

**LAWTON ACCESS BOARD
CITY HALL
CITY ATTORNEY'S CONFERENCE ROOM
212 SW 9th STREET
JULY 28, 2020 MINUTES**

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: Bonacci, Rocco; Jones, Mike; Love, Kay.

ABSENT: Polk, Ray.

OTHERS PRESENT: Denise Ezell, City Clerk's Office

APPROVE MINUTES from November 26, 2019 meeting

Motion by Love, **Second** by Bonacci, to approve the minutes of November 26, 2019. **Aye:** Jones; Love; Bonacci. **Nay:** None. **Motion Passed.**

BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. Old Business

A. Receive information on proposed sidewalk project to serve Ridgecrest Elementary School and take action if necessary to approve or deny request for funding to construct additional sidewalk not covered by the city's settlement with A&E Construction.

Jones stated there has been a few things happen since we last met. There has been a lot going on behind the scenes. We do have an item we will need to vote on today. At our last meeting we talk about our list of priorities and how they may change. One of the projects that we were talking about was the Ridgecrest School sidewalk project. The city has a settlement agreement with Mr. Espinoza for sidewalks and that project will start on the 10th. The settlement agreement dictates that Espinoza is liable or responsible for construction of 8,000 square feet of sidewalk. It is to include wheelchair ramps, driveway crossing and things like that. It's not just the sidewalk. It must include all the things that make it accessible. There is about 3,300 square feet that is remaining to complete the project. That is based on how far the Council and City Manager wants this project to go. It will go from the intersection on the southeast corner of the school and runs up to NW 47th Street. It then heads east along Santa Fe Avenue and goes to the pedestrian bridge at the corner of Santa Fe and 43rd. There are some existing sidewalks and the pedestrian bridge feeds into that area. The 3,300 is filling in the gap. Santa Fe has a lot of traffic that drives to fast. There are a lot of kids that walk to school. The project is a little over 11,000 square feet and Espinoza is responsible for 8,000 of that. I'm going to ask us to vote on covering the balance of 3,300 feet that Espinoza isn't responsible for. I'm going to suggest we allow no more than \$50,000 from Access funds.

Love stated if it saves one (1) child how much is \$50,000.

Bonacci stated I agree. There is a huge concern with multiple schools where kids are having to walk in the street or mud. If we can help to complete a good project, I would say we should do it.

Jones stated this is the first of many projects that will be going in around the schools. Engineering is working on another one that will be funded from Safe Routes To School. It is in the latter stage of design. Some of the projects change a bit due to different issues with right-of-way or if someone decides it should be on the other side of the street. Ridgecrest changed for a good reason. It lengthened the project to better fill in some existing gaps. We are going to cover the sidewalk that is right next to the school and is on school property. We will put some crosswalks and wheelchair ramps in and rebuild driveways that go into the school parking lot. It is currently in such poor condition that nobody could get across in a wheelchair.

Love stated we can only do one (1) at a time so we have to start.

Bonacci stated Rome wasn't built in a day.

Love stated my son was hit by a car when we lived on 69th Street. Kids don't have any place to play or walk except in the street. It will be great if we can get one (1) school and one (1) neighborhood at a time.

Jones stated let's start with this one. Are there any other questions or discussion?

Love asked is the school comfortable with this project.

Jones stated yes. I did reach out to their maintenance department about chipping in with some funds. I asked them specifically for fund to help with the replacement of the driveway and sidewalks adjacent to the school. One of the sidewalks is so unlevel that is it tough to walk on for a person that is not disabled. This is going to be a much better situation for that school. It will fix some things for them.

Love stated I'm so happy. That is a huge start.

Jones stated it is a good start. I had a conversation with the contractor last week and he is wrapping up a project and anticipates starting this project the week of the 10th.

Motion by Jones, **Second** by Love, that the Access Board provide funding for the Ridgecrest sidewalk project to cover the cost that are not covered by the settlement agreement between Alfred Espinosa and the City of Lawton in an amount not to exceed \$50,000. **Aye:** Love; Bonacci; Jones. **Nay:** None.

Jones stated excellent. I'm glad to get that done. I can tell the City Manager and the engineer that when we start construction it is fully funded. I do appreciate you coming today and allowing us to take care of this project.

2. New Business

A. Review the current sidewalk project priority list previously established by the Board and discuss possible changes in projects and their ranking. Take action, if necessary, to approve or deny any proposed changes.

