

**SONORA CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF SONORA  
APRIL 1, 2019**

A Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Sonora was opened this date in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 94 North Washington Street, at 5:02 p.m. with the following Members present: Mayor, Jim Garaventa, Councilmembers Matt Hawkins, Mark Plummer, Colette Such and Connie Williams; City Administrator Tim Miller, Deputy City Attorney, Nubia Goldstein, Administrative Services Director, Chris Gorsky, Community Development Director, Rachelle Kellogg, Fire Chief, Aimee New and Police Chief Turu VanderWiel.

**REPORT ON POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

City Administrator, Tim Miller, advised the Council that at 1:00 p.m. on the 29th day of March, 2019, the Agenda for the City of Sonora Council Meeting was posted outside City Hall for public view.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

There were no changes to the Agenda.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Presentations included a proclamation presented to Mary Ann Fielder recognizing April as Autism Awareness Month.

**PUBLIC COMMENT (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)**

**Martin Blake**, advised the Council he objected to canceling the Spring Festival and instead holding a western themed event.

**Martin Blake**, advised the Council that the Leadership Tuolumne County 2017/18 class was again holding the volunteer fair on April 25<sup>th</sup> at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds.

**Barbara Dressler**, advised the Council that the City would have an exposure if a sink hole opened up in the Beer Garden where the City acquired an easement to access an existing manhole.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Motion by Councilmember Hawkins second by Councilmember Plummer, unanimously carried on a vote of 5-0, approval of the March 18<sup>th</sup> Council minutes, previously budgeted expenses and payroll disbursements.** There was no public comment.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Consideration to approve a Special Event Permit application to allow alcohol possession and consumption (beer and wine) at on Linoberg Street for the 2nd anniversary of the Tap Room on April 13<sup>th</sup>.

Administrator Miller reviewed the Tap Room's request noting it was the same as for previous events but the music would start one hour later. Nayland Chappell discussed the request and in response to a question by Councilmember Such, indicated she had contacted the surrounding businesses and that Mountain Home would be closing early so the event could start at 7 pm instead of 8 pm. She also noted there would be a caterer serving bar-b-que food. There was no public comment.

Motion by Councilmember Hawkins seconded by Councilmember Such, unanimously carried on a vote of 5-0, to allow the possession and consumption of alcohol on Linoberg Street April 13<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 7 and 10 pm.

2. Consideration to adopt Resolution No. 04-01-2019-A authorizing the closure of State Route 49 (Washington and Stockton Roads) along with other City streets for the Mother Lode Round-Up

Chief VanderWiel reviewed the resolution. Mayor Garaventa noted the resolution needed to include the Fire Museum parking lot. Jim Opie thanked the City for their support. There was no public comment.

Motion by Councilmember Plummer second by Councilmember Williams, and unanimously carried on a vote of 5-0, to adopt Resolution No. 04-01-2019-A authorizing the street closures for the Mother Lode Round-Up including the closure of the Fire Museum parking lot.

3. Consideration to adopt Resolution No. 04-01-2019-B authorizing alcohol possession and consumption (beer and wine) within the street closure area for the Mother Lode Round-Up

**Chief VanderWiel** reviewed the resolution and noted the hours would generally be between 10 AM and 1 PM. There was no public comment.

**Motion by Councilmember Hawkins second by Councilmember Williams, and unanimously carried on a vote of 5-0, to adopt Resolution No. 03-04-2019-B.**

#### **4. Review and direction to City staff regarding the Red Church Pedestrian & Circulation Improvement Project**

**Director Kellogg** introduced the project. **Galen Gritz** reviewed the changes for the 65% plans. Councilmembers asked questions regarding the handicap ramp color, alignment of Snell Street, turning movements at Elkin and Washington, remarking of the loading zone, recommendation for bollards at the Red Church and pedestrian warning signs.

