



CITY OF RIDGECREST

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

City Council Conference Room
100 W. California Avenue.
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Tuesday, March 11, 2008 at 5:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Infrastructure Committee Members: Chairman Tom Wiknich; Members Steve Morgan, Lois Beres and Nellavan Jeglum

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Tom Wiknich, Mayor Pro-Term Steve Morgan, Planning Commissioner Nellavan Jeglum.

Absent: Planning Commissioner Lois Beres

Staff Present: Public Works Director Dennis Speer, City Engineer Joe Pollock, Assistant City Manager Mike Avery, Administrative Secretary Danielle Valentine

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was moved by member Morgan and seconded by member Jeglum to approve the Agenda. The Agenda was approved as submitted.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES February 12, February 21, 2008**

A motion was moved by member Morgan and seconded by member Jeglum to approve the Minutes of 12 February and 21 February, 2008. The Minutes of 12 February and February, 21 were approved as submitted.

4. **COMMENTS: (PUBLIC COMMENT)**

Mike Neel asked when the reducing of street sweeping and lighting had been discussed and Mr. Speer responded that it was approximately three to four months ago.

Mike Neel asked if this issue had been discussed at the last Infrastructure Meeting and Mr. Speer responded that at the last meeting an inventory of street lights was not available and this or a map showing locations of which lights needed to be kept on in regards public safety was required for further review. He indicated that the City Organizational Committee was also looking into the cost savings. Further, he said that in regards street sweeping it was just a matter of indicating how much the City wanted to cut back services in order to provide savings. Mr. Neel responded that he hoped the City was looking into this option.

5. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

(a) Review of proposed City policy of prohibiting utility cuts in streets post repaving

Chairman Wiknich advised that during the process of developing the Streets Initiative he had several residents indicate that they were 'fed up' with streets being cut after just having been paved and not being repaired properly – he emphasized this was a perception held by members of the public that he was sharing for discussion. He made the suggestion that the

City have policies to guard against this such as mandating that for one year after paving no cuts be made – unless an emergency situation arose.

Tom Mulvihill – General Manager – Indian Wells Valley Water District said that the Water District would support such an initiative and in the past the District had had regular meetings with the City where City Engineer Joe Pollock would advise of upcoming projects so that the District could plan scheduled maintenance before re-paving occurred. City Engineer Joe Pollock concurred with this comment and provided examples of how these regular meetings had been successful in avoiding cuts after re-paving.

Mr. Speer provided copies of two model ordinances from Santa Ann and Bakersfield saying they showed four different approaches:

- Encroachment permit process (i.e. the status quo)
- Moratoriums – (i.e. only under emergency situations)
- Resurface of street for major cuts (in the case of longitudinal cuts)
- Collecting a trench cut fee

He said that some of those approaches were currently being challenged by utility companies and another alternative would be to charge a fee to inspect the road after the cut is repaired.

Tony Wilson – Compliance Manager – Southern California Edison – said that Edison wanted to make sure that the City streets are well looked after. He indicated that Edison was a ‘dry utility’, but if problems occurred they would be fixed by Edison – this promise was good for the life of the road he said. Further Mr. Wilson said that cities have to understand that if they want growth they need to facilitate the utility companies.

Les Ingle – Gas Distribution Supervisor – P G & E - commented that PGE standards and procedures were that whenever a trench is repaired they tested for compaction. He said that initially a patch would be visible as until there were sufficient number of patches needing finalization they could not justify bringing a contractor into town. He said that perhaps those initial patches were creating a perception that the job had not been finalized when it was simply that there was a time lag.

Larry Defano – Operations Super – Indian Wells Valley Water Board – noted that the Board followed the City’s specifications and as far as he was aware there had been no ditch failures.

Member Jeglum asked why the perception was so bad and Assistant City Manager Mike Avery responded that it was because of all the “fly by night” cable and telephone companies who came in years ago and left behind bad work.

City Engineer Joe Pollock said he was aware from his experience in private practice of cable companies coming through and cutting immediately after paving had been finished.

