

**Tyrone Town Council
Workshop Minutes
March 4, 2021
5:30 P.M.**

Present:

Mayor, Eric Dial was absent

Mayor Pro Tem, Gloria Furr

Council Member, Linda Howard

Council Member, Melissa Hill

Council Member, Billy Campbell

Town Manager, Brandon Perkins

Town Clerk, Dee Baker

Town Planner, Phillip Trocquet

Town Engineer/Public Works Director, Scott Langford

Finance Manager, Sandy Beach

Police Major, Van Brock

Lieutenant, Philip Nelson

Mayor Pro Tem Furr called the meeting to order with limited seating and broadcasted on YouTube Live at 5:30 pm. This was followed by the invocation. The public was invited to watch.

Approval of Agenda

1. Palmetto Road Intersection Improvements. ***Brandon Perkins, Town Manager, Scott Langford, Town Engineer - Public Works Director***

Approval of Agenda

Council Member Howard made a motion to approve the agenda.

Council Member Campbell seconded the motion. Motion was approved 4-0.

1. Palmetto Road Intersection Improvements.

Brandon Perkins, Town Manager, Scott Langford, Town Engineer - Public Works Director

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Mr. Langford shared that he would be reviewing the recent traffic study with Council, in particular, regarding the “mini” roundabout potentially located at the Palmetto Road, Spencer Lane intersection. He added that it was included in the SPLOST list of improvements. He added that mini-roundabouts were usually for temporary relief and not meant for a permanent solution. The engineers that conducted the study agreed that a mini-roundabout would not be ideal for that intersection. He referred to page fifteen of the study. He also presented intersection charts that were indicated by grades and three different intersection diagrams. The diagrams indicated positions the roundabout could be placed within the intersection. He explained that the chart grading system indicated current conditions, during morning peak hours. Mr. Langford informed Council that Arrowood Road heading toward Spencer Lane was north, Spencer Lane onto Arrowood Road was heading south. According to page fifteen of the intersection grade chart, the study indicated, northbound, southbound, east, and west. It also included grades, A, B, C, D, E, and F as failing. Our goal is to have A’s and B’s. Currently, the Town has a D, eastbound, C, westbound, B northbound, and B heading south. This grading system was for the current status of that intersection. He shared that if we continued with a “no-build” scenario for that intersection, the grade would worsen. Eastbound would be E, westbound a C, northbound a B, and southbound a B. He added that the twenty-year projection indicated, eastbound would be an F, westbound E, northbound would be a C, and southbound would be a B. Mr. Trocquet shared that part of the calculations were due to the average growth rate of 1%, which was very conservative.

Mr. Langford shared that evening hours also indicated failing grades. He explained that on page sixteen of the report, the study suggested two means of improvement, with three proposals. One being a traffic signal, the other a regular-sized roundabout where the current intersection was located, and the third, a roundabout heading further north from the intersection. According to the study, if a traffic signal was currently utilized, the grade would be a B. If a roundabout were to be placed within the intersection, it would then be graded as an A. Mr. Langford shared that the westbound lane indicated an A for a traffic signal and an A for a roundabout. A traffic signal would only bring a C value, heading northbound. A roundabout would yield an A, in the southbound and northbound lanes. The roundabout had outperformed a traffic signal. He indicated that in the year 2042, during the am peak hours, the grade would indicate B, east, and west for both a traffic signal and for a roundabout. He shared that 2042 also indicated a C and B for north and southbound for a traffic signal and a roundabout indicated an A and A. Mr. Langford continued and stated that during the evening hours indicated a B and B for east and westbound, and a C for north and an A for southbound, for a traffic signal. For a roundabout in the evening hours for the year 2042, all directions indicated an A except for westbound, which indicated B.

Mr. Langford then shared information regarding the placement of a traffic signal and the grading for the lanes.

He shared that if a traffic signal was utilized in the year 2042 for the eastbound, westbound, and northbound lanes, the grade would register as a C. The southbound lane would be a B. He stated that a roundabout would perform much better in the year 2042 than a traffic signal.

Mr. Langford explained the diagram for a traffic signal. He shared that the lanes would be pulled back slightly and multiuse paths would be placed parallel to the traveling lanes. He shared that what concerned him regarding the traffic signal, was that the study indicated the intersection was expected to warrant an installation of a traffic signal based on Signal Warrant #2, by 2037. He shared that he understood that to mean the intersection was not suggesting a signal until the year 2037. He restated that it was not suggested to build a traffic signal before its warranted time, it could essentially worsen the intersection. However, if the intersection remained the same with stops signs, the report indicated that the intersection was beginning to fail. He shared that a roundabout was a better solution. Mr. Trocquet shared that even though a traffic signal was not warranted, does not indicate that improvements do not need to be made. Traffic delay is only one component to much-needed intersection improvements.