Jones stated there has been a lot going on behind the scenes. You recall at the last meeting we change our priorities. We bumped up Lee Boulevard. That was our highest priority behind Ridgecrest. We were building sidewalks from 11th to 17th. The city has decided they want a new road project with sidewalks on Lee Boulevard. They will reconstruct Lee Boulevard from Goodyear Boulevard to I-44.

Bonacci stated wow.

Jones stated wow is right. This will be a huge project and they want to start right away. We met with the contractor a couple of weeks ago and they are in the first stage for the western phase from Goodyear Boulevard back east to the next half mile. Each mile will be a little different. There won't be sidewalks on the most western mile. There is nothing to connect to out there. When it gets to downtown and specifically the area we are looking at between 11th and 17th there will be sidewalks on both sides. I'm still working on the design and will continue to do so until I'm told to stop. There are questions as to whether I should continue with the design since it is going to be a part of a larger overall project. I don't know if the section we are looking at is going to be resurfaced or reconstructed. If it is going to be reconstructed theoretically it would be wider. If we put in sidewalks, they might have to tear it out to accommodate the new construction. It could potentially be redundant and a waste of time. I have asked that question and until I have an answer I will continue to work on the design. The good news for us is that is a lot of brand-new sidewalks on both sides of Lee Boulevard.

Bonacci stated that area really needs it.

Jones stated very much so. You see people walking there day and night. They are either going to the grocery store, a restaurant or the convenient store. People walk or ride bikes there all the time.

Love stated they also walk to the hospital.

Jones stated yes and there are LATS stops all along that road. The road is in poor condition also. It is like a roller coaster.

Bonacci stated because my van has a conversion package, I have to drive a lot slower than the speed limit. If I don't it will bottom out.

Love stated I can remember when Lee Boulevard was a two (2) lane asphalt road.

Jones stated I don't know how long it will be before they start the project, but Council wants to make this happen as quickly as possible. They are designing the first mile.

Love asked and there will be sidewalks on both sides of the road.

Jones stated yes, except for the most western mile or miles.

Love stated probably 82nd on east. There are sidewalks on 82nd Street. There is a dog park and ballpark off Lee also. There are all kinds of reason to have sidewalks on both sides of the road. Will they get auditable crossings.

Jones stated I'm sure they will at every intersection. The big picture is to provide accessibility where there isn't any and that includes intersections. They put them in on Gore by the new safety facility.

Love stated Dana is visually impaired and she was complaining that there wasn't sidewalks and auditable crosswalks for her cane training. Her area is an area we need to focus on.

Jones stated for my own edification it would be nice to have her involved in our meetings whether she is a voting member or not. I would like to know if the truncated domes on the ramps really help. Do they help with someone who relies on a cane to cross the street,

Love asked does it have a separate sound.

Jones stated yes. At the end of the ramp where you cross the street usually it is a metal plate. The plate is contrasting in color and has little domes. The reason for the domes is so when scanning with a cane when you feel the domes and it alerts you that you have reached a point where you are going to cross the street.

Love stated I have been places I didn't know I was going down the ramp because I couldn't feel it. The problem with a guide dog they don't always recognize it. They will show you the ramp but when going forward you don't know when you have reached the end of the ramp that goes into the street.

Jones stated I was in Oklahoma City and was stopped at a light downtown. I saw a man crossing the street and he was guided by his cane. He was scanning the sidewalk in front of him. The intersection was on go so he just went across. I couldn't tell if he noticed the domes or not. They are not very tall but the spacing is supposed to be where you hit them when scanning. I couldn't tell if he caught them or not.

Love asked did they have an audible traffic signal. A lot of the time we hone in on the sound.

Jones stated I'm not certain. I was busy watching him with the cane that I didn't look at the sign or hear the sounds. He went across so fast that he may just be that good.

Love stated if you have good cane training and good confidence nothing will stop you.

Bonacci stated the first Council for the Blind convention that I attended was in Tulsa. I didn't know anyone until one day going down the hallway and I see a whole line of vision impaired people. They were all walking towards me with canes. If I hadn't gotten out of their way, they would have bulldozed me.

Love laughed well yes. You can see and they can't. We will probably be hosting the convention in 2022. I think it would be valuable for you to attend at least one (1) day to meet the vendors and to see what blind people are capable of doing. It will open your eyes to see what we can do.

Jones stated absolutely, I'll plan on being there. I'm guessing that will be posted to their Facebook page.

Love stated I'm sure. It is usually the third weekend in September. We aren't having one this year but 2021 will be in Oklahoma City.

