKSESSION/ROUNDTABLE**  
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA  
CONFERENCE ROOM 190, YUMA CITY HALL  
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA  
**October 6, 2009**  
**3:07 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Mayor Nelson** called the City Council meeting to order.

Councilmembers Present: Shoop, Mendoza, Beeson, McClendon, Nicholls, Johnson and Mayor Nelson  
Councilmembers Absent: none  
Staffmembers Present: City Administrator, Mark S. Watson  
Building Official, Randy Crist  
Director of Community Development, Laurie Lineberry  
Utilities Director, Hank Baer  
Director of Engineering, Paul Brooberg  
Various Department Heads or their representative  
City Clerk, Brigitta M. Kuiper

**I. DEMOLISHED BUILDINGS**

**Watson** stated that, during the recent decline in new building inspections, City staff has proactively focused on demolishing dangerous buildings and boarding up vacant structures.

**Crist** presented a before/after slideshow of various dilapidated and/or vacant structures, that were demolished or closed, commenting as follows:

Three Basic Types of Dangerous Properties

- Abandoned structures
  - Attractive nuisance
    - Location for drug use and other crimes
    - Transient refuges
  - Public nuisance
    - Used for dumping
    - Debris/unkept
  - Disease and pest havens
  - Negative impact on neighborhood property values, if not corrected
- Fire-damaged structures
  - Public nuisance
  - Disease and pest havens
  - Negative impact on surrounding property values, if not corrected
- Structurally condemned
  - Termites, wind, water damage, unsafe work done without permits:
    - Danger of collapse
    - Fire safety hazard
    - Electrical safety hazard

- Debris and generally un-Kept
- Depress property values, if not corrected

**Crist:** The abatement process is not quick. The owner(s) must be notified and there are several built-in waiting periods. Sometimes a contractor is used to perform the demolition and those costs become a lien on the property; however, that adds time to the process and is inconvenient for contractors. Buildings that are vacant/abandoned, but structurally sound, need to be boarded up to keep them from becoming attractive nuisances. Code enforcement personnel work closely with the Police and Fire Departments to address problem locations. **Watson:** City code enforcement personnel have also been working closely with Yuma County to clean-up sites and remove hazardous structures.

## II. TEMPORARY SIGNS DURING ROADWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Watson** stated that recently the City Council approved a temporary sign agreement with Chretin's Mexican Food Restaurant, allowing the restaurant to advertise its business on City rights-of-way during the 16<sup>th</sup> Street/Arizona Avenue road reconstruction project. With that as a backdrop, City staff has developed proposed temporary sign code regulations to address similar situations for other businesses and other projects.

**Lineberry** presented the draft amendment, Yuma City Code, Section 154-421 (3), noting the following:

- The goal is to allow businesses to have temporary banners when they are directly affected by road construction.
- The proposed regulations contain general regulations, regulations specific to public property and regulations specific to non-public property.
- The placement of temporary signs on public property requires the involvement of the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Manager and/or Traffic/City Engineer.
- The proposal requires all temporary banner signs to be on-site.
- The provisions state that no permit is necessary for a banner sign.

### Discussion

- In some instances, the current project has cut businesses off from all traffic; a sign on these businesses would be completely unseen. Why not allow businesses to place signs on adjacent businesses – with their permission – so they can be seen by traffic?
  - Multiple businesses might start putting their signs all on one site; too many signs can be overwhelming and makes advertising ineffective.
  - Requiring no permit means that the City will have a more difficult time tracking what signs are installed.
- It is of the utmost importance to keep businesses alive and the City should do whatever it can to help.
- This is not a beautification issue and there should be no harm in putting out additional signs during road construction.
- The provisions should apply to businesses that are actually being impacted by construction, not businesses that are located on the far end of a project that has since moved further down the street – when they are no longer being adversely affected.
- These provisions will apply citywide.

