

CLYDE CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL SESSION - March 14, 2023

The scheduled special session of Clyde City Council was held on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Clyde City Building, 222 N. Main Street, Clyde, Ohio 43410.

Roll Call.

Present: Mayor Doug McCauley
Vice Mayor Scott Black
Council Member Steve Keegan
Council Member Chris Shay
Council Member Brent Stanley
City Manager Justin LaBenne (Not voting)
Clerk of Council Janet Dickman (Not voting)
Deputy Clerk Jackie Hoppe (Not voting)
Finance Director Frank Weasner (Not voting)
Solicitor Zachary Selvey (Not voting)

Visitors:

Visitors signing in can be referenced in the record book supplement.

This special session is scheduled for the purpose of a discussion to be held with Sunrise Cooperative to discuss their proposed project.

Mayor McCauley introduced George Secor from Sunrise who wishes to discuss a proposed project to alleviate the train blocking of rail crossings throughout the City of Clyde. He further explained that no decision will be made tonight; this is a fact gathering session only, to determine the best for the City of Clyde and its residents.

George Secor is the President/CEO of Sunrise Cooperative. He announced that the railroad informed them that their 85 car train shipments will increase to 105 cars starting next year. Sunrise anticipated this would be coming and that is why they bought land from Eshelman Orchards. Their proposed project includes putting in a two complete circle double track to keep the train moving around this track/field, instead of stopping and blocking the rail crossings. The concern is how they will cross Burkholder Road. This was previously discussed with two options; to close the road permanently or to have railroad gates at the tracks. He would prefer to have gates. The State of Ohio has stated they will not put a traffic light in.

Crystal Schultz, 235 Hamer Street

Semi-trucks travel on this street to get around the blocked crossings. This has caused damaged to her property and is also a safety concern related to the high rate of speed of these trucks and of other vehicles, especially since there is a curve on this street. She questions how these heavy trucks could be causing long term damage to the street surface.

Heidi Mendoza, 1201 Burkholder Road

If the new tracks are right behind the houses on Burkholder, she is concerned about the noise. She questions if they will put up a fence for safety (there are many children in the area) and as a sound barrier. She thought the project would go straight back C.R. 260. She would like to see a timeline for this project and to know how far back they will be going. She also referenced noise from the silos. She questioned if the orchard property is zoned agricultural and if Sunrise zoning changes will affect the other property owners. She is not opposed to a solution that would stop the blocked roads, but she has concerns on how this will impact the home owners in the area.

Yvette Howey, 1287 Burkholder Road

They live within the City limits. She is concerned this circle track will be in their backyard as her property abuts the orchard property. The noise and pollution is a concern. She questioned if an overpass could be considered or to go in a direction away from the city limits.

John Lenthe, 1287 Burkholder

He questioned if additional rail sets could be put in to the southeast of Sunrise. He suggested to widen the intrack as opposed to going over Burkholder. He noted there was a train derailment within the last six months. He is concerned about the safety for children in the area. Also, neighbors have voiced concern with the dust caused by Sunrise; they were assured it would be taken care of but it has not been taken care of.

Holly Snyder, 1194 Burkholder

She questioned if part of a graveyard would be leased for truck parking, as a Council member shared this information with her. These changes would create additional dust (dust from the corn husks). It is already very noisy in this area and these changes would add to that as well. The Sunrise trucks already travel at unsafe high speeds on Burkholder Road and this would create additional traffic. She questioned how much Burkholder Road will be damaged while this is put in, and if it will damage the drainage in this area.

Tom Snyder, 1175 Burkholder

Mr. Snyder reviewed problems he deals with regularly due to the Coop business: 1) the can't bbq because of the noise and dust, 2) when mowing the yard, he must wear a face mask because of all the dust, 3) when Sunrise starts up their dryers, it is so loud it makes their house vibrate, 4) in the summer, his family must be in the house or leave because the issues are so difficult to deal with. Now this proposed project will create the same mess in their backyard.

Jim Keegan, 1319 Burkholder Road

If the railroad tracks are in their backyard, will this increase the property value or decrease the value. There are many properties along this road and who will contact the tax department to reflect this decrease in value for their property taxes.

Heidi Maines, 1050 CR 260

Their home is on the other side of the proposed tracks. They contacted Sunrise to request information and received a quick response. The Maines' discussed the possibility of purchasing a strip of land at the back of their property to be able to plant trees as a barrier to the proposed new tracks. She is concerned about lighting for this additional area. Although their property is not as

close as Burkholder Road, they still deal with additional dust and noise. She questions what their plans are for the full 100 acres.

Councilman Keegan has attended four or five meetings over the years for this situation. Every time it seemed they were going to try something new but then nothing ever happened. Former Council Member Mr. Dick explained this as “Sunrise being a victim of their own success,” and so are the residents. What time of day or night would the cars be moved around on these two new spurs (that would be determined by the railroad, Sunrise has no control over this).

Mr. Secor explained this increase of cars will increase the crossing blockage by about thirty percent. The volume at Sunrise will not change, it will only change how it is done. The locomotive will always stay at one end. Mr. Keegan supports Burkholder Road to stay open. The idea of an overpass has been discussed, but the amount would be over \$4 million and there is not a good place for it, to be able to assist with the grain trains.

