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CITY OF EARLHAM 140 S CHESTNUT AVE BOX 518 EARLHAM, IA 50072 (515) 758-2281

November 1, 2019

Dear Resident:

Some years ago, the City of Earlham submitted a request to the Iowa Interstate Railroad (IAIS) to install crossing arms at the Sycamore Avenue crossing. This request has finally come “on the radar” of IAIS and resulted in a meeting of Mayor Lillie, Public Works Supervisor Coffman, and 2 representatives of IAIS. As a result of this meeting, there are currently 3 options being considered regarding the Sycamore Avenue crossing:

**Option 1** - Install crossing arms similar to Chestnut and Walnut Avenues. This option will not impact train traffic in any way other than the arms would close Sycamore Avenue along with the other two streets whenever a train is approaching. Currently when a train is blocking only Chestnut and Walnut Avenues, Sycamore remains passable. This would not be the case under this option. This project is estimated to cost \$400,000, of which the city would be responsible for 10%, or \$40,000;

**Option 2** – Permanently close Sycamore Avenue at the crossing, leaving Earlham with only the crossings at Chestnut and Walnut Avenues. This would allow IAIS to move the “switch” from Sycamore to Chestnut, which according to their estimates, would decrease the amount of time the remaining two crossings would be blocked at the same time by 75%. This option would cost the City of Earlham nothing, and the City would receive a \$15,000 grant to be spent on the street closure;

**Option 3** - Do nothing and keep all streets and crossings as they are.

The Public Safety Committee of the City Council held a meeting, also attended by Public Works Superintendent Coffman, Fire Chief Boyle, and Police Chief Heimdahl. It was their opinion, in the interest of public safety, having one intersection open the maximum amount of time possible is in the best interest of the community, for not just fire and rescue concerns, but general travel and day to day activities for all citizens.

**Therefore, a Public Hearing has been set for November 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. to ensure all concerns are heard and considered before a decision regarding this matter is made. You are invited to attend this meeting and assist us in making such a landscape altering decision.**

In the meantime, if you have any questions, I would encourage you to call Gary Coffman at 250-9958. Asking questions ahead of time will allow us all to have as much knowledge of the situation as possible before the meeting.

Thank you,

Jeff Lillie, Mayor