

Lower speed limit sought for Hwy. 47

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Wednesday, 24 March 2010 22:02 -

City council considers speed change, traffic lights.

Worry about the possibility of accidents at the intersection of Highway 47 and First Street near Runza has prompted city officials to look into the matter.

At their March 16 meeting, Gothenburg City Council members talked about the installation of a stop light and/or slowing traffic along Highway 47.

City administrator Bruce Clymer said Baldwin Filters manager David Haynes has asked Runza restaurant owner Jeff Whiting, who is also a city council member, for assistance in obtaining a traffic light for the intersection.

Clymer said the intersection becomes especially busy during lunch times at both businesses and during shift changes at Baldwin Filters.

Both businesses are located along First Street which intersects with busy Highway 47.

When complaints arose about traffic concerns at Fourth Street and Highway 47, Clymer said the state completed a study of traffic patterns and added a turning lane onto Fourth Street.

He said he notified the District 6 engineer about the concerns.

Council president Jeff Kennedy reminded members that those worried about potential accidents at Fourth Street and Highway 47 also wanted a traffic light.

Whiting said he's noticed speed of traffic is the biggest problem at the intersection of First

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Avenue and Highway 47.

“The speed limit is 45 mph through there and if we can’t put in lights, what can we do to change the speed limit?” he asked.

Clymer said it’s probably easier to change the speed limit, noting that the council could pass a resolution asking the state to consider the action.

He added that police chief Randy Olson is also concerned about speed along Highway 47 particularly the 50 mph speed limit at the intersection of Platte River Drive just down the highway from the other two intersections.

Whiting said he thinks it’s a good idea to look at slowing speeds along Highway 47 especially when the Comfort Suites motel is operational.

Clymer said he would visit with Olson about the issue and revisit it at a council meeting.

On another matter, the council reviewed and accepted a preliminary audit for 2008-09 for the city as prepared by Robert Meyer of North Platte.

Meyer said everything looked good and that debt had been reduced.

Looking at proprietary funds, he noted that the cost of power increased \$300,000 and that rates didn’t keep up.

The city’s accounting department also lacks segregation of duties because of its small size which Meyer said can lead to increased opportunities for fraud and wrongful acts.

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However the audit states that the cost involved in changing the situation would greatly outweigh possible benefits to developing a more complex internal control system.

“It’s about quality,” Meyer said.

In other business, the council:

- passed on second reading a law that changes how commercial utility rates for heat pumps are figured. Water rates would be figured from a deduct meter or customers charged the applicable minimum customer rate or 50% of the water charge—whichever is greater.
- approved a \$17,721 payment to Paulsen Inc. for renovation of the police department.
- reviewed and approved an added lot which corrected a plat for Terry’s Business Park subdivision where a new Comfort Suites motel is under construction.
- learned that the city has filed a lawsuit against Sandra Foster, the owner of a property at 1514 Ave. A because of sign and building permit regulation violations. City attorney Mike Bacon said there’s a 30-day answer period. An appeal period and trial could follow.
- thanked local Rotarians for cleaning up roadside garbage in the area of Avenue M and 27th Street.

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