- The 16<sup>th</sup> Street/Arizona Avenue project uniquely blocks certain businesses – even businesses not immediately on 16<sup>th</sup> Street or Arizona Avenue – in areas where there are no alternate routes. This situation will not exist after the project moves farther to the west, past Arizona Avenue.
- All of the projects listed in the CIP will, at some point, end up as actual construction projects and these provisions would help mitigate the situation without the need for individual agreements.
- The provisions will allow Community Development to respond quickly to needs, which is good for business.
- A banner sign is generally a temporary sign constructed of fabric material.
  - A more formal definition is in the Yuma City Code.
  - Banner signs are intended to be less costly so that by the time they deteriorate, their need is past – something quick and easy to be installed for a short period of time.
  - Banner signs in Yuma may deteriorate faster than the project is completed; a more durable material could be allowed; business owners should be allowed to install something more costly if they wish.
  - The risk of allowing the installation of more permanent signs is that they tend to become more than temporary.
  - Signs that are more permanent would need to be looked at closely to make sure they are properly constructed for safety purposes; eventually code enforcement would become involved.
- Signs falling into the freestanding category require a building permit.
- Realty signs are not the same kind of sign as these temporary signs.
- The number of staff members is shrinking and a simple approach would be better.
- There is no benefit in adopting provisions that do no good.
- Directional signs – signs that actually indicate how to get into a parking lot – are more helpful than generic identity signs, especially on Avenue A.
  - Directional signs would be better than bigger signs.
  - These could be made a part of a CIP project.
- The provisions call for a maximum height of four feet; that is too short to be seen by traffic.
  - Perhaps the business owners should be allowed the option of determining the height, given their circumstances.
    - If that is the case, the business owners should be required to get a building permit for their signs, so staff could review what they are planning.
    - Staff chose four feet because that height and a 30-square-foot maximum size would not pose the structural problems higher and larger signs would, so no building permit would be needed.
    - These signs are temporary – months, not years. They are to be taken down and thrown away after the construction is finished.
    - Only the business owner can decide whether he/she wants to put up a more substantial sign; however, they must be temporary and go away when the construction is over.
    - Building permits should be required for any of these signs that are five to seven feet high and the building permit fees should be waived to lessen the burden on these business owners.
    - It would be better to allow any relocated signs to avoid the need for a new building permit, should that be the case, and require only a building inspection.
- Staff should consider naming the section “Temporary Signs” rather than “Temporary Banner Signs”

- The City does not want business owners to spend a lot of money on a sign, making it more likely that they will want to relocate it after construction, when it might not conform to permanent sign provisions.
  - Business owners will have to take that into account.
- Are these provisions specific to government construction projects? What about an adjacent property owner's construction of a new driveway that might affect his neighbors?
  - These provisions attempt to control those projects the City can control – those that are large enough to have major impacts on numerous businesses.
- Does roadway construction also apply to the installation of other utilities, such as water lines?
  - Perhaps the wording could be changed to state that these provisions apply to businesses impacted by the diversion of normal traffic from their businesses rather than businesses impacted by roadway construction.
    - Perhaps any businesses whose access and visibility is impaired.
  - It's a question of definitions.
  - The issues could be clarified in the definition of a temporary banner sign during roadway construction.
  - The provisions need to be reviewed in terms of other utilities such as fiber optics.
- The American Sign Institute offers generic construction guidelines that could be used to verify safety concerns rather than having an engineering inspection.
- The word "temporary" should be underlined and bolded each time it is used in the document.
- Staff should be aware that there could be a temporary construction easement on property during periods of construction.

**Watson** concluded that staff would take these recommendations and prepare revisions. He noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission is reviewing this draft concurrently with the City Council and staff will keep both the City Council and the commission informed of each other's comments. A new draft will be read for further review in two weeks.

#### IV. WATER PRESSURE IN YUMA VALLEY

**Mayor Nelson** agreed to reorder the agenda and move item IV forward at this point in the meeting.

**Watson** recalled that the City Council has received letters from City residents in the Yuma Valley recently concerning the area's water pressure.

**Baer** explained that, over time, water pressure in the Yuma Valley began degrading, even prior to the most recent boom in growth. Water pressure is directly impacted by demand and that is what was happening in the Yuma Valley. The City began addressing the issue some 10 years ago, with the construction of a new water treatment plant on the Mesa and improvements to the transmission system in the valley. As a result, the water pressure was raised significantly, to the point that people were complaining. Some of the older structures were not strong enough to handle the increased pressure. Staff is now working to lower and more closely monitor water pressure in the valley. It has been lowered from an average pound per square inch (psi) of 90 to a median of 79 psi and an average of 73 psi – all through operational procedures. No valves have been closed. Staff is continuing to work to regulate the pressure and reduce differentials.

In response to questions, **Baer** stated that the Arizona Department of Health Services has established a minimum of 20 psi for residential lines. The National Fire Protection Association establishes a minimum water flow of 1,500 gallons per minute under all conditions, with a minimum residential pressure of 20 psi for firefighting purposes

### III. MAJOR ROADWAYS PLAN

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Street from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to Avenue E½

**Lineberry** displayed the revised right-of-way line on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, based on previous discussions. The width has been reduced to a Minor Constrained Arterial, 76 feet, and deceleration turning lanes have been eliminated at all but the major intersections, which makes a big difference in the amount of right-of-way the City would need to take for any widening of the street.