Mr. Langford began the discussion regarding roundabouts. He shared that roundabouts were essentially safe, due to when a driver approaches a roundabout, they usually slow down. When a driver approaches a traffic signal, they are traveling faster, then stop. The risk is higher for accidents. He shared that GDOT preferred roundabouts to signalized traffic devices. Mr. Langford shared the first of two diagrams for a proposed roundabout. The first example would require little land from property owners. He explained that on the northeast side of the diagram, .71 acres were needed, on the southside .032 acres were needed, and on the east side, only .042 were needed for the roundabout. He shared that there may be more needed for the off-set of Palmetto Road heading east and west. He added that one goal was to keep conforming lots to becoming nonconforming. Mr. Trocquet expanded on that topic. He shared that according to the diagram, the lots that were outlined in red were already nonconforming lots, at only $\frac{1}{2}$ acre. He added that for the zoning area for the roundabout, the minimum requirement for acreage was 1-acre. The area needed for that particular roundabout would expand the nature of the nonconforming lots. He described a lot to the south that was a 1-acre lot, the lot currently was conforming. The lot would be changed to a nonconforming lot if split. The designs could affect the conformity of surrounding lots.

Council Member Hill asked if the design could be repositioned to not have an impact on the conformity. Mr. Langford informed everyone that the land would be traded in the corner section, to utilize land more toward Palmetto Road for conformity.

Council Member Campbell indicated that with the current design before Council, only one lot would be affected, regarding conformity.

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Mr. Trocquet agreed, that other lots were already nonconforming. The Town's goal was to avoid creating nonconforming lots. Council Member Campbell inquired of the distance between the .042 parcel lot line and the proposed designed roundabout. Mr. Trocquet measured approximately 25 ft. to 35 ft. deep. Council Member Campbell asked if any property owners had been approached. Mr. Trocquet stated no, the project was only in the preliminary stage. Council Member Hill asked how the lots became nonconforming. Mr. Trocquet explained that the homes were built in the 1970s and zoning requirements were not the same.

Council Member Howard asked if the lot in question would have traffic on it. She added, would there be a need for any buffers. Mr. Trocquet and Mr. Langford commented that there would be a need for a "clear zone", landscaping and drainage, but that it would be included in the discussions with property owners when the time came. Council Member Howard asked if the current design indicated one-lane around the roundabout. Mr. Trocquet stated that the roundabout was for one-lane only. Mr. Trocquet indicated the travel lane, the traversable apron area, and the center of the roundabout on the diagram. Mr. Langford clarified that the traversable apron was for 18-wheelers who could not make the turns with ease. Council Member Furr inquired if the design was a large roundabout. Mr. Langford stated that the designs that were being shown were slightly smaller than normal roundabouts. It was not large enough for a truck to travel the entire circumference. He gave an example of when he traveled to England, their roundabouts were 3-4 lanes wide.

A discussion began regarding the comparative size of the roundabout shown on the diagrams. The Tyrone roundabout would be smaller than the roundabout found at Hood Ave. and N. Glynn St. in Fayetteville. Mr. Trocquet compared the Tyrone roundabout size to the roundabout located at Kathi Ave. and Church St. in Fayetteville. Council Member Howard asked if the Tyrone roundabout would be large enough. Mr. Trocquet shared that according to the engineering study, it would be.

Council Member Campbell asked for a brief description for "lane failing". Mr. Langford shared that the grading system was A, B, C, D, E, and F, which was based on time delay at intersections and its repercussions. Council Member Howard asked how many years would the roundabout be suitable for the intersection. Mr. Langford explained that in 2042 the roundabout would be at a category B on the eastbound lane, and C on the westbound lane, both of which are Palmetto Road. It would be an A and B on the Spencer and Arrowood lanes. He added that it was based on the 1% estimated growth rate. If a roundabout was placed within that intersection, the Town would be in good shape.

Council Member Hill asked if 18-wheelers could travel through the roundabout. Mr. Langford stated that could drive through, but not be able to make the complete turn-around.

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A discussion began regarding mini-roundabouts. Mr. Langford shared that the main intent for a mini-roundabout was only for a temporary solution. Mr. Langford added that in England, it intended to slow vehicles, mainly on backroads. Council Member Howard shared that her concern was growth and if the roundabout could sustain our needs. She added that she believed that 1% growth was conservative. Mr. Trocquet agreed and added that the estimate did not factor in downtown growth, but that a roundabout would carry us through and be the safest option.

