

**CITY OF LABELLE
SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
JUNE 6, 2022**

Mayor Wilkins called the special meeting/workshop to order at 2:00. Commissioner Akin lead the invocation. Mayor Wilkins led the pledge of allegiance. All commissioners were present.

Secretary L.K. Nandam of District 1 with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) gave a brief overview of the updates being done to State Road (S.R.) 80 and S.R. 29. He noted that they were going to re-evaluate the one-way pair alternative on S.R. 29 that used Main Street and Bridge Street, and look for alternatives using the community's input and concerns as part of the design process. He stated that the construction funding was slated for 2030, and that they would like to compress that time frame in case funding becomes available sooner. He then noted that the bridge needed to be replaced between now and 2030.

Commissioner Spratt asked if a modified roundabout was an option for the bridge. Mr. Nandam replied that the plan was to construct two bridges. There was discussion on where the two bridges would be located.

Commissioner Spratt asked if there would be any truck traffic allowed on Main Street. Secretary Nandam explained the options for truck routes.

Yassi Myers and Eric Whikehart of T.L.P. Engineering Consultants, informed the Commission that they wanted to improve the profile of the bridge in order to make improvements to the roadway below. There was discussion on having direct access from S.R. 29 to the Barron Library, and how that was not an option due to the necessary profile of the bridge foundation.

Mayor Wilkins asked if it was possible to return to the bypass option due to the increase in large truck traffic through the walking district in downtown. Mr. Nandam explained that to pursue a bypass, the city and county would need to go through the Transportation Planning Organization request process once again. He noted that the bridge would still need to be replaced within the next ten years, and that the option would take at least fifteen years to complete.

Mayor Wilkins explained the options that were previously presented by FDOT. She noted that there were several roundabouts and other creative options, however she wanted to minimize negative impacts to the Barron Park area.

Mr. Nandam stated that safety was their number one priority, and that the options would be presented to the public through the Public Empowerment Process. He then gave a brief description of the Public Empowerment Process.

He explained that roundabouts force people to slow down, which would address the speed control concerns in the area, and then explained how a roundabout would work. He also explained that the roundabouts had plenty of room for a large truck to maneuver. He gave examples of where roundabouts were successful in reducing traffic accidents.

Mayor Wilkins expressed her concern on the navigation of the roundabouts by citizens.

Commissioner Spratt asked if red lights would have the same effect as a roundabout. There was discussion on the differences between roundabouts and traffic signal lights.

Commissioner Spratt asked Brent Stevens, the Fire Chief of LaBelle for his opinion on the traffic options presented. He noted the leading five locations of crash points. He expressed his opinion that if a traffic light was not going to be put at the four-way stop at South 29 and Cowboy Way, that a roundabout would be needed. There was discussion on if the roundabouts would affect response time by the Fire Department.

Paul Sammerdyke a member of the Hendry County School Board was called to address the Commission. He noted that his concern was about the congestion on Cowboy Way during school pick up and drop off times. He suggested a left and right turning lane in front of the high school. He also recommended widening Cowboy Way. It was then clarified that Cowboy Way was a county road and not a state-maintained road. Commissioner Akin noted his concern for the traffic congestion at the middle school as well.

Mayor Wilkins called upon Nikki Yeager to address the Commission. She expressed her concern with the traffic from Moss Landing being forced to drive through the construction area of a future development of 175 single family homes in order to get onto S.R. 80. She stated that there was road to the south of Moss Landing has been blocked off to become a to be a golf cart path. She also noted her concern for drainage in the area with the new developments.

Mayor Wilkins noted that there was no lighting at the intersection of the M.L.K. Blvd. and S.R. 80. There was discussion on speed control in the area, and possibly a roundabout or traffic signal light at the intersection.

Nikki Yeager concluded that her proposal was to find an alternate route for traffic other than through the construction site, and a safer alternative to get onto S.R. 80 to go either direction.

Mayor Wilkins clarified that the City had closed Shady Oaks Lane, the subject closed road, in order to preserve historic oak trees. Discussion continued on why the road was closed.

Commissioner Akin noted that speeding was the issue on S.R. 80. Mayor Wilkins and Commissioner Akin discussed the speeding and the population increase.

Commissioner Spratt added that the area was a retirement village, and that it was dangerous for elderly drivers. Future developments in the area, and the traffic they would provide was discussed

Commissioner Vargas addressed Mr. Nandam with his concern with the speeding on S.R. 80 through town, specifically by M.L.K. Blvd. He also noted that the population was growing. He expressed his concern for foot traffic along both sides of the road and residents that cross S.R. 80 where there are no cross walks.

Mayor Wilkins explained that crosswalks were needed on the road. She asked how to get raised crosswalks. Secretary Nandam explained that the community planning office and safety administrator would look into all the options.

Mayor Wilkins suggested to test changing the truck route from Main Street to South Bridge Street in order to reduce traffic build up.

Commissioner Spratt addressed her concern with the center turning lane and the possible roundabout at Lee Street and S.R. 80. Secretary Nandam stated that there were multiple options.

Commissioner Akin again noted that speeding was the issue and any help on S.R. 80 would be appreciated.

There was more discussion on the possible re-routing of the truck traffic.


Kelly Boone of the LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC) voiced her concerns on the redirecting of traffic away from the downtown district into a residential area.

Commissioner Vargas asked where the roundabout options were proposed to be. There was discussion on the locations of the possible roundabouts.

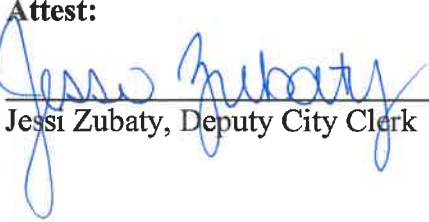
In closing Secretary Nandam thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak about the concerns with S.R. 80 and S.R. 29. He added that their priority was to work with the community to make it more successful, and that they were planning on having a community meeting in October. He also noted that they were actively looking for opportunities to advance the projects.

Mayor Wilkins expressed her gratitude for everyone in attendance and adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

APPROVED:



Commissioner Daniel Akin,
Vice Mayor

Attest:


Jessi Zubaty, Deputy City Clerk