

**MINUTES
LAWTON ACCESS BOARD
CITY HALL
CITY ATTORNEY'S CONFERENCE ROOM
212 SW 9th STREET
JANUARY 30, 2018**

Mike Jones called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. in the City Attorney's Conference Room. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall notice board as required by law.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Mike Jones; Kay Love; Ray Polk.

ABSENT: Joseph Harper; Don Kesler.

OTHERS PRESENT: Denise Ezell, City Clerk's Office; Keith Neitzke, Parks and Recreation; Ryan Landers and Sean Spell, LATS; Virgil Watson, Member Lawton Heights United Methodist Church.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

APPROVE MINUTES from October 31, 2017 meeting

Motion by Polk, Second by Love, to approve the minutes of October 31, 2017. **Aye:** Love; Jones; Polk. **Nay:** None. **Motion Passed.**

BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. New Business

A. Consider a request from Virgil Watson of Lawton Heights United Methodist Church to provide funding for the construction of sidewalks that would connect to a proposed LATS stop/shelter to be located at the intersection of NW 16th Street and NW Taylor Avenue.

"The LATS Blue route and Red route cross at this intersection. The church would like to pay for/building the shelter, but would like the City to pay for the sidewalk."

Jones stated I received an email that stated "The LATS Blue route and Red route cross at this intersection. The church would like to pay for/building the shelter, but would like the City for pay for the sidewalk." This is Virgil Watson and I'll let him tell you about the project.

Watson stated last summer I noticed we had a lot of people at this corner waiting on the bus. It is kind of a transfer point from one bus to the other. I saw 1 person in a wheelchair that was waiting on a driveway. It is sad that we have all this property on the corner. It would be a perfect area for a bus stop. The busses slow down because there is a stop sign. This helps with flagging the busses. This led to us looking into what we needed to do for a bus stop. We met with our Councilman, a representative from LATS and the Planning Division. They informed us there would be certain criteria that would have to be met. We were informed there could be

nothing in the site triangle and it had to be ADA compatible. We don't have the funding for this type of project. It was suggested we come before this committee to see if you could help. We feel this would be a benefit to the neighborhood and that is what we are supposed to be about. This stop would provide a place for people to go to wait on transportation to go where they need to go within the city. One gentleman stated it would be nice during the summer because there isn't any shade. This would provide shade and protection from the north wind. We believe this is a good project and we hope you can help us to make it happen.

Jones stated here is the drawing you sent and I made some additions. What you see in orange would be the basic structure. This sits on the corner and there is a power pole about 4' inside the curb that we would have to work around. Are you wanting a shelter with a roof and would it be enclosed.

Watson stated yes. It will be enclosed with an open front. It would be ADA compatible, have a bench and we want to put in some solar lighting so it will be bright enough early morning and late night.

Jones stated the church is offering to pay for the bench, shelter and lighting with hopes of the committee furnishing all the concrete. I met with the engineer that would be designing the sidewalk. For the meeting this design is great but if the project is approved he would do the actual design.

Watson stated this was just to get something started.

Love asked will the shelter be far enough back that it doesn't impede the view of the sight triangle.

Watson stated yes.

Jones asked does any of your congregation use this stop.

Watson stated not currently. We are hoping by placing a stop there it will increase our membership.

Jones stated the reason I color coded the drawing was for the board's purpose. We have some options we could choose to fund this. Keep in mind we have our current priority list. Priority One is finished and it looks really good. Priority Two and Three are in the design phase. If you choose to fund this project it would take precedence over the other two. We could look at doing the landing area now and the sidewalk later or you could do one of the sidewalks and not the other. We have LATS representative Ryan Landers and Sean Spell with us and I'll let them speak to anything that might need to be considered with this project.

Spell stated I'm Sean Spell the Director of Operations at LATS. This is a good idea and plan. Basically we are looking at 15 to 20 customers daily that go through this area transferring from one bus to another to connect to another area of town. One thing I forgot to bring up at our initial meeting was we will be doing another route study that could change the routes. In 2 years

we may not be on this road. You may want to wait before spending funds to make certain the busses will still be using this area. We don't know when this study will be done. We just know that once the new safety facility is opened and we will be occupying that area as our new transfer station. Once this happens the route structure will change. Keeping this in mind you may want to wait on this project. I don't know if you want to put money into something that in 2 years may not be there.

