

May 04, 2015

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

A Transportation Committee meeting was held on Monday, May 4, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. in the County Administration Building, Quorum Court Meeting Room, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas

Committee Members Present: Curry, Anglin, K. Harrison, Adams, Meyers, Moore

Others Present: County Judge Bob Clinard, Assessor Linda Hambrick, JPs Shadlow, Sandlin, Leadabrand and Moehring, Administrator of Public Services Jeff Clark, Comptroller Brenda Guenther, Historical Preservation Commission Chair Glen Jones

Media: Tom Sissom

JP Curry called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

War Eagle Bridge Project

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that he is bringing information on War Eagle Bridge to the court, which has been gathered with a whole lot of effort on everyone's part. He gave a summary of actions taken over the last few years, and how the county and the highway department have dealt with the bridge.

Judge Clinard stated that claims that the county plans to demolish the bridge are false. He stated that he has never, ever said that, and has never intended to do that.

Administrator of Public Services Jeff Clark reported that the state Highway and Transportation Department has identified several structural defects in inspection reports, and the county will have to do the repairs to the bridge. He stated that at this point, they have not found an engineer who will assume the liability to oversee the repair work on the bridge.

Senior Asset Coordinator Trevor Messbarger presented a power-point presentation of the War Eagle Bridge repair options and costs. He stated that the current inspection from the Arkansas Highway Transportation Department (AHTD) shows 17 deficiencies in War Eagle Bridge, and that the reported deficiencies have not changed since 2006, even after all the repairs completed in 2010. He stated that in 2007, Garver Engineering presented an option for complete rehabilitation of the War Eagle Bridge with the possible bridge capacity rating to be raised to an H25. He stated that the estimated cost of the full rehabilitation in 2007 was \$1,755,600. He said that due to budget constraints, the county chose the lesser options and spent \$604,000 on repairs. He stated that according to Garver Engineering, the work was completed in 2010 leaving \$1,080,000 worth of work yet to be completed. He stated that work to be completed includes correcting the deficiencies as stated on the AHTD inspection, as well as the bridge approaches. He stated that at this point, the county hasn't been able to acquire an engineer willing to engineer the repairs for this project because of liability concerns. He stated without an engineer to assess the bridge, the county cannot determine a plan of action or cost associated with rehabilitation. Trevor Messbarger reported that calculating from an average of what it would cost AHTD to either build a new bridge or replace an old bridge in the State of Arkansas, the average cost per square foot in

2013 was \$150. He stated that there are three options the county has examined— rehabilitating the bridge, bypassing the bridge and leaving it intact, or replacing the bridge with a new one at the same location.

Lengthy discussion was held on the deficiencies noted by AHTD, and the costs to repair or replace War Eagle Bridge.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated we cannot take the previous engineer's report and do the structural repairs. He stated any bridge upgrade that is done will need an engineer willing to work on the bridge project.

Further discussion was held on seeking a qualified engineering firm to work on the War Eagle Bridge project.

JP Anglin stated that she wants the county to do more to find an engineer for the project. She stated that we need to have an exhaustive search for an engineer. She added that she did not see building a new bridge as an option.

JP Moehring suggested the county go national in its search for a qualified engineer.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that the county will continue seeking an engineering firm willing to examine the bridge, and oversee its repair or restoration. He said having an engineer working on the project is crucial in determining how the bridge will be used, whether as a pedestrian bridge, as a bridge for limited traffic, or whether it must be replaced. He stated that the maximum loading we can get an engineer to sign off on will determine how the bridge can be used.

JP Curry announced that the update for the Benton County Road Department which is on the agenda will be presented at the May 12, 2015 Committee of the Whole meeting.

Public Comments

Dennis Boyer, owner of War Eagle Cavern, stated that the War Eagle area has been a very important tourism destination. He stated that the War Eagle Bridge needs to be preserved and restored in some sort of manner so that the county will not lose a lot of tourism dollars.

Jenny Harmon, a resident of the War Eagle area, suggested that the National Trust for Historic Preservation is one possible source of information on similar work done elsewhere. She said that other bridges have been saved and that Benton County should make use of the experience and knowledge gained in those efforts.

Other residents of the War Eagle Bridge area expressed their concerns for preserving the bridge.

JP Curry said between the judge, the Road Department, and himself that the county would pursue every avenue possible to restore this bridge. We have to put safety first, but we do not want to take away the bridge.

Adjournment

After motion and second the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.