**Gerald Fuccillo** suggested the elimination of the bulb outs at City Hall and Dorthea's, add sidewalk from the Red Church to the north along Washington and install pedestrian warning signs at Wyckoff. **Barry Rudolph** expressed concerns about narrowing the street and affecting evacuation routes and public safety services. **David Morgan** questioned whether the City or CalTRANS would be responsible for the improvements. **Stephanie Seuss** commented that while the improvements are better at their business location she was concerned about the impacts to the Red Church and the need to involve TUD regarding their utilities. **Elena Linehan** suggested the public was not being kept informed, questioned the hardscape and the loss of parking, Snell alignment and costs for maintenance, liability and damages. **Bill Seldon** raised concerns about the condition of utilities, the problems with bulb outs, too many signs and the impacts to the historic character. **Olivia Phillips** also expressed concerns about bulb outs and their effects on circulation especially during evacuations. **Sharon Marovich** suggested eliminating the modern improvements, was opposed to the pedestrian warning signs and concluded the design should be more tailored to a historic district. **Bill Atkins**, stated he agreed with the comments of Gerald Fuccillo and Bill Seldon and noted hardscape is better than landscape because of increasing demand and fewer employees in the Public Works Department.

Written comments from **Gerald Fuccillo, Marianne Wright and Barry Rudolph** are attached as a part of the record.

Councilmember by consensus provided the following direction:

1. Eliminate the curb extension in front of City Hall
2. Eliminate the curb extension at Dorthea's
3. Install "sandwashed" concrete for a more historic look to include brick bands
4. Eliminate the pedestrian activated warning signs and consider "rumble strips" and other types of advanced warning signs or pavement markings

MONTHLY REPORTS

None

VISION SONORA COMMITTEE REPORT

None

COMMUNICATIONS

None

COUNCILMEMBER/DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

**Chief New** reported the department had a successful Career Day. **Director Kellogg** reported on the defensible space clearing behind Alpine Lane and Ireland Drive. **Councilmember Such** requested that the Council pay be agendized and that the City consider partnering with the County to provide portable toilets at the homeless camp. **Mayor Garaventa** reported attending the Parking and Traffic Commission meeting and their action to install red zones north and south of the Cosmetology School.

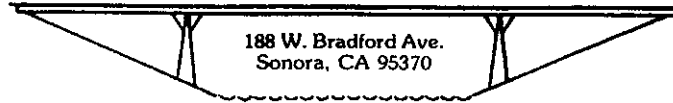
ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Colette Such, City Clerk Pro-Tem

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **GJF Engineering**



Date: April 01, 2019

Subject: **Comments to the Revised Red Church Pedestrian and Circulation Improvement Plan**

I have reviewed the updated plans and staff report for the April 01, 2019 City Council meeting and I feel to we should take some time to get a little more public input, and especially something in writing from Caltrans. I would like to suggest some further revisions and additions to the plan to make this project a practical project for the City, as follows:

1. Delete the hardscape area in front of Dorothea's Christmas building and maintain the existing curbline. This bulb-out eliminates a shoulder area and parking space, and is so small it is virtually useless. Who is going to use this area with a bench next to the traveled way and in the sun. The bulb-out eliminates a safety area where a vehicle or bicyclist southbound on Snell, can pull over at the stop sign to let someone pass. The bulb-out will also encourage people to cross Snell St outside of the crosswalk. To me it seems like we are just creating our own safety hazard with this bulb-out.
2. Delete the bulb-outs on both sides of the crosswalk between the Parking Structure and the Fire Museum. Bulb-outs are intended to increase pedestrian visibility on multilane streets. At the location, there is only two lanes, and there is excellent visibility. By eliminating the bulb-outs in front of the parking structure, one can then maintain the two way traffic pattern in the parking structure with less conflict with turning movements in the crosswalk, and with more convenience to the public.
3. The most important safety improvement that I see is not on the plan and should be added. The currently depressed sidewalk along the west side of Washington Street along the Red Church should be redone and raised with a curb. Right now, it is very easy for a vehicle to drift over the sidewalk area. It is very apparent that vehicles do drift from the looks of the bent over post at the Red Church corner. This depressed sidewalk with no curb is probably the most hazardous sidewalk in town, and should be redone along Washington Street and around the corner to Snell Street.
4. I agree with the solar pedestrian signing at the crosswalk crossing Washington at Elkin Street. I do feel it very necessary to add additional solar flashing signing in advance of the Elkin/Snell Street intersection on Washington Street as well as on Snell Street. If one is driving southbound on Washington Street on the approach to Elkin Street, you will see a slight hump in road which makes the ground area at the crosswalk invisible until one is almost on it. More advanced signing with notification of multiple crosswalks in the downtown is needed to advise the drivers in the vicinity of Wychoff Street. With the advanced signing, the one pushbutton crossing at Snell St should be enough. More than one pushbutton within a short distance will increase congestion on an already congested street.