Member One asked what is the possibility of you not using that corner? I would think 16th Street would always have busses.

Spell stated we are looking at a more linear route for quicker service to the citizens. We are not saying we will not be using 16th Street we are saying we don't know.

Member One asked what is the possibility.

Spell stated it is possible. We will be going through a route study and we want to make certain you keep in mind the route might change. You need to decide if it is worth constructing the project when there might not be busses coming by there in 2 years. Sidewalks are always great.

Watson stated if there is a bus stop and a shelter there then the possibility of the ridership increasing would be better. You have multiple bus stops on 16th.

Spell stated our system is a flag system and bus stops are nice. Our concern is the waste if we are no longer there. We have to look at how we are going to cover the majority of the places we cover now, expand upon the routes, and get more ridership with a more frequent service on those routes.

Watson asked would that increase the time between the stops.

Landers stated a more linear route is supposed to increase frequency. Right now we have an hour headway and it would move towards a 30 minute headway. It would increase from going to the end of the stop and back. The hope is to increase ridership. To do that there are only so many places you can go and so much money to go to different places within the city. Once we have the design of the new transfer center we will start a route study and surveys. What is your timetable for doing this project?

Jones asked do you have funds for the shelter.

Watson stated not today.

Jones stated the city does have their funding. Going back to the possibility of breaking this into 2 or 3 different phases we could do the orange phase once you have funds available and sidewalks later.

Landers stated our timing depends on how quickly the safety building is actually built.

Jones stated that will be at least 2 years.

Landers stated that is when we would start construction of our facility. Once the design is done then we will start looking at the routes. I would say the middle of next year we will start looking at things. This could go into our discussions of where things go.

Watson stated that's what I'm saying. If it would increase ridership at that location it would then figure into your surveys and route selection.

Landers stated it all depends on what we get back as feedback and what we feel would be best for the system. We are not saying this is a bad idea. We want to know if you want to do this now or wait until we have our routes structure. There are areas with existing shelters we will no longer use. We are looking at everything we can do to increase ridership and get passengers the needed amenities. We don't want to say do this and then in a year we leave the area.

Member One stated if there is a bus that goes through our neighborhood I can't image it wouldn't be on 16th Street.

Landers stated it could be 2 blocks down from this shelter.

Member One stated I understand. It is still a flag system and if they are going down 16th they can flag them down.

Landers stated true. It is possible but I can't guarantee we are going there.

Member One stated to me there isn't much risk on 16th. Busses will be using this street.

Landers stated I can't guarantee we will have busses there. When you increase frequency you take away certain things in order to get to a location quicker. The hope is with increase frequency you have more ridership.

Jones stated I believe Landers is trying to say there is some amount of risk with the expenditures of funds. Looking at this project it shows probably 40 to 50' of sidewalk. I think the Access Board looks further than that. We don't want to put in sidewalks that don't accomplish what we want to do. We want to provide a great deal of access for somebody in a wheelchair and for safety. If we stop the sidewalks where they are shown we are not providing greater access. What we would be looking at are a couple of driveways that enter the church parking lot. One is probably 150' north of the pad and the other 120' east. We would build a sidewalk from the corner of those driveways and putting in ramps. Is there an entrance on the south side of your building?

Watson stated yes.

Jones stated so they would probably come from that door to the sidewalk. So the sidewalk going north along 16th may or may not be necessary. The sidewalk that goes east may accomplish all we need to do.

Watson stated there is probably more foot traffic going north and south on 16th than there is going east and west on Taylor.

Jones stated the cost for the pad, 2 curb ramps with truncated domes and the warning system for the visually impaired is about \$2600. The sidewalk running east and west is about \$4600 and the sidewalk running north and south is \$4800. We need to decide if we think it is worth doing with the risk factors involved. How do we want to proceed? Do you have a timetable?

Watson stated there is a 2 month waiting period between the time we order the shelter and delivery.

Jones asked prior to ordering how long do you think it will take to raise the funds?

Member Two stated we can't get contributions until we know there is a project.

