

**Rising Sun City Council  
Special Meeting—State Route 56/Arnolds Creek  
June 12, 2006  
7:00 P.M.  
City Hall**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Bill Marsksberry with all of Council present.

State Senator Johnny Nugent and State Representative Bob Bischoff informed all present they had received calls from many concerned residents of Ohio and Switzerland Counties regarding the pending closure of SR 56 at Arnolds Creek. INDOT representatives were contacted regarding the concerns this closure presented. Among the concerns was the fact that there was no good State detour. The possibility of a temporary bridge was discussed but INDOT representatives felt they could have the project complete before a temporary bridge could be constructed with the added permitting requirements. Other concerns voiced were access to hospital or doctors—and the impact on small businesses in the area. It was requested everyone work together tonight—if a temporary bridge is not feasible then maybe INDOT could close the window of time to complete the project by having the contractor work around the clock. It was noted there were lots of rumors on the loose—including the possibility of using a temporary bridge that was used in a bridge project in Laurel.

Mayor Marksberry informed all that an Engineer from the Schneider Group had been retained to review the bridge. He questioned if the City/County wanted to participate in costs of a temporary bridge. Doug Baker asked INDOT what the normal procedure was in Gibson County. He felt it was unfair to ask the taxpayers of this City and County to pay for any of this run around.

The Engineer from the Schneider Group informed all that the bridge is safe now—but when the demolition begins on the deck that is being used now the bridge will not be able to handle the load. City Attorney Lane Siekman questioned Schneider if these issues were foreseeable? Schneider stated the project probably should have been thought out more by INDOT. INDOT representatives stated we must keep in mind that we were not aware—and in fact were planning that one lane would stay open throughout the project. It was not until the Contractor began work that Pandora's Box was opened.

Dill Dorrell stated he was in attendance as a City resident and guest—he informed all that this closure will affect Switzerland County, Ohio County, Belterra and Grand Victoria—as well as the State of Indiana. Mayor Marksberry stated he is not excluding any of these groups—he questioned if the County had an agreement with INDOT in reference to the use of County roads for the unofficial SR 56 detour? It was stated there had been discussions with INDOT but was unclear if an agreement had been signed between INDOT and Ohio County.

There was further discussion and clarification regarding the safety of the bridge. Councilman Padgett clarified he understands the bridge is safe now—but when demolish the columns the original thought was to use 1 lane—or keep one lane open. But now this can't be done because when the columns are demolished the bridge can't carry the load. With all the discussion it appears that INDOT has looked at other possibilities/options, which haven't panned out. Sodrel's office is willing

to help try to expedite the permitting for a temporary bridge. Attorney Siekman stated we understand the bridge is to be closed completely on Wednesday. The deck will be tore down before we get a chance to address on this level.

Howard Wiesmann told INDOT Representatives it is a State Road..the City and County paid for SR 56 once and will not pay again...it is a State Road...it is a State decision.

At 7:00pm INDOT Representative Marvin Jenkins thanked the City of Rising Sun officials for having this meeting. He stated he has a close guarded timeframe for this meeting. There is an overview of what has transpired and possible options. After this INDOT will be open for questions. The meeting will adjourn at 8:00pm. There were approximately 15 representatives from INDOT present—a brief power point presentation was given to the group. It appears the original construction plan was split in 2 phase: Phase 1 East Bound lane under construction and Phase 2 West Bound lane under construction. Phase 1 began April 10<sup>th</sup>. It was recently discovered once the deck is removed the bridge is no longer sound. Plan changed to close both lanes due to this finding. Detour traffic from SR 56—officially US 421 & US 50. Construction of the bridge will be finished by contract completion date June 9, 2007. According to INDOT the changes to this project have been done for safety, cost and timeliness.

It was questioned why not use the temporary bridge plan? INDOT stated they would possibly have to purchase Right of Way and they would be required to get more permits from the Corps—which takes a lot of time—then there is the cost of the construction of the temporary bridge—the project could easily go into 2008 before it would be complete.

Bob Bischoff questioned if the project had planned to be complete by June 9, 2007—how long would it take to reopen if the contractor worked 24/7? Could one lane of the bridge be opened by December 1<sup>st</sup> if the contractor worked 24/7? INDOT stated it was possible, but there would be factors. Bob stated June 9, 2007 is unacceptable to these communities—and he would hope INDOT would work with the contractor to speed up this project. Johnny Nugent expanded on Bischoff's comments—stating on I-465 in Indianapolis a hyper fix was done to complete the project.

City Attorney Lane Siekman stated the number 1 issue is safety—and we have been told the bridge is safe as it stands now. INDOT could proceed with getting proper permits—Sodrel's office and local officials could make contact to expedite the corps permits. INDOT could go back to the phase 1 and phase 2 plans—might take an additional 90 days but the State wouldn't take a 15% hit on 6 million dollars they should receive from gaming in this area. A rough estimate at 15% reduction in revenues at Belterra and Grand Victoria—be \$3.6 million per month or over \$6 million loss to the state per month the bridge is closed. INDOT representatives stated permitting has to come from IDEM/EPA which takes even longer than the Corps. According to INDOT their Attorney stated the permitting could take 120 days—but they would appreciate any help.

For clarification City Attorney Siekman stated the contract which you have now—or originally acquired—does it permit you in these waters to get to these piers or columns—or do you need additional permitting? INDOT representatives stated if one lane remains open additional permits will be necessary.

Howard Fletcher local businessman informed INDOT that closing this bridge would be catastrophic for grain company trucks—with the added miles of the detour and added fuel costs---this will devastate small businesses within the community. One lane should be left open on the bridge construction even if it takes 2 years.

It was questioned if this could be a consideration—leave one lane on the bridge open—no matter the time frame of project completion? INDOT representatives stated the Contractor for this project has done all the work he can do without closing down the bridge. Mike Jones Switzerland County Councilman stated for economic and safety/EMS services INDOT should do everything to try and keep one lane open—even if the project completion takes more time.

Steve Patz Superintendent of RSOC Schools explain the impact of closing this bridge to the school system—stating the school is already thousands of dollars short from delayed state funding. This would add to bus routes and personnel as well as the added cash shortage.

Jeanne Siekman resident of Dutch Ridge stated if the bridge is totally closed—Dutch Ridge will not be able to handle the additional traffic load. INDOT representatives stated they can only post the official state detour, which does not include Dutch Ridge.

#### IN SUMMARY:

#1 Option/Request from Rising Sun—Request INDOT take another look at possibility of waiting for Permits 90-120 days—rework the budget numbers and contract to enable construction project keep one lane open throughout the job. Completion may be 2 years—but one lane would remain open throughout.

#2 Option/do a hyper fix on the bridge—work 24/7 to get one lane open by December 1 2006.

City Attorney Lane Siekman requested a commitment from INDOT that the bridge would not be closed on 6/16/06. INDOT representative Bob Williams stated the bridge would not be closed on 6/16/06—he will meet with Commissioner Sharp tomorrow to discuss the City's request.

It was discussed that the Laughery Creek bridge is being designed now—the plan is to try and maintain the continuous flow of traffic.

Representative Bob Bischoff thanked INDOT representatives for listening to concerns of these communities and working with the area to reach a solution.

With nothing further before Council a motion was made by Councilwoman Scott to adjourn the City Council portion of this meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilman Brown; motion carried 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Attest:

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Rae Baker Gipson,  
Clerk Treasurer

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William A. Marksberry, Mayor