Council Member Furr inquired as to how much land would be needed from property owners on Palmetto Road for the roundabout. Mr. Trocquet shared that the travel lane would be shifted away from the property. Mr. Langford shared a second roundabout design and added that the amount of land needed was less than the size of the Council Chambers. Council Member Furr stated that houses sat very close to the road. Mr. Trocquet shared that the current design was more centered within the intersection. The second design shifted more into the east side of Palmetto Road and Spencer Lane, within the lot which housed the two abandoned office spaces. Mr. Langford shared that with that design, less land would be required on the north-west end. Mr. Trocquet stated that more land would be required on the north end on Spencer Lane from the 10-acre lot on the corner of Palmetto Road and Spencer Lane. Mr. Trocquet explained that the existing road, on Spencer Lane, would be utilized as a continued cart path from Arrowood Road.

Mr. Davenport shared that the area being discussed was land normally required for utilities, which would be lost. Council Member Campbell shared that the existing road which would also be abandoned would be lost, with little value. The discussion continued regarding the 10-acre lot located on the corner of Spencer Lane and Palmetto Road. The first design would only require .7 acres of land, the second design would require more land and would leave 1-acre of land that would have no buildable value.

Mr. Langford shared that the goal would be to have the final design from the engineer and to acquire all needed land to begin the construction by FY 2023. This would include the multi-use path. He added that SPLOST funding was available for the intersection improvements and the multi-use path.

Council Member Hill stated that she preferred the second design because it affected fewer property owners. Council Member Campbell agreed. Council Member Furr asked how far the cart path traveled on Palmetto Road. Mr. Trocquet stated that the cart path would tie into the existing sidewalk and not continue to the Senoia Road intersection.

Mr. Langford brief Council on the cost for all three options. He stated that the traffic signal cost would be approximately \$270,000, with an annual maintenance cost of \$15,000. Option I, a roundabout for the current location would be an approximate total of \$1.3 million. Option II would include moving the roundabout more toward the northeast and would be approximately \$1.4 million. Mr. Perkins and Ms. Beach interjected with question about the property tax value. Mr. Langford shared that the 10-acre lot was prime real estate, and could affect our tax base.

Mr. Davenport informed everyone that before acquiring property, the property needed to be appraised. Mr. Langford stated that it would be premature to estimate property values or tax bases before appraisals of fair market values. Mr. Trocquet shared that the property did lend itself to development than remaining a vacant lot. Improving that intersection does become more of a challenge regarding the future value of the property. Council Member Hill asked how much SPLOST funding was budget for the intersection improvement project. Ms. Beach stated that \$250,000 was set aside for the project. Mr. Langford shared that during the upcoming Retreat, SPLOST projects would be discussed. He added that additional SPLOST funding was available due to completed projects and projects that GDOT denied. He spoke in particular about the potential on-ramp from Senoia Road to Hwy 74, near Powers Court.

Council Member Campbell asked if the cost review for the roundabouts included the required land acquisitions. Mr. Perkins shared that he believed the cost only included the engineer and construction fees, not land acquisition. Council Member Campbell stated that the developer of the corner property may not be willing to part with that section of land, it may interfere with their development plan. He added that Council could not decide until the cost of properties were established. Mr. Langford shared that the purpose of the workshop was to get Council's opinion on whether to make improvements to the intersection or leave it as is. If improvements were to be made, does Council want a traffic signal or a roundabout, if a roundabout, then which one would you prefer? Staff would then begin conversations with property owners. Mr. Trocquet agreed that staff was only in the preliminary phase. The right-of-way still needed to be determined. The study was performed to gain a professional opinion regarding SPLOST funding, what intersection improvements needed to be made. Mr. Perkins added that improvements to that intersection could also improve the sale or development of property in that area. The owner could be open to our plans for improvement.

Mr. Langford shared that the intersection could also be an attractive gateway into the Town, which would lend to more improvements later, maybe a sign or a fountain. This would add value to all property in that area. Council Member Hill reiterated that the cost to maintain the traffic signal would add up over time. She asked what maintenance was required for a roundabout. Mr. Langford shared that normal road repair would be required or repairs to the apron if damaged.

