

**MINUTES**  
**WORKING SESSION**  
**CITY COUNCIL**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS IN THE CIVIC COMPLEX**  
**401 WEST WASHINGTON STREET**  
**EAST PEORIA, ILLINOIS**

August 15, 2023

The Honorable John P. Kahl Mayor of the City of East Peoria called the Working Session of the City Council of the City of East Peoria, Illinois to order at 5:15 P.M. with the meeting having been properly noticed. The City Clerk certifies that notice of the meeting was duly served upon Council Members via email on Friday, August 11, 2023 at approximately 4:23 P.M.

Upon the roll being called the following answered present: Mayor John P. Kahl, Commissioners Daniel S. Decker, Mark E. Hill, Seth D. Mingus, and Michael L. Sutherland.

Absent: None.

Mayor Kahl explained that the Special Meeting is called for the purpose of Proposed East Washington Street Lane Reconfiguration discussion. He explained that this is the second working session that the City has held on this topic as the City is getting closer to the project. He explained that no formal action would be taken at the meeting and turned the discussion over to Director of Planning and Community Development, Ty Livingston. Director Livingston introduced Robert Culp with Midwest Engineering & Associated and turned the discussion over to Mr. Culp. With the water main work, the City is able to see how traffic is going through the area when there are reduced lanes through the area. Mr. Culp commented on some changes to the reconfiguration that have been proposed since the last Working Session meeting. He displayed a map with the proposed changes. Heading eastbound on East Washington Street the new proposed plan would retain the same two-lane configuration up to Springfield Road where the right lane would have to turn right – leaving one thru lane from there to the I-74 interchange. Heading westbound on East Washington Street, there would be one thru lane and a center turn lane. This configuration would continue through the Springfield Road intersection up to Anna where it would return to its current configuration.

Mayor Kahl asked for any comments from the audience.

The businessowner from CLA Income Tax came up to the podium. She commented on the road being a mess during the construction process. She does not see how the roadway can go down to one lane for just two blocks. She explained that the current construction and lane reduction is a good test and explained that it is a mess. People have been blocking roads and stopping in the middle of the main street. She feels that the closure of part of East Washington Street and moving down to one lane has been a complete disaster. She suggests thinking this through quite lengthy because it has been a complete mess.

Commissioner Sutherland explained that he owns land on Cole Street. He inquired if trucks are not allowed to turn right over Farmdale Creek how are they going to get through going from a four lane to a two lane. He explained that it does not make sense from his perspective. He explained that he is not against roundabouts where the town is built around a roundabout, rather than trying to fit a roundabout in the area in between buildings. He commented on the water department doing things on the street before the repaving is a good idea, and this is a good idea about what it might be like if the lanes are reduced. He explained that he avoided the area during the construction process.

Commissioner Hill commented on the road diet and one goal being for reduction of speed and another goal being for traffic reduction. He explained that he passed 11 cars and another ten cars queued up. He explained that this is not the normal traffic in the area, because people are choosing alternative routes. The traffic was down in the area. He commented on receiving letters against and in favor of lane reductions. He commented on pedestrian safety.

Mayor Kahl explained that the speed on E. Washington Street is not any faster than other streets. Mayor Kahl explained that the traffic is finding an alternative route and creating problems elsewhere. He explained that traffic was backed up to the City Hall on West Washington Street on the first day of the water project with the lane reductions.

Director Livingston commented on speaking with Ameren regarding poles. He explained that it is not an easy process, as there are different depths of sidewalk at different locations. There are also poles with other utilities located on them, among other possible issues. It is trying to move poles off curbs. This will take some time in working with Ameren in trying to move the poles.

Commissioner Decker commented about on-street parking and the small town feel. He is concerned traffic and Festival of Lights traffic. He wonders what the impact would be with the reduction. He asked about having a program that would show what would happen to vehicle movement. He thinks coming down Springfield Hill Road and go straight. He commented on traffic potentially stacking on that road from the intersection by CVS on North Main Street. He is also concerned with people suggesting a ring road that would go around East Peoria. Commissioner Decker expressed surprise with some people being in favor of this proposed road diet. He is concerned with the change and what impact that would have.

Commissioner Mingus is leaning towards not being in favor of a reconfiguration. He is concerned with similar things that other commissioners have mentioned. He explained other areas may have traffic issues due to potential lane reductions. He struggles with seeing how lane reduction will work and does not see how it will make it better. He is also concerned with the Festival of Lights traffic. He commented on concerns expressed from the Fire and Police Department for calls for services and other safety concerns especially when traffic is heavy or backed up.

Commissioner Sutherland commented how the traffic was done in the past. There was previously pots that were placed in the parking area, and when people were commuting to work, the parking was taken away so that the parking could be used for car traffic. He does not see how lessening lanes will work better.

Chief of Police David Catton commented on potential issues with accidents on Main Street and not on Washington Street. The biggest concern is diverted traffic from Springfield Road to Main Street. The bottleneck occurred at N Main Street and where Long John Silvers and CVS is located. He ran the stats in the past three years, and there were only three minor pedestrian accidents. Commissioner Hill inquired where the cars queue to go up Springfield Rd hill. Chief Catton explained that they will back up the road to Main Street. There would not be an impact on Springfield Road. There will be an impact to E. Washington Street from Springfield Road to Main Street because cars will not use the through lane. There is an issue on East Washington Street and likely onto West Washington Street. During Festival of Lights, the traffic does back up to the intersection by CVS.

Fire Chief Bobby Zimmerman commented on when the utility poles being moved would help. He does not see that it would be safe unless those utility poles are moved. He does not see how a fire truck can get through if it is reduced to three lanes and those utility poles are not moved. Anything that puts the fire truck more frequently into oncoming traffic is not a good thing. He feels that reducing lanes will put the fire trucks more frequently into oncoming traffic

Commissioner Decker commented on a roundabout in the area and the traffic never stopping and may not be as big of a problem. Commissioner Mingus asked about the timeline on getting the road open. Engineer Culp explained that there is an issue of the ADA ramps and the sidewalks, and it is likely a Spring mill and overlay project.

Engineer Courtney Allyn from Midwest Engineering responded to some concerns. The right turn on Cole and the concerns is mainly from the tightness of the turn on the roadway. It would be difficult to get the trucks through there to clear the corner. While the construction lane reduction is similar, it is also different from the proposed lane reconfigurations and barrels and lane changes will slow traffic down. It is not a clear-cut example of the proposed lane reconfigurations. She explained that this project has changed by adding turn lanes. The other issue was the N. Main Street construction going on at the same time, and there were other issues causing the back up. Ms. Allyn explained that a traffic study was done previously, and at that time, the traffic study showed that the lane reconfiguration would work. The Festival of Lights with the current proposal is not that different from what exists today. Regarding emergency services, with the proposal, there are two dedicated through lanes until Springfield Road. In the research that they did, there was data that shows that response times are improved because of the flexibility of the center turn lane. One issue with safety here is also comfort with pedestrians walking because the traffic is so close to them currently. The last issue was crash safety. There were five times higher crash rates than they were on other roadways within the City, due to the narrow lanes and opposing traffic right next to each other.

Motion by Commissioner Mingus, seconded by Commissioner Decker; Mr. Mayor, I move you that we adjourn the meeting.

Yeas: Commissioners Decker, Hill, Mingus, and Sutherland and Mayor Kahl.

Nays: None.

Mayor Kahl declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 5:59 P.M.

/s/ Morgan R. Cadwalader

Morgan R. Cadwalader, City Clerk