



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes City Council

Friday, April 21, 2017

12:00 PM

Municipal Center

Special Called Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR PERRIN AT 12:00 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL BY CITY CLERK DONNA JACKSON

Present 11 - Darrel Dover; Ann Williams; Chris Moore; John Street; Mitch Johnson; Gene Vance; Chris Gibson; Charles Coleman; Bobby Long; Joe Hafner and David McClain

Absent 1 - Charles Frierson

3. NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS TO BE INTRODUCED

RES-17:044

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE WILLINGNESS OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO UTILIZE FEDERAL-AID TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM FUNDS FOR THE DOWNTOWN TO A-STATE CONNECTION PROJECT

Attachments: [Downtown to ASU Cost Estimate](#)
[Downtown to A-State Maintenance Letter](#)
[Downtown to Astate8x11](#)
[Survey Results for the Public Hearings](#)
[Downtown to ASU Application](#)
[Perrin TAP grant letter.pdf](#)

Councilman McClain said he had a couple of questions and comments. Mayor Perrin stated he had some comments.

Councilman McClain stated he was not representing the University in this capacity. He is being an alderman. He feels they are not implementing or creating a serious plan, overall plan, in trying to connect this to any other trail or any other lanes to give access for cyclists or if someone wanted to walk or run. The biggest question for him is when are we going to have a serious plan to implement. He said he knows they have had plans in the past or we have paid for plans in the past. He asked when they were going to have a serious implementation of a plan for a biking, hiking or whatever the case may be. Councilman McClain asked how much has the City paid in the past as far as looking at plans, how much have we paid for plans and not implemented.

Mayor Perrin said he would try to answer Councilman McClain's question. He said the problem has been over the last 4-5 years, we have looked at bicycle trails,

walking trails, and even the sidewalks to tie into this. We have had a couple of studies done. A lot of this was part of the revitalization of downtown Jonesboro as well as the mobility of the City of Jonesboro. On my desk now, is a proposal for a complete master bike, walking trail plan for the entire city. Mayor Perrin said he sent that to the Highway Department. The Highway Department has come out with a new deal on their bike trails. They just came out about 30 days ago. Mayor Perrin said he sent that down to Lori Tudor and asked her to look at this proposal and to see if there should be anything added to that. She sent that to their Planning Department and AHTD Planning & Policy Division Engineer Jessie Jones sent back about nine or ten items. Mayor Perrin said he in turn sent those back to this company to redo that proposal so we can take a look at it and propose it to the Council.

Mayor Perrin stated the cost of that proposal is expensive, but that would be the entire city, the whole 81 miles that we have in the city. That will take into account all of your bike trails, walking trails, the Master Plan. To get serious about big money that we could get for that, you are going to have to have a Master Plan before you ever do that. We had one that was sketched out many years ago from the prior Parks Director. We have tried to stay pretty close to that. I think what we have done so far is good in the fact that we got the one walking trail from St. Bernard's or from downtown all the way to Allen Park. With those that we have done, we have tried to place them in a position so that they could be in the Master Plan. We had the Walton Foundation come in and meet with us for about 2-3 days. They liked what they saw. They actually got on bikes with some people and took complete routes with Ted Herget and a bunch of people. They said the only thing you need now is a Master Plan and this is something they suggested we do. After that meeting, Wixson Huffstetler, Parks and Recreation Director got with some people to get a Master Plan. Mayor Perrin said he does have one on his desk right now, but they are going to have to make some changes to that Master Plan. Basically, it is going to be tying in the new items that the Highway Department has come out with on width and things of that nature.

Councilman McClain asked how soon the Council would be able to see that proposal. Mayor Perrin said it depends upon how fast they can make those changes on that proposal, but he would say probably in no more than a month he should have something.

Councilman Vance stated that would be a proposal and not the actual plan. Mayor Perrin said that was correct. Councilman Vance said it would be a proposal for someone to study; to come and study the city and make recommendations for a plan that we could adopt as a long-range plan. Then, we would start working it out phase by phase. Councilman McClain asked if we had not done that before. Councilman Vance said no.

Councilman Long asked how long the trail will be and what will the City have to come up with in order to get that done. Mayor Perrin asked if he was referring to the Master Plan. Councilman Long said no, just the part being proposed today. Mayor Perrin said this proposal is to do a connectivity. As you saw in the proposal the other night, from downtown to ASU, depending upon which way you go, will determine the cost. The estimated cost on that is somewhere around about \$500,000 or somewhere in that area. If we get this grant, then the City would be out nothing unless there is a match in that grant.