Watson stated the best case scenario would be 4 months.

Polk asked what would be the impact of a rush. Why is it so necessary do go ahead with the project right now.

Watson stated this is for those who ride the bus. They are doing without and can continue to do without but why should they. If there is a will and the funds are there then why should the ridership suffer?

Polk stated I agree. The whole thing is quite pedestrian unfriendly. People in wheelchairs are crossing busy intersections and baby carriages walking in the grass or road. We need to do something but it isn't going to happen overnight. Unless there is something else I don't feel we should rush into something that might turn out to be a disaster.

Member Three stated we have to have a starting point. Until we have a starting point and it is feasible you can't go ahead. We say we will do it in the fall and then when fall gets here the weather gets bad. Now we are going to wait till spring. We keep changing the time. We can't get people obligated to donate if we don't know something is going to happen.

Polk stated that helps to bring out the point I'm trying to make. With the uncertainty of whether that route is going to stay as it is it seems to me we would want to wait until we are sure before moving ahead and putting something in that may not be used.

Member Three stated I look at it as the cup is half full and not half empty. I've lived in Lawton for a long time and we have heard so many times things would happen in 6 months or 2 years. Five years down the road it still hasn't happened. I can appreciate watching our pennies

but you cannot count on anything in Lawton in 2 years. Good plans don't make it happen. I was hoping we would have it by summer to have shelter from the heat.

Love asked is the first and second priorities for the schools.

Jones stated Priority Two runs along Sheridan Road from Gore to Ferris and Priority Three is from Ferris to Cache Road on Sheridan. They both feed to Tomlinson. Schools are a consideration for us.

Member Four stated two days ago the bus pulled into the intersection to to let the wheelchair ramp down. We have no place in our neighborhood to let the ramp down. It blocked traffic in both directions. Those in wheelchairs need something. We don't have sidewalks or ramps.

Neitzke stated I apologize for being late. What is preventing us from putting in the landing and the bench? I assume you can get a shelter that is surface mount and then phase the other in. If you abandon it you still have improved the corner for access to that area. We could get a bench for \$265. People will be more inclined to donate if you have a bench and the landing.

Jones stated nothing prevents that. We can to do that if we want. They have stated it would be 4 months before they could provide the shelter.

Watson stated the shelter would be 4 months but we could do the bench sooner.

Jones stated there are a lot of areas in town and a lot of gaps that need to be filled in. Recently we did an area like this at 20th and Smith. Can you give me an idea on a weekly basis how many people use that stop and how many are in a wheelchair?

Spell stated we do not assist anyone in a wheelchair and regular customer is 1.

Jones asked how many people ride on a normal basis.

Spell stated 20 or 30 a day.

Jones asked and the one at 20th and Smith.

Spell stated about 10 per day.

Jones stated there are other things that factor into this project that needs to be considered. If we want to look at providing something now we can certainly do that and get a bench out there sooner than later. We could do what is shown in orange and revisit the sidewalks at a later date. Maybe after LATS knows what they will be doing with the routes.

Member Four asked where do you get the benches from.

Neitzke stated the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.

Member Four stated if you will put it in I'll buy the bench.

Member Two asked is there a possibility that we could get one of the sidewalks so those in a wheelchair will have access.

Landers stated with just a pad you have no wheelchair access. You have to have sidewalks on both sides for a wheelchair passenger. I hate to keep saying this but there is no guarantee we will be going through this area. You can't put the stop so many feet from a stop sign so you have to have the sidewalk. In hindsight wouldn't it be better to wait until you have the funds to do the whole project. By then we would know whether or not we will be going there on a permanent basis.

Neitzke stated by the time they have the funds you may not have a project.

Landers stated there is a point if you don't have a bus stop.

Neitzke stated I'm sorry but it wouldn't be the first piece of concrete that was abandoned.

Member Four stated it isn't going to hurt anything. We want to put in a Blessing Box and something for books. This is to serve more than 1 purpose.

Member One stated I was surprised at the cost. Do you have an estimate on the sidewalks? Usually if someone comes out of our building they would come out a southwest door which has a sidewalk directly going west and they could get to 16th Street and go to the shelter. 16th Street would be a nice place for a sidewalk. It is a busy street.