In summary, I agree with all the sidewalk replacement work which is within the existing curb lines shown on the plan. If a majority of the sidewalk work is within the curb-line, we would be working on the City right of way and have an easier time with the Caltrans Permit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerard J. Fuccillo".

Gerard J. Fuccillo (Jerry)  
As a Sonora Resident

Dear Mr. Mayor and City Council,

I just wanted to chime in on one of the subjects at tonight's meeting, the red church intersection project. My comment would be that the intersection as is works well for traffic flow, as best as I think it can, and I think the plan proposed would interfere with traffic circulation and really slow things down in addition to interfering with existing businesses. My suggestion would be to do as much as there is possible to improve and ensure pedestrian safety by doing as much as possible with the existing crosswalks, and to do away with all of the other unnecessary portions of the proposed plan which would be the realignment and the unnecessary amount of landscaping. At prior Council meetings you all discussed a number of things that can be done to make the crosswalks safer, and they were all very good ideas. I realize the commitment has been made to do the project. But you could still do the project by really beefing up the crosswalks taking care of the main reason for the project in the first place. So anyway, this is my public comment. I won't be able to make it tonight to the meeting.

Thanks,

Marianne Wright

## Red Church

Union Democrat January 9, 2019

35% (\$105K) spent so far. Is this a case of doing anything even if it is wrong just for the sake of getting a grant? It sure seems like it. It is April Fools Day?

Peter Rei, long time Tuolumne County roads director. "Bulbouts are meant to narrow the street" especially NB Traffic. These are called traffic calmers. Google "Traffic Calmers Camp Fire Evacuation" See what comes up.

Traffic calmers contributed to delaying the evacuations during the camp fire especially through downtown paradise where four lanes were necked down to two. Wider evacuation routes-not narrower, folks. All, in the name of boosting commerce as well as traffic and pedestrian safety. That's not me, that's The LA Times talking about the Paradise Town Council's "Road Diet" complete with benches and landscaping to beautify the area.  
November 20, 2018

Installing permanent concrete barriers in any form along Washington Street will serve to hinder evacuations and also the use of the street at those locations for fire equipment to use the street area for operations-especially for buildings on fire next to them. It also makes snow plowing more difficult.

For Example, if an evacuation were to occur in the middle of the night or during the early morning (as was the case in Paradise) law enforcement could reconfigure Washington street as a one way route with two lanes going out of town and one lane southbound using the parking spaces along the sides of the street. Very few cars are parked along the street at night when the business district is shut down.

Rei says that "acceleration speeds up" there at Elkin Street. NO KIDDING! It's the first place where you can go faster than 0-5 MPH! Try driving 25 MPH through downtown Sonora (middle of the night or early morning). It feels much faster than 25 because you are so used to being stop and go. Rei does not say what the accelerated speeds are. Anything over Zero is "accelerating."

Rachel Kellogg: “Improve vehicular circulation, pedestrian safety, and intersection function. Let’s break this down.

**Improving vehicular circulation.** How does installing a barrier that causes a vehicle to first turn left and then a right around a barrier an improvement over being able to proceed straight ahead with no obstacles to navigate? (BTW anyone who has lived here for any period of time knows this is the point where traffic backs up and many southbound vehicles yield the ROW to those entering from Snell to SB Washington St. and also those trying to go NB on Snell from Washington St. It really is a smooth operation by all involved. I’ve been doing it for close to 30 plus years along with many others on the roadway. An added benefit of this driving behavior is that it allows traffic moving northbound to keep moving northbound on Washington Street. If you don’t yield the cars quickly fill the turn pocket and back up onto Washington St. cars NB then try and drive around those in the turn lane and move farther to the right by the sidewalk-and as Mr. Rei says, accelerate. See any potential problems here? They are rare because the locals yield and free up the turn pocket many times letting numerous vehicles through at once because the SB traffic is stopped because of congestion.