**Broberg** added that turning lanes have been retained on 8<sup>th</sup> Street approaching 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue eastbound and westbound, and eastbound approaching 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue because 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue is the terminus of a Collector for 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Lineberry** and **Broberg** commented on each section of the roadway, moving from east to west as follows:

- The intersection of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue A will include 300-foot deceleration approach lanes in all four directions.
- In the area leading up to 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue from the east, the buildings previously in danger of being taken for right-of-way are spared under the Minor Constrained Arterial designation.
- 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue is designated as a Collector street.
  - The intersection at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue has been reduced. If a right turn is needed for westbound traffic on 8<sup>th</sup> Street to turn north on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Yuma County Water User's Association right-of-way may be available
  - Does the right-of-way shown in the display of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue reflect earlier discussions?
    - The right-of-way in the revised scenario stays close to the existing right-of-way with some expansion toward the secondary irrigation canal on the west side of the East Main Canal.
- The intersection of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue B will again have 300-foot turn lane approaches from all directions. This intersection will be discussed in more detail when the City Council considers Avenue B, north of 8<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Street continues as a Minor Constrained Arterial until Avenue C.
- May Avenue falls on the mid-section line and, as such, should be a Collector. It does not go farther south, but has the potential of crossing the West Main Canal to the north.
  - There is no designated Collector Street going south from 8<sup>th</sup> Street in the vicinity of the May Avenue alignment.
- The right-of-way for Palm Avenue south of 8<sup>th</sup> Street has been widened to accommodate more traffic.
- At Avenue C, again, there are 300-foot turn lane approaches to the intersection from all directions.
- At Avenue C, 8<sup>th</sup> Street could become a Principal Arterial or a Minor Arterial – unconstrained.
- The alignment of Avenue D, a potential major corridor, will need to be established.

Discussion

- Vaughn Avenue/Date Street (north/south of 8<sup>th</sup> Street respectively) would be a better choice for a Collector than May Avenue because of existing development.
  - The development on the May Avenue south of 8<sup>th</sup> Street is generally not homes, but rural accessory buildings to residential structures.
  - The creation of a new Collector in this area will be discussed at a future meeting.
- There is little development on the north side of 8<sup>th</sup> Street, past Avenue C to the west; the roadway could be shifted to avoid taking any homes if need be.

**Lineberry** noted that there have been a number of street sections discussed where no changes are to be made; she will be bringing forward resolutions to confirm this. The schedule for bringing the items to the City Council has not been firmed up.

**Watson:** The planning effort to revise the Major Roadways Plan will involve a public input process and members of the public will be able to address these revisions during that process.

**Traffic Patterns: Area bounded by 24<sup>th</sup> Street, 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, Pacific Avenue and Arizona Avenue**

**Brooberg** presented the following information:

- The area consists of a square mile of property bounded by major streets.
- In 1989-1990, a warrant study was conducted on the intersection of Palo Verde Street and Pacific Avenue, which resulted in the installation of a signal.
- In the early 1990's, a study was conducted of the intersections of side streets along 24<sup>th</sup> Street; subsequently, the intersections were modified to improve sight distances.
- The intersection of Arizona Avenue and Palo Verde Street is oddly configured. Because of its configuration, drivers are more cautious at this point. There is no accident history at the intersection and no warrant for a signal; however, the intersection continues to be watched by staff.
- In 1996, the City and the Arizona Department of Transportation cooperated in creating an improved intersection at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and Arizona Avenue, bringing two T-intersections together, creating a more normal four-legged intersection that is easier to cross and signalize.
- Improvements have been made to 32<sup>nd</sup> Street at its intersection with Pacific Avenue to accommodate increased traffic going northbound to Walmart on Pacific Avenue.
- In the 15 years prior to 2007, when the data was collected, the following has occurred:
  - 24<sup>th</sup> Street: 30% increase in traffic
  - Pacific Avenue: 66% increase in traffic
  - 32<sup>nd</sup> Street: 10-15% increase in traffic
  - Arizona Avenue: traffic has remained relatively constant
- The Palo Verde wall, located at the northwest corner of the new dog park behind the Pacific Avenue Walmart came up recently in discussions.
  - The wall was installed in 1987, the result of an encroachment permit.
  - Reasons for the wall's construction:
    - The area to the west was undeveloped sand dunes, blowing dust and weeds.
    - The Max Club developed immediately to the east, followed by Walmart and various other retail and restaurant development.
    - The installation of the wall was reasonable at the time it was constructed.