Jones stated we could accomplish the whole project for about \$13,000. Are there currently any wheelchair customers that use that corner?

Member One stated we are looking to see what help you could give and then we would go from there.

Jones stated we don't dispute it is a good spot for sidewalks. We would like to see sidewalks up and down 16th Street. It is a matter of where the greatest need is currently and how we accomplish the biggest bang for the buck.

Member One stated this all came from a thought of a "Blessing Box". We wanted a location for people in our neighborhood to be able to go and get food, books or other necessities. Then we thought it would be a nice place to put in a bus stop. If all comes together we will need help financially.

Jones stated this brings us to a point that we need to decide what we are going to do and how we are going to go about it.

Spell stated I agree with Neitzke. Go ahead and start the pad and then grow from there. I understand your wanting to put the other amenities inside the shelter and you need to start somewhere. I would say the landing would be our starting point.

Member One stated wouldn't it be neat if other churches around town did this. There would be shelters all over town helping the community.

Spell stated your church would be the first and it might blossom into something where churches start to connect through sidewalks.

Love stated I'm concerned about city funds being used for things other than what we had originally started with. I have always gone for the schools. I want to make certain we have the schools covered with sidewalks. We can't have our children walking to school in the streets. If we want to start with the pad and if the routes change you would still have a place that would give people the opportunity to get out of the weather.

Jones stated I would remind the board we have a lot of flexibility in what we want to do and how we do it. We could decide to fund the landing and come back and revisit the sidewalk at a later date. That gives LATS time to get a better idea of how the study might look further down the road and Priority Two time to get through the design phase.

Love stated a shelter is always a good thing. It would be a nice place for people to go for contemplation and a quiet moment.

Jones stated absolutely.

Member One stated this says the shelter would be 8'x5' and I think we need 12'.

Jones stated that maybe right. I haven't seen any plans on the shelter itself.

Love asked is this on the church property.

Watson stated most of it is. The pad for the shelter is on the easement.

Love asked has the church agreed to this.

Watson stated we would love to see this happen. We aren't in a big hurry and we want it to be done right. We want to see if we can get the wheels turning.

Polk asked what was said about the landing and the accessibility for wheelchairs.

Landers stated with just the landing you won't have wheelchair accessibility. The bus can't be at the stop sign. We have to be a certain number of feet back.

Polk stated we need to take this into consideration.

Jones stated at a minimum we are talking about the bus landing and the sidewalk that goes back to the east.

Landers stated that is the only way to access the bus stop.

Jones asked do you need the sidewalk to the north.

Landers stated we just need one.

Watson stated I believe the sidewalk on 16th Street would be a better option. It is a busier street.

Love asked is this the sidewalk we need to be 50' back?

Watson stated on either you have to be 50' back. Using 16th Street would allow pedestrian not to walk in the road. This would give wheelchair accessibility not only to the shelter but all the way up to Andrews. To me it makes more sense to access 16th Street.

Jones asked will this matter to LATS.

Landers stated I can't say without doing a little more research.

Jones stated we are talking between \$7500 and \$8000 to do the landing, sidewalk and ramps.

Love asked would that impede on any of our priorities.

Jones stated it would take precedence over Priority Two but only temporarily.

Love asked could you do a little more investigation to see how it would affect 16th Street?

Landers stated that might be a good. We can bring you more information at the next meeting. I'm not against anything but I don't want anyone to rush into anything without all the information.

Member One stated this will give us time to try and get funding.

Motion by Love, **Second** by Polk, to table this item until the next meeting. **Aye:** Love; Jones; Polk. **Nay:** None. **Motion Passed.**

Landers asked when is the next meeting.

Ezell stated it will be the last Tuesday in March.

Jones stated this was a good discussion and a good project. It would be a great benefit to your neighborhood.

Polk stated I'm all for the project but I don't want to see us make a rush decision. I hope we can come out with a good positive decision at the next meeting.

Jones stated I appreciate your church showing up to support this project.

2. Comments/Discussion

3. Adjournment

There being nothing further the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Motion by Jones, **Second** by Love, to adjourn. **Aye:** Jones; Love; Polk. **Nay:** None.
Motion Passed.