Mayor Perrin said they used to have a Safe Routes to School. We just got done talking with Kane Webb who is the Executive Director of Parks and Tourism. Mayor Perrin said he went to the commission meeting they had here in Jonesboro. They used to have Safe Routes to School, the TAP grant or Transportation Alternative

Plan, and another one called REC. They used to have several million dollars, but that shrunk down down to four million for the entire state. The Highway Department is where this would be going. We don't know if we are going to get any money or not. Whatever we get, then we have to relook and see which way we are going to go and we will work with ASU on that.

Mayor Perrin said he has a letter endorsing this from Dr. Len Frey from the University. It just depends on which way the route is and how much money we can get on the grant. We are applying for \$500,000 on this grant. Councilman Long asked if that was in order to cover the entire cost of that proposal. Mayor Perrin said that was correct. This is an 80/20 grant so about \$100,000 would be the cost to the City.

Councilman Coleman asked how much input has the City Engineer has had in this. Mayor Perrin said the City Engineer has been in it all the way through. He has attended all of the Public Hearings. We have had two Public Hearings. Parks and Recreation Director Wixson Huffstetler said that he and City Engineer Craig Light are the ones that have come up with the routes that we presented to the citizens. We have done a lot of walking through woods and over bridges. The one thing he wants everyone to know is that this is not the only route we are looking at to go to ASU. There needs to be several routes to get around the whole campus. Councilman Coleman said that is why he asked the question. Anything that we do at this type of magnitude, he wants to make sure the City Engineer has gone along every path that this goes in. Councilman Coleman wants to make sure that the City Engineer has ok'd it because he may have a different direction. The City Engineer and the engineers at ASU should be working together. Mr. Huffstetler said that he and City Engineer Craig Light have put many hours into this. We have to have more than one route to ASU and this is just a start because ASU's campus is so big. His goal is to get the four quadrants of Jonesboro connected to downtown, North, South, East, West. We have the East. We are working coming up from the South and Craighead Forest through these grants. ASU will be the fifth leg of what we call a bicycle tire with spokes.

Councilman Vance said not the exact route but the general route of this has been talked about for over 25 years and that is mainly due to the structure that allows us to go under the railroad. This isn't anything new to some of us. It may not be along the same route as Hope and Patrick, but the general route of this isn't anything new. It made sense back then and there wasn't money to do it. It kind of makes sense now to do it.

Mayor Perrin said the route can be changed. The key to this is simply applying for this money and if we get the grant, it may be 100% of the \$500,000 or it may be \$300,000, we simply do not know what it will be. Whatever it is, it will be the 80/20 match on this TAP grant. Before we come to Council, we will come back and work with ASU and all those to decide on the route, calculate the cost, and then come back to the Council before we ever accept that. Once that is approved and sent to the City, Mayor Perrin said he is not going to sign off on that until he knows the cost, the route, and the dollar amount.

Parks Director Wixson Huffstetler said the Bridge Street route is being talked about. We all know that the bridge has got another 15-20 years. The problem with trying to do that route is that the bridge is not ADA compliant and if we were to submit this to the Highway Department, the project would not be funded. The whole trail has to be ADA compliant even if there is an existing structure there that connects to it. If we were to submit that, we would get zero funding.

Councilman Hafner said another important point is that we are referring to this as a connector to ASU, but this is a recreational trail connector. It is not the connector for the revitalization between downtown and ASU. That is two totally different things. This is purely a recreational trail. Mayor Perrin said that was correct.

Mayor Perrin said he met with Dr. Frey and he gave him a letter yesterday. In fact, ASU is going to apply for a TAP grant to do some other things out at the University themselves. There is going to be a lot of competition on these grants. With \$5 million, it is not going to take long when you have 500 cities trying to get some of these TAP grants. We have been very fortunate. The entire walking trail, bike trail that you see out at Craighead Forest, took us 3-4 years, for what you have now. Every dime of that, 100% of that has been paid for by the Highway Department. The 3.2 mile walking trail, if we can get this other phase, would be paid for in total by the Highway Department. With the dedication, we would have them here to make sure and thank them for it. That is why we were taking the Director of Parks and Tourism around this morning. We spent two hours on a tour.

Mayor Perrin stated he would go through the whole letter from Dr. Frey. "I am writing to clarify our position regarding the City of Jonesboro proposed TAP grant linking Downtown Jonesboro to the A-State campus. As conveyed in our previous discussion, the key issue that I want to ensure that everyone understands is that placing any portion of the trail on Arkansas State University Property will require a formal agreement such as a memorandum of understanding or potentially action of the Arkansas State Board of Trustees. Please know that we are in no way expressing opposition to the conceptual plan. Because I only learned of the grant proposal late Tuesday afternoon, A-State administration has not discussed, evaluated or formed an opinion on the proposed route.