Councilman Stanley noted many neighbors have expressed concerns with the vibrations and noise with the current system. The additional spur would help with the blockage of Route 20, but what can be done to help with their concerns. Mr. Secor noted they spend a great deal of time and money trying to address these issues for the betterment of the environment of their employees as well as the neighbors. They cannot touch the railroad, they can only work with their equipment. Mr. Stanley would support Burkholder Road staying open. An overpass is a great idea, if it makes sense as it did in Bellevue. Today’s cost would probably be double the \$4 mil estimate. The location of an overpass would be a problem. He appreciates the residents sharing their concerns.

Vice Mayor Black is a lifelong resident of Clyde. As a kid he always loved trains, but he now hates trains as it relates to tracks that are close to his property and the noise from the train whistle and the vibrations to their house which cause constant dissatisfaction. He thought progress was being made at a previous meeting, but nothing came of it. He does not have a recommendation for a solution, but Council will try to find the best solution to try to satisfy as many people as possible.

Councilman Shay thanked residents for coming to this meeting to express their opinions. Council will consider all comments when a decision is made. He thanked Mr. Secor for attending as well. All concerns are valid and he has empathy for all the residents and what they are going through. He questioned who decided to change from 85 cars to 105 cars (the railroad; this would be cost effective for the railroad). Mr. Secor noted Sunrise would need to pay all costs for any additional track. He questioned if Sunrise would consider investing in some type of sound barrier (they always put in a fence or trees when new structures are built, depending on which method the property owner prefers).

Mayor McCauley does not feel the State would assist with the cost of an overpass. He also does not see that there would be enough land to construct an overpass and it would take a great deal of time to build it. Property owner concerns are extremely valid and he appreciates them expressing their opinions. If the loop would come to fruition, he questioned how much additional lighting would be added (Mr. Secor stated they do not foresee the need for any additional lighting).

Mayor McCauley would support keeping Burkholder Road open. He questioned future plans for the available acreage if the loop is built (they would be unable to build anything additional on the land in the center of the loop because it would not be feasible to get equipment across the tracks). He questioned if there are any additional plans for additional grain storage elevators (not at this time).

Mr. Secor noted although Sunrise will pay 100% of the cost, the railroad will have full control of the design.

Mr. Selvey questioned if blockage time would stay relatively the same amount, but it would just occur in shorter lengths of time more frequently (basically, yes).

Mayor McCauley noted the railroad will not be concerned with how any changes will affect the City or the residents. The railroad has much authority to do what they want. This is a proposal to do something about the City rail crossings blockage concerns. New details were brought forward tonight from the residents who live close to this situation.

Councilman Keegan recalled past discussions explaining that an employee has to walk the length of the train to assure the couplings and the air brakes are properly set. This adds to the amount of time that the train is stopped. He confirmed that it was once mentioned that the City of Clyde might lease some property from the cemetery for truck parking.

Councilman Stanley has been on Council for three years. He has repeatedly voiced concerns with all of the crossings in Clyde being blocked at the same time, which does not allow emergency vehicles to go where they are needed. He understands the complaints of the property owners who live close to Sunrise and he also referenced the many complaints from residents regarding the stopped trains.

Vice Mayor Black referenced a previous meeting with the railroad where he was told the government deems railroads to be essential and the railroad has never lost a ruling. Because of this, he does not anticipate the railroad being cooperative to try to find a solution. This may be the most reoccurring problem to come before Council. Previous discussions for solutions have always died out, but he hopes discussions do not die out this time.

Mr. Lenthe spoke regarding homes that were purchased before the railroad was put in. He feels there must be a solution that does not involve putting additional tracks behind their homes. He supports additional ladders and switches as a solution.

It was noted that protection for the employees is for forty hours a week, compared to the amount of time the home owners have to deal with the noise. One resident purchased their home when there were minimal silos and an orchard; now, without the orchard, the noise is terrible. It was clarified that the new loop would actually hold a total of 210 cars and any given time.

Mrs. Maines feels it is understandable that the railroad is not going to help, but it is hoped Sunrise will work with the property owners to find solutions. Sunrise is a huge business, who also supports Clyde schools/athletics.

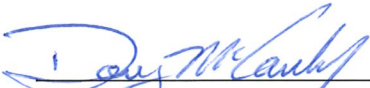
It is great to care about the employees, but the employees applied to work there and were told ahead of time what the environment conditions would be. This is not true for the neighbors.

Mr. Keegan stated the blowers are started late on Friday afternoon, soon before the employees leave for the weekend and the property owners deal with the noise for the entire weekend.

A community member questioned why residents were not notified of this meeting, as they only heard about it by word of mouth. It was clarified that for zoning changes, letters are sent to abutting and neighboring property owners. For a Council meeting, public notices are posted at the library, on the city calendar on the website, radio, newspapers. A suggestion was made to add notices to Facebook.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor McCauley announced the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.



Doug McCauley, Mayor



Janet R. Dickman, Clerk of Council

CLYDE CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL SESSION

Date: Tuesday March 14, 2023

Visitors:

1. Jerry Nicely & Marc Rahrlecker
2. Angela Schenck
3. Chris & Holly Snyder
4. Ken Wihe
5. MARK & Heidi MAINES
6. Ben Brown
7. John A. Lenthe
8. Grette Howey
9. Jim Keegan
10. John & Chris Snyder
11. Adam Crockett
12. Laura Crockett
13. GEORGE SECOR
14. MIKE ROESER
15. Heidi Mendenhall
16. Ken Bonning
17. Frank Weasner
18. Paul Fiser