**Pedestrian Safety.** This seems to me to be what we used to call “playing the safety card” when all else fails to make your point of fight for something in government. What is the actual safety issue here? Especially when compared to anywhere else in the city.

The fire chief, Amiee New provided information there were 21 accidents between Stockton Rd and Elkin Street. A bit more information is required for this to be meaningful: What kind of accident? What was the timeframe for this- ten years, a year, a month? Where exactly were the 21 accidents? Where is the context? I don’t see any reference to a single accident on Snell St? There is a reference that “most of those accidents involved pedestrians within the cross walk on Elkin Street and no work is planned for that!

I’m not a traffic engineer but I can tell you that when you have 90 degree intersections or other angled intersections, blind spots are created in many modern vehicles “A” Posts-especially to those on the right side of the vehicle farthest away from the drivers view. Same thing happens on our windy roads where you don’t see oncoming traffic in the opposing lane



momentarily because of the A post blind spot as you make a left turn in a curve.

The sharper the curve the more this is pronounced. Don't believe me? You either haven't driven in this county or you move your head back and forth to look around the A post of your car or truck. I drove Code 3 vehicles for nearly three decades and that was my first hand experience. So let's see, the proposal for Snell creates the potential blind spot to the right side of the driver because of the right side A Post. If the street intersection is left as is there is a full unobstructed view for the driver of any pedestrian coming from the driver's right side. The left view is fully unobstructed as is now with no changes.

**Intersection Function.** How does creating multiple physical concrete barriers that by admission of the traffic engineer will **NARROW** the road and thus bring opposing moving traffic **CLOSER** to each other, thus making it more difficult (or at least present the potential to make it more difficult) for large commercial truck traffic and passenger busses to navigate, make an intersection function better?

How do installing concrete barriers (landscape bulbs) in the roadway make it easier for large vehicles to make right turns around them? It does not, we know that it does not, and yet we are going to do this so that we don't loose out on grant money? This is the classic case of a solution looking for a problem and is illogical.

We are spending nearly a million dollars to move a turn pocket over about 3-4 feet (putting NB cars and semi's closer to pedestrians crossing Elkin Street where the accidents are reported); building two opposing concrete barriers (landscape bulbs) that by admission from the expert will narrow and already narrow road and potentially negatively impact emergency vehicles and mass evacuations; build a third concrete barrier that will eliminate a straighter entrance onto Washington street that will make navigation and visibility for drivers of large and small vehicles actually more hazardous and make it more difficult for vehicles attempting to exit Washington Street NB onto Snell Street; and finally installing a fourth concrete barrier at the apex of the rock wall of the front of the read church which eliminates useable roadway and pushed the vehicles closer together: lastly moving only one crosswalk and only then slightly at a more right angle on Snell street serves only to push the pedestrians further into the traffic lane of SB Washington Street.

If you really want to tackle an intersection I think is many times more dangerous than the red church, move your efforts to Church Street and South Washington St. by Yosemite Title and the newly finished entertainment facility that when opened is going to create a tremendous amount of pedestrian traffic across a poorly marked crosswalk and multiple lanes that cause varying traffic speeds based on the lanes being used and drivers jockeying for position like a NASCAR pit road at Daytona! I believe this is also an intersection not influenced by CAL TRANS!

I've been here since I was 8 years old. The traffic now looks just like it did then-even with the east bypass. Sonora will never be a Murphys, period. If you want to really have a vision for Sonora, then spend your time effort and money working to build a N/S bypass from Columbia to Hess Avenue and one from Shaws Flat to Jamestown.

The real solution is to remove the thru traffic off Washington Street and onto newly constructed bypasses both to the north and the west somewhere along, or to near to, the Jamestown Road corridor.

Only then will you be able to have your street events, craft fairs and a downtown that is vitalized as the Vision Sonora Seeks to achieve.

This is an ill-advised project especially given the lessons learned we will experience from the evacuations of the Camp Fire.

Barry Rudolph  
April 1, 2019