

Jean Latka
Chair

Brandice Eslinger
Vice Chair

Chris Kaufman
City Council Representative



Planning & Zoning Commission

Weston Burrer

Jeff Falletta

Brian Lucas

Raymond Seybold

REGULAR MEETING

City of Pueblo, Colorado

Wednesday, February 13, 2013 – 3:30 p.m.

City Council Chambers – 301 West B Street

Minutes

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. with Chairperson Jean Latka presiding.

Commissioners Present: Weston Burrer (late), Brandice Eslinger, Jeff Falletta, Chris Kaufman, Jean Latka, Brian Lucas, and Raymond Seybold.

Staff Members Present: Julie Ann Woods, Director of Planning and Community Development; Jeff Bailey, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Development Services; Paul Willumstad, Attorney for the Planning and Zoning Commission; and Pepper Whittlef, Transportation Engineer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion was made by Commissioner Seybold to approve the agenda, seconded by Council Person Kaufman. **Motion passed 6-0.**

Commissioner Burrer arrived.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ACTION

1. **MP-13-01** – Master Plan Approval for the New Pueblo Freeway Plan Preferred Alternative.

BACKGROUND

Staff report given by Julie Ann Woods.

Under the City Charter, the Planning and Zoning Commission has the responsibility of considering plans and making a recommendation related to those plans to City Council. CDOT has been working with the community for well over ten years on this Project and has taken the community vision and incorporated it into their plans for the highway. They wanted to be able to balance the regional trips versus through traffic and make sure that accessibility between the east and west sides of the expressway were improved, had some aesthetic improvements related to the expressway, and opportunities for partnerships.

There are a number of issues that have been laid out in the staff report in terms of the areas of concern that the planning staff have heard. The Eilers/Bessemer neighborhoods still have concerns about the expressway. There remains concern regarding the acquisition of lands from Mineral Palace Park, the lack of direct access into downtown going southbound at 1st Street, the removal of a large portion of the Grove neighborhood located on the east side of I-25, the removal of the remaining stoves and stack on CF&I owned property, and the connecting tunnel for CF&I that goes underneath I-25.

When it comes to the details within Mineral Palace Park, staff wants to make sure that mitigation adequately addresses what the community is looking for without any further erosion or damage to the remaining historic fabric of the Park.

The 13th Street access remains critical because of the hospital. There will be access into downtown at 4th Street by way of an interchange; however, there is not enough length to construct another interchange at 1st Street. CDOT is proposing a slip lane, which would start at about 7th Street. Northbound, vehicles wishing to access downtown will be able to exit at 1st Street and 8th Street only. With the elimination of the 13th Street exit, access to Parkview Hospital will be by way of a frontage road to 13th Street from 8th Street, so signage on the freeway will need to be strategically placed to best inform those needing a hospital.

The Grove neighborhood has known about the acquisition for some time. CDOT is encouraged to work quickly and diligently with this neighborhood to find comparable housing as part of the acquisition process and to minimize additional delays.

The Eilers neighborhood will likewise be heavily impacted by the New Pueblo Freeway. Much of the western portion of that neighborhood (located east of I-25) will need to be acquired as well. There does not appear to be a good option for this as shifting the freeway to the west would impact another neighborhood west of I-25. "Neighborhood connectivity" across (over/under) I-25 was an important aspect of the early design discussion, but it appears that the Eilers residents do not wish to lose homes in its neighborhood, and has attempted to communicate with CDOT representatives and feel they have not received a very good response.

Evraz Steel, the owners of the CF & I property, is down to the last stoves and stack that define the mill property and its important place in our community's history. CDOT proposes to remove and relocate the stoves and stack as part of the preferred alternative. By removing and relocating the stack, it would likely hinder the Bessemer Historical Society's (BHS) efforts to develop "industrial tourism" as an economic development driver for their organization and our community.

As part of their plans, BHS hopes to secure the use of the existing tunnel under I-25 that historically served employees who lived in Bessemer and walked to the mill each day. This would allow visitors to experience what it was like to enter the mill as so many other Puebloans had before. The tunnel's role had great significance because it provided access from the steel mill to the administrative building for all of the workers. CDOT has not fully addressed the stoves/stack, nor the preservation of the tunnel as part of the 106 agreement

that they have asked the City and BHS to sign. BHS forwarded a letter to CDOT on September 12, 2012 indicating their reasons for not entering into the 106 agreement. It appears from the plans that the existing tunnel may remain, but that the eastern portal will no longer have a view of the steel mill.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission recommend that the new Pueblo Freeway preferred alternative not be recommended for approval at this time. Further, Staff recommends that CDOT put more effort into addressing the concerns of the Bessemer/Eilers neighborhoods, the Bessemer Historical Society, and downtown access and identify alternatives that will minimize impacts to our community that will better serve the community in the long run.

HEARING

Joe DeHeart, Project Manager, Colorado Department of Transportation, 705 Erie Avenue, Pueblo, CO appeared and testified in favor of the application.

No one spoke in opposition to the application.

Chairperson Latka closed the hearing and requested a motion.

COMMISSION ACTION

Motion was made by Council Person Kaufman to approve the new I-25 Pueblo Freeway plan, seconded by Commissioner Falletta, with the following condition:

Add appropriate signage directing the public to local attractions, businesses, and community features.

Motion passed 6-1 (Seybold opposed).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made to approve the Minutes of the January 9, 2013 Public Hearing by Commissioner Lucas, seconded by Commissioner Eslinger. **Motion passed 7-0.**

SCHEDULE PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing for March will convene on Wednesday, March 13, 2013 at 3:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

SCHEDULE WORK SESSION

The Work Session for February will convene on Thursday, February 21, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. in the Planning Conference Room, 211 East D Street.

ADJOURN

There being no further business the Regular Meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Jean Latka
Chairperson

Jeff M. Bailey, P.E.
Executive Secretary

Digital recordings of all the meetings of the Planning and Zoning Commission are maintained and available for inspection and review during normal business hours (M – F, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.) at the Department of Planning & Community Development, 211 East D Street, Pueblo, CO.