

## Donna Jackson

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**From:** Margaret Carter [mcarter56@suddenlink.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 30, 2009 11:44 PM  
**To:** Donna Jackson  
**Subject:** Ordinance closing Caraway Road

Harold Carter  
902 Tony Drive  
Jonesboro, Ark. 72401

### ORDINANCE: O-EN-043-2009

I have looked into the authority of city councils to take such actions as the Caraway St. closure and find that they can close streets such as Caraway Road without a public hearing, apparently. I object to this closing and the fact that afterwards there will be no street level crossings between Fisher St. and Airport Road. Pedestrian should not be required to travel over these industrial style overpasses especially one such as the one ASU is building which is well out of the way for foot traffic. I have been told what an advantage to pedestrians this will be, by those who in all likelihood will never cross this structure on foot except as a demonstration project so they can say they have done so.

This structure will not be a good route for foot traffic because of the additional distance involved in walking to the overpass, not on a direct path to anywhere of interest to most people, and then having to walk back. It will be quite an improvement for vehicular traffic and safety will be much improved for vehicles, not for foot traffic. The inherent undesirable and unsafe aspects of walking across a heavily traveled overpass such as this should be obvious. There will be lanes for vehicles to exit and enter the structure to get to the athletic fields between the tracks. This will require pedestrians to cross paths with vehicles two times each way. ASU does not expect it students to take this overpass to play ball no matter how highly they recommend it to others. This overpass will give the impression to drivers that it is a controlled access type highway which it is not. It will be much like Caraway Rd. always has been, but with the ability to travel fast and without obstruction except for some rare pedestrians. Unlike Caraway Rd. on the overpass there will be no place for pedestrians to run if they need to avoid some vehicle. You can only go over the side of a 30-40 foot high structure. No bicycle path across this overpass will meet any definition of a bike path such as appears in the Land Use Plan. It appears from my exploration of the closure of Caraway that ASU's fallback position on this overpass and closure is that they together with the State do not need Jonesboro to complete and use the overpass and close Caraway. There are no other property owners between the tracks the property is owned by the State and ASU. So apparently if needed they could just work with the RR and put up a barricade on RR property doing nothing else except perhaps notifying the City. They will own the overpass and they can deal with foot traffic and bicyclist however the Arkansas Highway Department says. I cannot even picture the issue of safe wheelchair access.

If ASU can ultimately do all of this without the city why don't you let them. Unlike the City Council the ASU Board does not even allow public presence at their Board meetings. One can view their proceedings on TV. As far as I can tell they only want the City to participate in this closure for their convenience. If the City were to refuse, they can do it anyway without City permission. The City has already contributed money.

This Ordinance came from a special called meeting of the Public Works Committee which took a maximum of 5 minutes. On the same day it was walked onto the City Council agenda where it was rapidly passed in the final minutes without allowing for the additional readings at subsequent City Council meetings. There was no real time issue or emergency involved in this Ordinance so the normal readings could have been conducted with no bad results. Jonesboro residents should get the time to carefully study matters such as this that come before the City Council, which was not allowed for in this case.

**Donna Jackson**

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**From:** Margaret Carter [mcarter56@suddenlink.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 26, 2009 7:41 PM  
**To:** Donna Jackson  
**Subject:** REQUEST TO APPEAR ON THE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ON AUGUST 31, 2009

August 26, 2009

I Harold Carter request to appear on the City Council Agenda on August 31, 2009 Monday to address my concerns with the following Ordinance discussed in the Public Works Committee on 8-18-09 and referred to the City Council at their meeting on 8-18-09. I do not believe it was finally passed by the City Council and was up for additional readings. In any case I request to appear on the Agenda to talk to the City Council about the undesirable nature of this Ordinance to the residents of Jonesboro.

