

Hillsboro Planning Commission Public Hearing Minutes
Roberts Road /Fenner Avenue Extension
October 18, 2021 – Meeting - 5:30 p.m.
Old Firehouse 108 Governor Trimble Place

HILLSBORO PLANNING COMMISSION

CALL TO ORDER

At 5:30 p.m. Rob Holt Chair called the Hillsboro Planning Commission Public Hearing to order.

ROLL CALL

The following were present for the meeting: Rob Holt; Chair, Brianne Abbott; Safety Service Director, Jason Brown, Mayor Justin Harsha, and Bill Sims. Paul Worley and Tracy Aranyos were absent. Also in attendance were Clerk; Kimberly Newman, Public Works Superintendent Shawn Adkins, Council President Tom Eichinger, Councilmember Ann Morris, Councilmember Mary Stanforth, Gary Silcott; DLZ, Whitney Seitz; II Administrative Assistant I, and over 20 citizens of Hillsboro.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was met.

BUSINESS – Roberts Lane/Fenner Road Extension

DISCUSSION: Mayor Justin Harsha discussed plans for the proposed extension of Roberts Lane and Fenner Avenue, as the city needs more room for commercial land and the proposal is in the preliminary stages with more meetings to follow in the future, with possible changes. A map was provided to citizens in attendance showing the proposed extensions with a cul- de- sac near Te Mar Avenue. Mayor Harsha explained the proposed extension has been discussed for many years and the time has come to implement this extension. The vision for the extension would be converting St. Rt. 62 from Main St. to Harry Sauner and St. Rt. 73 South, to one-way routes through Hillsboro. This will open up some commercial property and then extend on down to Fairground Road to create more thoroughfare. The proposed area is zoned commercial, and the proposal is the extension of Robert's and Fenner roads and making more thoroughfare within the city limits with the goal for the opportunity for growth. This would include infrastructure, road, lighting, sidewalks, all that is involved with development.

Questions asked of the public were: how did the expansion proposal get started: was it by the city or by property owners. What other areas were considered aside from Roberts/Fenner extension. Does the city have any commercial entities right now that are asking for properties within the city limits and were lined up. Will access to Pea Ridge be impacted by the proposed Roberts/Fenner extension. Is the entire extension was contingent upon St. Rt 62 and St. Rt. 73 being one-way routes. When would this proposal

be implemented and what is the cost of this proposal. Will low income housing be considered for the proposed area. Will there be a by pass in the center of town where you have all the traffic jams.

Chair of Planning Commission Rob Holt advised that this meeting is to hear the public's input to be taken into consideration, not to go back and forth and say, "we should do this" Mr. Holt asked citizen's to please talk one at a time, so everyone could be heard. Mayor Harsha continued with the one-way route is an idea in the early stages of development and a traffic study will need to be completed first through ODOT. Mayor Harsha advised that the city has some easement agreements with the Hauke and Shaw property owners for construction easements and right of way, and at this time did not want any other property. All that is proposed tonight is the extension of the road and it is zoned commercial. Safety & Service Director Brianne Abbott answered questions in regard to changing the zoning, or using other areas in the city like Carey town Road or Hobart Drive. Brianne Abbott and Rob Holt both advised those are industrial areas and the city needs to keep that area for that purpose. The proposal is already zoned commercial and allows for single family dwellings, the intention is to utilize the areas as it is zoned. Ms. Abbott added that there is nothing lined up at this time as far as commercial build, but the city has received an average of 20 calls in the past year from those looking for commercial property. Currently there is not a lot of opportunity for continued growth. The city has 16 commercial developments either in the process of construction or the city has documents where they are getting ready. Hillsboro has a lot of development taking place and want to keep the ball rolling as currently there are three vacant commercial lots in the entire city and they are small. The city is holding true to the vision for this area since the 1990s and want to bring some additional development to the city. The city would love to have Carl Smith incorporated, but that would take some time and there is not a lot of space for industry. It will be the property owners who choose what development will be, as long as it complies with how it is currently zoned.

Mayor Harsha said it is very important to keep the Hobart area industrial for the possibility of bringing a manufacturer to benefit the city. When you start looking at a map and you take a development like Hobart and see how much of a footprint that one manufacturer needs, it does not take long to fill up a lot of property. The strip along Carl Smith Drive, with two or three manufacturers, would take up a good bit of land.

Mayor Harsha advised that the extension is not contingent upon one-way routes, as of now if the one-way happens, Pea Ridge would end up turning into a right turn only lane, so it could be impacted. There would be an intersection there where the proposed road would come down and intersect with Pea Ridge. Rob Holt added the intersection of Pea Ridge and Fairground Road would create a four-way interception right there, as proposed right now. Another resident asked if the city would be taking houses to build this intersection. Mayor Harsha replied that there is absolutely no eminent domain being proposed at this point. Everything on the map has been discussed with the property owners that own every piece of this, there won't be anything being proposed with any other property owners at all. The extended loop on the west side of 73, that is all one

property, and the city has talked with them. This will come down to Pea Ridge and then stop there and right where Fairground Road stops, then extend across the road and loop out to 73.

A citizen expressed concern that there would be big problems if it is not one-way and inquired on the traffic light placement. Gary Silcott advised that all of the plans are just a sketch at his point with nothing done with the terrain, or traffic studies to give definite answers to some questions. Mr. Silcott added that the city was cognizant of ensuring infrastructure will not interfere with the neighboring properties and will work to address some of the mentioned concerns. He further stated this is a lot of work, about 8 million dollars amount of work, and is not something that is to happen overnight. Mr. Silcott also added that he has done this work for almost 30 years, saying, "We are not going to make everyone happy." Mayor Harsha added that the city will be searching for funding for this proposal to happen.



In response to expanding city limits, Chair Rob Holt advised the proposal is already in the city limits and it would make sense as it is contiguous to the city's commercial development area already, as it sits. It makes a whole lot more sense to develop what the city currently has, rather than going to something else.

Public Works Superintendent Shawn Adkins advised to the question about the square footage between a property owner's driveway and the proposed road would be enough space for a road way and sidewalk. Gary Silcott of DLZ said it would be at least a couple hundred feet.

A petition with signatures from 48 homes against this proposal was given to Mayor Justin Harsha.

Other residents expressed concern of the need of sidewalks in this area, increased traffic problems and the cul- de- sac being used for drug deals, and a property owner not being notified of this hearing. SSD Brianna Abbott apologized for lack of notification and the property owner will be advised of future hearings, as the proposed plans changed, it created a larger property owner notification list.

MOTION At 7:06 pm Chair Rob Holt moved to adjourn, seconded by Bill Sims. The next meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for 5:30 pm on Monday, November 15, 2021 at 108 Governor Trimble Place, Old Firehouse.

 Rob Holt, Chair  Kimberly Newman, Clerk