

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Special Called Council Meeting

August 30, 1978
7:00 P.M.

Council Chambers
301 West Second Street

The meeting was called to order with Mayor McClellan presiding.

Roll Call:

Present: Mayor McClellan, Mayor Pro Tem Mullen, Councilmembers Snell, Cooke, Goodman, Himmelblau, Trevino

Absent: None

Mayor McClellan called the meeting to order, stating that this was a Special Called Meeting for the purpose of conducting a public hearing (Barton Skyway Bridge) on the proposed 1978-1983 Capital Improvements Program.

Joe Ternus, Urban Transportation Department Director, stated that the Planning Commission had recommended Project 79/65-02 which would provide \$175,000 for preliminary engineering and design of the Barton Skyway Bridge. No construction funds were included. The study did include traffic analysis, environmental considerations as well as the physical design of the bridge.

Roger Duncan, representing the Citizens Board of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality, stated that on August 9, 1978, the Board passed the following recommendation to the City Council: "That the \$175,000 proposed for engineering and design of the Barton Skyway Bridge be deleted from the CIP because there has been no environmental assessment of the project." The Board also noted that they supported the environmental design study for MoPac and part of the recommendation of that study was that the Barton Skyway Bridge not be built.

JANET STOCKARD, 2148 Barton Hills, felt that building the bridge would destroy the surrounding greenbelt.

RICHARD CRUSE, 2148 Barton Hills, felt that the bridge would bring traffic and pollution into the neighborhood.

DR. GERRY BAUGH, 2405 Bluffview, representing the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association, stated that traffic increase was the main reason the neighborhood objected to the bridge. He cited some statistics to support his point.

BETH SEBESTA, 2600 Rockingham Drive, spoke in opposition to the bridge, particularly as to how traffic would affect the neighborhood.

KATHY PUCKETT, 2315 Farnsworth Circle, opposed the bridge, but yielded to Joel Block who made a slide presentation.

JOEL BLOCK, 2807 Oakpark, spoke about the increased traffic and danger to children if the bridge were built. He stated that 45% of the children attending Barton Hills Elementary had to cross the intersection where the bridge would be located. He asked the Council to consider the following points: (1) that Barton Skyway is already a dangerous street with blind intersections and fast-moving traffic; if the bridge went in the projected 157% traffic increase could be devastating. (2) that the safety of neighborhood children would be impaired greatly, but especially near the proposed bridge opening at Barton Skyway and Barton Hills Drive.

Jim Bannerot, 2301 Forest Bend, spoke on the impact of the bridge on the creek. He had no objection to an environmental study or a traffic study, but he opposed an engineering study which would commit the Council to further development.

PHIL CAMPBELL, 2905 Rae Dell, stated that if the bridge were built, Barton Skyway would become a major arterial, and not remain a collector street. He cited reasons why Barton Skyway was unsuitable as a major arterial.

KAY SANDERS, 2900 Cedarview, spoke in opposition to the bridge, particularly in regard to safety factors involving children in the neighborhood.

DR. NORMAN BROWN, 2607 Barton Skyway, spoke in regard to neighborhood opinion. In a recent poll, 1,212 people contacted in the area had the following opinion with regard to the bridge: 75.3% against, 17.9% for, 6.8% no opinion. In The Woods and Windridge Apartment complexes, 95% opposed the bridge. He then presented to the City Clerk a petition containing 1,242 names of people who opposed building of the bridge.

ED PERRY, 2317 Farnsworth Circle, stated that 87% of the people surveyed in the Horseshoe Bend area opposed the bridge. Reasons were: (1) danger to school-age children, (2) a price would have to be paid for having the bridge as a convenience, (3) area would not be suitable for residential housing.

Ann Orzech, 2901 Oak Haven Drive, discussed traffic routes out of the area. She also discussed the problems involving Robert E. Lee Road and stated that efforts should be made to resolve the bottleneck at Robert E. Lee Road and Barton Springs Road.

DON LIBBY, 2124 Barton Hills Drive, stated that he lived at the Barton Skyway dead-end. He stated that the bridge project should not be in the CIP before MoPac was completed and before the total impact of MoPac on South Austin can be studied and evaluated.

MARIE SCHRAMMEL, 2501 Rodkingham Drive, spoke against building the bridge because of its effect on traffic.

HEINZ AESCHBACH, 1401 St. Edwards Drive Apartment #230, opposed the bridge and stated that what Austin needed was mass transportation.

RENEE DELAUNE, 2807 Oak Park, spoke against building the bridge because she felt that it would increase traffic problems.