Bonacci stated I think in the next couple of weeks we will see the overall number start to go down due to people wearing mask. I think it will be a catalyst for the flu season to be guarded up like we have never been before. If we had this attitude as a country, I believe we could get rid of COVID. There are a lot of positives that can come from something so negative.

Love asked what is our next priority and how long before we start on Sheridan Road.

Jones stated I was going to tell you about Sheridan Road next. We are working on a couple of different ways to attack these projects. Typically, the surveyor goes into the field and picks up all the data such as driveways, fire hydrants, ground elevations and all sorts of different things. The surveyor for the City of Lawton passed about four (4) months ago and the city is not going to replace him due to budgets being tight. I knew that I was going to have an ongoing need for surveyor work, so I learned how to use his equipment and software and have been doing the surveying for my sidewalk projects. I have surveyed the Lee Boulevard project, so I have what I need. I'm in the design process at this time. I hope that it doesn't get put off because I did all the survey work and hope that the time wasn't wasted. It can take a while to get things done especially for a project like Sheridan Road. As you know the west side of Sheridan Road is crazy. I walked it as a precursor of doing the survey work and there were driveways, signs, and broken concrete. You name it and it is on Sheridan Road. It is going to be a bear to do that sidewalk project. We have been given authorization to contract this to an engineering company. I emailed them Friday to give them a heads up about the project. They will do the survey and design work. That opens things up for me to move on to our next priority. I talked to you before about doing downtown ramps and sidewalk crossings. This should speed the process up and I'm going to change my design process to a fast track things. I'm proposing we don't do survey work and I'm going to use an aerial and make notes on the aerial. The notes will say I want a sidewalk from here to here and it will be 6' wide with ramps at each end. If you encounter a problem, we will deal with it when to come to it. It will be faster, but they won't know about problems in the field until they have one. When they lay the sidewalk out from curb to curb, they will see if there is a water valve, fire

hydrant or tree that needs to be removed. They will have to work those issues out as they are laying the concrete. I don't know how that is going to work but the upside is in the design phase will happen quickly. The guys in the field might be cussing me once they get out there. The construction part will be slower. I'm doing that because of the pressure I'm getting. I have to come up with a solution to get those out quicker. This isn't all that I do, and I can't sit on it for eight (8) hours a day for a full week at a time. I have to come up with another solution and that is all I could think of.

Love asked what is the latest on west Gore from 67th to the high school.

Jones stated the junior high is under construction and there is a lot of new sidewalk that will go in with that project. I don't know about west of there. There is a plan to reconstruct Gore from 67th to 82nd Street and it will get new sidewalks. I would image that along that same timeframe it will become a priority to fill in the gap between the high school and 67th Street on the north side of the road.

Love stated the kids that live within a mile have to walk and there are not sidewalks on Gore. It is scary.

Jones stated that is one our priority list and I believe it will be moved up higher once they start working on Gore from 67th to 82nd. That will increase the importance of getting it done and filling in the gap. Filling in the gap is a lot of the way we work. It will probably be coming up pretty quick. It could be right after the downtown project. If we decide to do that then we can.

Love stated there was a lot of discussion about Ferris. Fortenbaugh stated that on Ferris from 2nd to 11th would be redone.

Jones stated that will become a five (5) lane road. He also said that was a long-range plan of about twenty (20) years.

Love stated we talked about getting it for the playground in the park.

Jones stated yes, on the north side of the road. I think we still need to do that. Even if it becomes a five (5) lane road I think that the sidewalks on the north side will be okay. They would put sidewalks in on the southside which is also need due to the proximity of the school. Also, the sidewalks by the Neighborhood Walmart have been completed since we last met.

Love stated I hope it has ramps for people in powerchairs.

Jones stated it does. All new construction must be completely accessible. They have the truncated domes.

Love stated that is a safety issue for those with powerchairs.

Jones stated I have seen those chairs in the middle of Gore and Lee Boulevard. Now they won't have to do that.

Love stated they said someone was trying to cross in a powerchair at Cache Road and Sheridan. That is crazy. I guess when they are in their chairs, they feel like they own the road.

Bonacci stated that is a little brave for even me.

Jones stated Mr. Harper use to do that.

Love stated I don't believe there are curb cuts where Mr. Harper use to cross. Is that something that is in the works. I think we talked about this.

Jones asked which spot are we talking about.

Bonacci stated the intersection of Cache and Sheridan on the southeast corner. There is a small sidewalk, but no curb cut or ramp. All the other corners have new sidewalks ramps.