ORD-09:056 1 ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS PERTAINING TO CLOSING CARAWAY ROAD AT THE RAILROAD CROSSING INTERSECTING CARAWAY ROAD REPLACING SUCH AT-GRADE RAILROAD CROSSING WITH AN ABOVE-GROUND RAILROAD CROSSING STRUCTURE

*Public works  
Appeal Hearing  
Harold Carter*



August 26, 2009  
Harold Carter

### **My concerns regarding the proposed closure of Caraway Rd. at the RR S of ASU**

There should be planning and preparations to provide an alternate route or routes over the railroad crossings rather than just to say that pedestrian traffic can walk over the overpass under construction as if this option is just as desirable as saying vehicles can cross the railroad tracks on this overpass. This is not a realistic or desirable method for foot traffic to cross. It is much of to stressful to take such a route during periods of heavy traffic and in addition the sidewalks to gain access to the future overpass are not complete enough for foot traffic to continue safely from where they would leave the new overpass on the south end. Finally the additional distance to travel by foot for most pedestrians going N. to ASU or students going S. to shop would be considerable. I have heard that the proposed Greenway from the Mall will be designed to go under the railroad tracks somewhere east of Caraway Road off east Matthews and in this way provide access for foot traffic to cross the railroads and gain access to the campus and in general North Jonesboro. However, there is no telling when this will be started or finished. The use of below grade crossings for foot traffic is particularly dangerous at night and in low populated areas such as any trail or greenway from Matthews to ASU. Plans should be in effect well before any final action is taken on the closure of Caraway Road to provide free access to North Jonesboro and ASU from the South side of the railroads and free access from the North side for students of ASU and other Jonesboro residents to cross going south. A sidewalk provided on the new overpass under construction does not provide a free and desirable route for foot traffic going either way. Between the old overpass on Bridge Street and Airport Road after the closure of Caraway Road there will only be Fisher St. and the new ASU overpass for foot traffic to cross from South to North Jonesboro or the other way from North to South. Traveling North for foot traffic desiring to cross the tracks there is only Culberhouse, Johnson Avenue and the overpass that crosses the tracks at Main Street. Johnson Avenue is of little use to foot traffic due to the low population in that area and no sidewalks and heavy traffic which would endanger anyone walking. Culberhouse has no sidewalks and is quite wide and rough and is not near any appreciable populations on either side of the tracks that would have any attractions on either side of the tracks to make this an inviting crossing. However, Culberhouse, Main St. and the old overpass on Bridge St. together with the less inviting routes on Fisher St. provide an adequate number of crossings for West Jonesboro of varying degrees of appeal and safety to foot traffic. Once the ASU overpass is finished and Caraway is closed there is only the ASU overpass and Airport Road for foot traffic. Airport Rd. would have little foot traffic for the same reasons mentioned for Johnson Av. on the West. Using common reason the next crossing I would expect to hear up for closure is Fisher St. The crossing there is very rough and without decent sidewalks, although it once had apparently suitable. Safe sidewalks for foot traffic it definitely does not now. The old overpass on Bridge is close to Fisher and would not result in as much of a detour for the local residents as the closure of Caraway will for students and other residents on both sides of the tracks. Predictably next for closure would be Culberhouse a very wide and dangerous crossing for years with no sidewalks and fairly heavy rail activity. Why not close this crossing also, sidewalks would not be then needed, likewise on Fisher and I am sure the Railroads would be pleased. All my propositions about additional closings may not happen but they could without making the situation in downtown and West Jonesboro worse than the closing of Caraway will for foot traffic in that part of the city. There should be relatively free access for foot traffic from N. to S. Jonesboro. This access should be improved rather than curtailed more than it already is. I am primarily concerned with E. Jonesboro where I like on Tony Drive and I believe the closure of Caraway will make North\South foot traffic actively unfriendly and dangerous, it will not remain the same with this closure in will get much worse, foot traffic will, I predict be much reduced. This closure should not take place until adequate improved routes for foot traffic are actually constructed.