Mr. Neel asked if City staff were not available to check work after it was compacted. Mr. Pollock responded that the utility companies had their own contractors to do that. Mr. Neel then asked about the cable companies and Mr. Pollock responded that most organizations used slurry. Further he said that 6-7 years ago the City’s Engineering Department had a huge layoff and now there was not the staff – thought they did try to keep on top of the situation they could not spend the time necessary.

Chairman Wiknich brought the discussion back to the issue of cuts after repaving.

Tony Wilson – Compliance Manager Southern California Edison – noted that he felt if the City had moratoriums with no exceptions they would lose new business (if there was no alternative cut). Les Ingle – Gas Distribution Supervisor – PG& E said he agreed with this comment.

Member Morgan said that given the manpower issue the City could not perform these duties therefore he said the City needed to either (1) change staffing or (2) change ordinance. He said he was in favor of a moratorium.

Member Jeglum said that if a moratorium did not preclude necessary action she too was in favor of it. She said that the City needed to show the public that they are serious about streets being repaired and maintained. Further she said that as long as utility companies are kept aware, necessary upgrades and improvements could be made in a timely manner.

Tony Wilson – Compliance Manager – Southern California Edison – said that there should be a requirement for regular meetings hosted by the City at least quarterly.

Chairman Wiknich requested that staff bring forward a recommendation on a moratorium including time periods.

(b) Review of utility permit and inspection policy for utility cuts

City Engineer Joe Pollock advised the Committee that the City has two part-time inspectors and the Engineering department relied upon somebody calling in and requesting inspections. He said that the problems emanated from private developers and without sufficient staff they could not keep up – he said there had been no issues with the utility companies.

Chairman Wiknich asked if there could be time limit standards set for finalization of temporary patches. Mr. Pollock advised that the concrete companies only open some of the year and Mr. Speer concurred that this would not be possible from a practical point of view. Chairman Wiknich then suggested that a time limit around the paving season be instituted.

Member Morgan summarized saying that the Committee may have a recommendation for staff but no way of monitoring standards. He said he had an issue with patches on a permanent “travel piece” of road. He said he wanted to see the whole lane re-paved and repaired every two years if needed if it was not possible to cut near the curb.

Tony Wilson – Compliance Manager – Southern California Edison – said that Edison’s patches would hold up and to grind and re-pave didn’t make financial or structural sense but that Edison would do what they had to, to work with the City.

(c) Highway 395/China Lake Boulevard Intersection

Member Morgan said that he had reviewed the CalTrans report on this project. He said that he did not believe there was any way to push for an interchange at Bowman as there was no way to suggest that Bowman would build out. He indicated he was “pretty happy” with the report but suggested members review and if they had comments they could do so at the next meeting. Further he advised that a copy of the report was available in the library for anyone wanting to review.

Member Jeglum asked if there was any comment on the “bump” onto China Lake from French Ave etc. and Mr. Pollock responded that CalTrans was aware of the issue and efforts were under way to get something done about it – though funding was an issue. Chairman Wiknich asked Assistant City Manager Mike Avery to assist with this endeavor.

6. DIRECTORS REPORT

Dennis Speer briefed the Committee on the following:

- Staff was making progress on the truck ordinance – i.e. vehicles in excess of 26,000 pounds gross weight. He said the intention was that signage would be posted at the entrance to the City.
- He said that enforcement of the prohibition on 178 would need state approval which required a proposed resolution which would go to the City Organization Committee on Thursday then onto District 9 and then onto City Council.
- He indicated that there would be a need for an encroachment permit application for the handicap ramp at Denny's as the park was in the CalTrans right of way. He said CalTrans had asked the City to submit a no fee encroachment permit and maintain the park.
- He reported attending a conference where he received good information on street maintenance which has been successfully used in Santa Barbara which he would like to share with the Committee in a complete report at a later date.
- Finally he distributed copies of American Public Works Association documentation on Reducing Roadway Liability.

Before closing the meeting Chairman Morgan summarized the following:

- Work was underway to review the street light issue.
- The Committee was due to give a recommendation on the street sweeper – saying that he believed a reduction in street sweeping would not only increase the life of the machine but decrease costs at the landfill – Mr. Speer would come back to the Committee with comparatives to assist with a recommendation.
- There had been no update on Ridgecrest Sanitation but Assistant City Manager Mike Avery would have this available for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.