Jones stated the Sheridan Road project will go from Rogers Lane to Cache Road and then back west to Homestead Drive on the north side of the road. I could have them analyze that intersection to see what we have. If we deemed that unsafe, they could tear out those ramps that are noncompliant and replace them with compliant ones. I'll look into that.

Love stated I'm so excited. The changes that I have seen since we started meeting in 2016.

Jones stated I have good news about a couple of others. The I-44 pedestrian bridge is back on. We have met with them and the design has changed.

Love stated we have also had one (1) or two (2) more fatalities of people crossing there.

Jones stated it is really an unsafe situation.

Bonacci stated I remember the debate and I was calling Jay Burk everyday telling him that the Comanche Tribe needed to help with the bridge. He and I have not always seen eye to eye. The response he gave me was to bring my argument to Council. When he saw me in the meeting getting ready to speak, he announced that he had worked out an arrangement with the Tribe. This was one (1) of many lessons I learned from him. He told me he wanted my butt to be there to see that he had been working on this. I think they finally agreed to help with the project.

Love stated this will create a path from the eastside to the westside of town. I think it is exciting.

Jones stated I agree. I'm looking forward to seeing it finished. It is a connection across I-44 where we don't currently have one. It was proposed at one (1) time to be what is called a cantilever design and it is attached to the main bridge. What has been decided upon is a separate bridge that will be 45' to the south of the I-44 bridge. It will be its own structure.

Love stated I think that will be safer.

Bonacci stated I agree.

Love stated with a high fence on both sides.

Jones stated that is called a throw fence. It is put up high enough on both sides to keep people from throwing things off. Obviously, these days that is important. You see in the news where people are throwing things off the bridges and killing people.

Love stated good. That is exciting and will help to give Lawton that big city feel.

Jones stated it is in the design phase, so I'll keep you posted. We have asked for that as quickly as they can get the plans out. The only other thing I have today is to talk about a new member. What is the process for that?

Ezell stated the Mayor makes that decision. I have informed him of the vacancy and I'll send the recommendation that Kay has given me to him. The end decision comes from the Mayor.

Jones stated okay.

Love stated Dana is on the Lawton Council for The Blind. She has always been willing to get involved. I asked if she would consider serving with us and she said sure. She hasn't been blind for a long time. This is still a new learning process for her. With the dealings that I have had with her she is a very delightful.

Jones stated I guess everyone knows about Mr. Kesler.

Love stated he called me the night before he moved to Edmond. He wanted to thank me for my friendship and tell me he was going to miss me. I was surprised but delighted that he took the time to tell me how important our friendship had meant. He was a nice gentleman.

Bonacci stated Mr. Kesler was incredibly smart and had a headful of knowledge. I'm thankful we still have Kay. I don't know how she remembers the things that she does.

Love stated I wanted to show you the book that Tom and I did. When I left the hospital after having my legs removed, I wasn't given any resources, who to contact or ask. We started S.O.A.P, Southwest Oklahoma Amputee Program. We put information together to have available for new amputees, so they didn't feel so alone. You are dealing with the trauma of losing your limb and to not be given any information or resources adds to your trauma. I came up with the idea of making a book of resources. The group liked the idea and ask the only blind person in the group to put it all together. Memorial Hospital liked it so much that they had copies printed and pass them out to their amputees.

Jones stated there is a ton of information in there. This is great.

Love stated I got most of it from the internet. The resources are there you just have to look for them. You have to look when you are ready. You grieve just like you would if you lost a family member. Things are going to be different. You are not the same person and it takes a bit to get use to. You must mentally adjust. You have to get your head on straight before looking for resources. This is what I came up with and I'm proud of the way it turned out. Tom helped with the editing and making it look nice.

Bonacci stated Kay does the newsletter for the Oklahoma Council of the Blind and the Lawton Council of the Blind. When I type the minutes for the Lawton Council, we have a process. I type them and send them to Kay for editing. I have learned that she does not hesitate to let me know if a word is misspelled.

Love asked what is the key Rocco.

Bonacci stated F7.

Love stated full sentences and F7 before you send it to me.

Jones stated does anyone have anything else for today.

Love stated this is exciting and we covered a lot.

Jones stated it is exciting and we did cover a lot. That is the reason I didn't want another month or two (2) to by before meeting.

Love stated I assume we are 6' apart. That is the bad part about being blind. I don't know if we are 6' apart or not.

Jones stated we are. We have been instructed to maintain social distancing and to wear masks. Everyone is following those guidelines. I hope Rocco is right and in a couple of weeks things start flattening out.

Love stated that would be wonderful.

Jones stated I agree.

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

3. Comments/Discussion

4. Adjournment