1. The City had to vote to close Caraway on Aug 18 when it started the process.
2. Commitments had been made in relation to the ASU overpass were required to be honored by a vote for the closure.
3. I was told that in the first public LUC meeting.
4. Shortly after this meeting I was told that the TC Greenway was planned to go beneath all of the tracks or the Railroads separating ASU from South of these tracks. No time of start or completion was known for this route under the tracks.
5. The ASU overpass will have a bike path in addition to the sidewalks. This bike path will not be a separate path but will be a crosshatched portion of the overpass roadway, presumable going both ways but on second thought that does not seem likely. So if it is one path on only one side of the roadway how will it be arranged for bicycles to safely enter the path and then exit. This does not seem reasonable either way. Some thought it would require a person to lead a bicycle across the overpass on foot. I



cannot believe the overpass will be built with bicycle traffic on both sides for coming and going, this would be very expensive.

6. That the Railroads had to approve the overpass even to go over their right of way. That in doing so this was some kind of a favor to the City and ASU. That somehow in doing this the reciprocation required by the City was to close Carraway and that no foot traffic in addition was a part of the deal. That the City had proposed going under the Railroad at Carraway but that the water table was too high and in any case the Railroad had vetoed this proposal which they asserted they had a right to do in any case.
7. No one in the City seem to know if there will be two sidewalks or just one going over the overpass. In any case apparently there will be traffic entering and exiting the overpass in the space between the Railroads where ASU athletic facilities are located. This would complicate and make dangerous any design for bike traffic and foot traffic crossing the exit and entrance lanes no matter whether one or two.
8. Apparently some consideration of an above ground arrangement for foot traffic over the tracks but this was abandoned either because the Railroads did not want it or it was not considered feasible for foot or bicycle traffic or both.
9. There is no assurance that the Railroads will even allow a Greenway path to go under the railroad bridges that provide a path for ditches or creeks and run under the tracks. Apparently the Railroads have a veto on this also if they choose and they have not finally agreed yet.
10. So the City has dealt away Carraway Road and agreed to close it for any purpose at all relating to both foot and vehicular traffic and has got in return an overpass for vehicles with the other provisions for foot and bicycle traffic not known, at least by all of the Council. I need more information on this to know what is known. It would seem a stretch to think no one in the City actually knows.
11. From my admittedly incomplete information it would seem the Railroads have much more power than the City. I would like to know more and be told where I am wrong and exactly how and when all these irrevocable commitments were made and how, before a vote of the City Council. The RR can say no to the City but the City cannot say no to the RR. When was this legal decision concluded?
12. Why would the City agree to close the RR to foot crossings a larger additional extent than ever before without a much more substantial quid pro quo from the RR. The RR seems to be much the winner in this arrangement. Even though the City has not yet closed Carraway it must irrevocable do so and cannot say no. The RR has allowed an overpass almost exclusively for vehicles from which it has the biggest potential liability for damages and has shut off all foot traffic between Fisher St. and Airport Rd without agreeing to any provision for alternate paths for foot traffic at grade level except over the overpass which will greatly reduce foot and bicycle traffic. Traditionally bicycle traffic on Carraway Rd. has been permissible even though the safety of such traffic was questionable but no more so than it remains on most or Jonesboro's entire present street system. Instead they along with foot traffic must cross the new overpass whose design for foot and bicycle traffic safety has not been described in any publicly available document I have seen. I request to see the design for this overpass and to be told in detail what it means and describes for foot and bicycle traffic. The City claims to be interested in providing pedestrian friendly and bicycle friendly provisions for participants but is actively providing only a vehicular safe roadway with provisions for foot and bicycle traffic that are much more restrictive that at present and will be virtually impossible to reverse.
13. Are mutually beneficial negotiations with the RR so difficult or impossible for the Jonesboro legislative body and the mayor and also apparently the legal staff? Who negotiated this arrangement?
14. How was the Ark. Highway and Trans. Dept involved in this arrangement. Do they have a veto on most or all of Jonesboro's actions in addition? If this is actually the way thing go with overpasses and associated actions what is the City function if any besides furnishing some money.

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