Arkansas State University will be submitting a TAP grant proposal in support of its master plan to provide multiuse linkage from Johnson Street south along University Loop East and continuing south along University Loop to the intersection of the West Loop Road and Aggie Road. We would certainly be supportive of additional linkages from the A-State campus to Downtown Jonesboro.

We appreciate your support and interest in better connecting the University to the Downtown District. We look forward to working with you to continue to enhance the quality of life for the students of Arkansas State University and the residents of Jonesboro. To this end, let's plan to bring together interested parties in the near future to discuss ways in which we can work together for the benefit of the community and the University."

Mayor Perrin stated that we can change the route and we have discussed that. He said he has a meeting with the University President, Dr. Charles Welch, next Wednesday and the Highway Commission, in his office at 3:00 p.m. to start dialogue about everything we want to do and how we both have to be a partner together. We cannot have division. We have to work together.

Councilman Moore mentioned that there were two different people that talked about the limited lifespan of Bridge and it's 10-15 years according to Mr. Huffstetler and Ms. Marshall. Are we still thinking that the replacement bridge for that will be aligned with Patrick somewhere coming across Johnson or where do we think the replacement bridge will be. Mayor Perrin said the plan is that if it is ever replaced, it would be the Patrick overpass. The one that we applied for with the TIGER grant, but that we did not get because right now there is not enough volume of flow of traffic to get that TIGER grant like we were successful on Highway 18 overpass. There was so much volume on it that we got it. Councilman Moore stated he was making the point that

eventually if we are going to close the bridge on Bridge Street, there will have to be a replacement that goes North and South and that seems to be relatively close to where this trail is and that would also give us an alternative to cross over the railroad tracks in that same general area. Mayor Perrin said he thought we had a good program that we sent to D.C. on Patrick. Councilman Moore said he thought that was a good program too. Mayor Perrin said on North and South, we don't have a lot of connectivity and this would be good. One thing we are looking at in the 2018 budget is to build a road between Highway 141 all the way over to Patrick and that would be behind our park that we have now in North Jonesboro over on North Church Street. The front part of that park would then become that new road. Because we don't have any connectivity that would be big for North Jonesboro. We got a schematic drawing of that park and we have to do something with that park. Mayor Perrin said he would like to make an all purpose park where the fields are all purpose where you can have soccer or whatever. That was done with a federal grant. We cannot sell it. If we do, we have to pay that grant back. There is a lot of activity that could be done in that park.

Councilman Moore stated that as we are talking about plans, Master Plans, eventually, we are going to have to cross the railroad tracks. It is important that the plans include some kind of pedestrian and bicycle access on the new bridge when that is built. Mayor Perrin said that would be over Patrick. Councilman Moore said the proposed trail is going right to that direction. He is not necessarily in agreement with where the proposed trail is, but it is lined up with where we are eventually have to cross the tracks. We may have to make some small change in the future to that.

Mayor Perrin said that was the same thing when he was on the Council that when ASU came to us and we studied that for a long time. He was on the Board of Trustees at that time. When Mayor Perrin and Dr. Wyatt went and met with the railroad people, we wanted to move the tracks in closer to make that less expensive on the overpass. They basically told us that it would be cheaper to move the University. What that is saying is they are not going to move the track. The City of Jonesboro put \$1,000,000 into that project. The reason we did that was to take care of some drainage issues. Now, there is a real fancy detention pond that St. Bernard's put in. This City and this University has always tried to march at the same beat and work together. Mayor Perrin said he appreciates Dr. Frey giving him this letter.

A motion was made by Councilman Chris Gibson, seconded by Councilman John Street, that this matter be Passed . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 11 - Darrel Dover;Ann Williams;Chris Moore;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Gene Vance;Chris Gibson;Charles Coleman;Bobby Long;Joe Hafner and David McClain

Absent: 1 - Charles Frierson

4. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Chris Moore, seconded by Councilman Mitch Johnson, that this meeting be Adjourned . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 11 - Darrel Dover;Ann Williams;Chris Moore;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Gene Vance;Chris Gibson;Charles Coleman;Bobby Long;Joe Hafner and David McClain

Absent: 1 - Charles Frierson

_____ Date: _____
Harold Perrin, Mayor

Attest:

_____ Date: _____
Donna Jackson, City Clerk