

Earlham Public Safety Committee
October 8, 2019

The Earlham Public Safety Committee met on Tuesday, October 8, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. Earlham City Hall. Chairperson Brant Payne called the meeting to order and the following answered roll: Payne, Griswold, Swalla. Also present: Mayor Lillie, Council Member Fredericksen, Fire Chief Boyle, Police Chief Heimdal, Public Works Supervisor Coffman.

1. Approve Agenda.

Motion by Fredericksen, second by Griswold, to approve agenda.

Roll: Ayes – unanimous. Motion approved

2. Discussion on railroad crossing at S. Sycamore Avenue

Coffman gave a brief history of this issue, stating it started in 2004, when the mayor at that time requested crossing arms at Sycamore Avenue railroad crossing. We were told at that time the cost would be approximately \$100,000 and City would have to pay 10% of total cost. The cost now would be \$400,000, or \$40,000 in city costs.

In a related matter, Coffman told representative from ISAI railroad they have to stop blocking traffic at all the crossing at the same time. ISAI came up with three options which addressed several issues: 1) do nothing and leave it the way it is; 2) for safety, put cross arms in, costing the city \$40,000; or, 3) close the road. In doing option 3, they would move the switch to the west side of Chestnut, thus alleviating the intersections being blocked by stopped trains. There is Federal assistance of \$15,000 available to the city, part of which to be used for safety.

With Option 3, the ISAI would also give their lot on the north of the tracks and east of Sycamore Avenue to their city. The Chestnut crossing will be fixed no matter what. Payne stated Option 3 would help fire rescue responses. Mayor stated if option 3 is chosen, letters need to be sent to surrounding property owners for the public hearing. Discussion on semi-truck exiting the hardware store after unloading. Mayor added we need to think of any and all consequences this closing would cause. Mayor felt Option 2 was not a good option. Railroad is obviously pushing for Option 3. ISAI stated if option 3 were chosen, the amount of time both crossings would be blocked would be cut by 75%. Swalla stated Option 3 appears to be best option for everyone. Chiefs Boyle and Heimdal see no problems with this option. Coffman said he would talk to IASI on which street will most likely be blocked. Mayor stated we would lose a crossing but gain 75% reduction in blockages.

This is a mainly a safety issue. Now people living south of railroad have delayed emergency services when all crossings are blocked. Discussion continued as Mayor asked about the 100 ft south of the crossing. Discussion on whether to close at the crossing or close at SE 3rd and Sycamore. Consensus of committee is to recommend Option 3 to the council. Everyone agreed anyone with a SE Sycamore, SE Maple, or SE Chestnut address should be sent written notice of the public forum.

3. Adjourn

Motion by Fredericksen, second by Swalla, to adjourn.

Being there was no further business, meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Brant Payne, Chairperson