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Mr. Perkins reminded everyone that the mini roundabout was arbitrarily placed on the SPLOST list and that some engineering work had been completed. When reviewed, it was found that the mini roundabout was not the answer for many reasons. He added that improvements were needed for the intersection, in part due to the off-set turn from Palmetto onto Spencer Lane, it was designed poorly. Council Member Campbell asked if there was a possibility of acquiring a grant for the project. Mr. Langford stated that the road would not qualify as a major collector for TIP funding. However, LMIG funding may be an option. However, if Council chose that route, it would take away from other projects. Mr. Trocquet shared that depending on the result of the LCI that area may be expanded and included within the Town Center District. That may justify a TIP grant. If acquired, Council would need to determine where in the Town Center District the funding would be better used. Mr. Langford shared that as Palmetto Road properties develop in the future, there could be better connectivity options for residents such as Palmetto to Spencer, Arrowood to Palmetto, or perhaps Palmetto to Senoia.

Council Member Howard stated that residents in that area were asked to contact the Town. Had any contacted the Town and what were their thoughts? Mr. Perkins stated that he had not been contacted since he was in the position of Town Manager. Mr. Perkins stated that he did not recall staff being asked to contact residents in that particular area. Council Member Howard shared that she agreed that something had to be done to improve that intersection and traffic flow in the area. Mr. Perkins recalled the public being notified in the past, before the approval of SPLOST. A roundabout was part of that discussion. Mr. Trocquet shared that the Citizen newspaper published an online article regarding the meeting currently held and the topic of the intersection. However, there was no public engagement request.

Council Member Howard began a discussion regarding the connection of Palmetto Court (located at the northwest corner) to Palmetto Road. Mr. Langford shared that Fayette County-owned that particular right-of-way. Mr. Trocquet stated that staff did consult the engineer regarding that road, and the engineers shared that due to the situation of the curb cuts, it would cause more traffic conflicts to utilize Palmetto Court. Council Member Howard stated that if it was utilized, it may give more relief heading east. Council Member Campbell added, there could be a right turn only direction. Council Member Howard stated that it may work with a traffic signal, there would be enough time in between. Mr. Langford stated that gaps would be formed in between, but the roundabout would allow for continued flow, by reducing the speed entirely.

Council Member Furr asked when the project would commence. Mr. Langford stated that if everything went smoothly, the design could begin during the next fiscal year and the construction could begin the following fiscal year.

Council Member Furr shared her concern with several projects taking place at the same time costing over \$1 million, which were funded through the general fund. Mr. Langford reiterated that although only \$250,000 was reserved from the SPLOST fund for the proposed project, there were other transportation-type projects on the SPLOST list that funds could be shifted from. One project was denied by GDOT. This could possibly allow \$600,000 from another project into this project. Mr. Perkins confirmed that the Senoia Road ramp project would have cost \$400,000. Mr. Langford also shared that other projects came in under budget as well. Mr. Trocquet stated that \$100,000 was also dedicated to cart paths in that area. Mr. Langford stated that there may be funding remaining from a Farr Road project that would begin the next fiscal year. Mr. Perkins stated that Council may be more hopeful when SPLOST discussions transpire during the Retreat. The possibility of additional funding may be there. Council Member Furr shared that she did not want us to get bogged down in debt. Mr. Perkins clarified that the only current debt was from the new Town Hall. He added that sewer expansion was being funded by SPLOST. Council Member Furr asked about the Pendleton Dam project. Mr. Perkins agreed and added that staff was still hopeful for grant funding for the Dam project. He stated that our hand would be forced this year regarding the grant. We do have 100% funding for the Dam if there is no grant funding available. He continued and stated that \$.5 million was from a private contribution for the lift station and \$200,000 came from the Fayette County Board of Education for their portion. He shared that the Town did have a lot of projects going on however, the Town's SPLOST fund was \$9 million, and most projects were being funded through that fund. He also shared that the SPLOST topic would be covered during the Retreat and that Council would also be given a comprehensive updated list. Council Member Furr asked if the Town made an annual payment for the new Town Hall. Ms. Beach shared that we pay principal once a year, and interest twice a year.

Mr. Perkins asked for thoughts on what was presented regarding the intersection. Council Member Howard raised the question regarding a detour during the construction. Mr. Perkins stated that there were options for diversion. Mr. Davenport inquired about the sewer extension and its relationship to the two roundabout options, would it impede the construction? Mr. Langford shared that the sewer lines were currently under the road, his only concern was where the force main was currently housed near the Southampton subdivision.

Mr. Perkins asked for Council's direction regarding the intersection improvements.

Council Member Campbell shared that he was still on the fence however, Option II roundabout would be his preferred choice. Council Member Hill agreed that the Town either does nothing or Option II. Council Member Furr agreed with Council Member Hill, Option II. Council Member Howard also agreed with Option II.

Adjournment

Council Member Howard made a motion to adjourn. Motion was approved 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 pm.

By: _____
Eric Dial, Mayor

Attest: _____
Dee Baker, Town Clerk