DANIEL CURRY, 1209 Hollow Creek Apartment #2, stated that he lived just off Robert E. Lee Road. He spoke about traffic hazards on that Road, and said that no speed limit signs existed on Robert E. Lee Road near Zilker Park. He thought that a bike trail along the Road would be nice. He felt that mass transit would be preferable to building bridges.

SPIKE ROGERS, 1807 Brookhaven, a senior at Austin High School, spoke in support of the bridge, particularly as it would affect students who attended Austin High School and O'Henry Junior High School.

MRS. ANGUS MCDONALD, 1113 Robert E. Lee Road, stated that she had lived there since 1944. She spoke in favor of the bridge.

FRANCES DUDLEY, 2811 Rock Terrace Drive, read a letter from the Austin Independent School District dated April 27, 1978 signed by James Jeffrey, Assistant Superintendent, AISD, which reiterated the School District's position in 1975 to support building of the bridge. She felt that area children should have a safe and economical way to get to O'Henry and Austin High, and asked the Council to support building of the bridge.

ARI ROGERS, 2206 Spring Creek Drive, stated that she was not against the bridge, but that traffic needed to be stopped on Robert E. Lee Road. She felt that the \$175,000 should be used to educate people in the use of mass transportation or car pools.

BRYAN DUDLEY, 1602 Ethridge, stated that he did not live in the neighborhood, felt that a \$175,000 engineering study was inappropriate because fundamental information had not been provided on the traffic needs and movements and environmental impacts.

JOE GIESELMAN, 2900 Barton Hills Drive, opposed building the bridge, but suggested the following alternatives: (1) counterflow lane on Lamar Blvd. Bridge similar to the lane on the First Street Bridge, (2) provide money in operating budget for a demonstration transit project the Barton Hills/Horseshoe Bend area to provide commuter trips from the neighborhood to downtown, and (3) provide \$50,000 for an alternative study of the various transportation alternatives available to the City Council.

Councilman Cooke stated that regarding the counterflow lane on Lamar that it had been examined and part of the problem was the railroad overpass. It would be very difficult to have three lanes with the existing island.

Mr. Gieselman agreed that problems existed, but felt that they could be resolved. He stated that Federal funds could be made available for a number of projects recommended in the MoPac Environmental Design Study.

BARBARA CILLEY, 1114 Mariposa, quoted from the November 1976 MoBac Design study which recommended against the Barton Skyway Bridge. She asked the Council to vote against the Bridge.

ROBERT L. JENKINS, 4204 Manchaca Road, spoke against building the bridge.

KAREN BAUGH, 2405 Bluffview Drive, representing the Travis Audubon Society, distributed some photographs of the Barton Skyway area to the Council. She stated that building the bridge would damage an environmentally sensitive area in the following ways:

1. Any bridge construction would entail significant and permanent damage to the steep limestone walls of the creekbed;
2. A bridge constructed at ground level would require massive cuts and/or fills due to the great variance in elevation from one side of the creek to the other;
3. Construction of an elevated bridge would also cause an unavoidable amount of site disturbance, and would contribute immeasurably to visual, air, and noise pollution in the entire creek area;
4. The construction of the two million dollar bridge, and subsequent development of a cross-town arterial, as outlined in the City's 1969 Expressway and Major Arterial Plan, would lead to increased development in the Barton Creek watershed, and hence to increased run-off pollution of the creek itself.

She felt that an engineering design study should not be funded until results of the Barton Creek Watershed Study were reviewed and the perimeters of the aquifer mapped. Travis Audubon also urged that any Barton Skyway study funded in the CIP include an independent environmental impact statement in addition to the engineering and design analysis. In conclusion, she requested that the City Council delete the \$175,000 earmarked for a Barton Skyway Bridge engineering and design study from the 1978-83 CIP.

HERNDON WILLIAMS, 1800 Cresthaven Drive, felt that the convenience of the proposed bridge was not worth the harm it would cause to the neighborhood and the greenbelt.

RON ANDREWS, 1001 Robert E. Lee Road, spoke in favor of the proposed bridge, particularly as it affected traffic on Robert E. Lee Road.

SAM SMITH, 2408 Kathy Cove, felt that an origin/destination study of traffic patterns to prove that the absence of the Skyway bridge was the reason for the traffic problem on Robert E. Lee Road needed to be conducted before conclusions could be drawn. He opposed building the bridge.

WILLIAM N. PUCKETT, 2315 Farnsworth Circle, spoke in opposition to the bridge.

Zorena Bolton, 2601 Ræckingham Drive, commented on the pro-bridge literature contained in a petition circulated in her neighborhood. She opposed building the bridge.

ROBERT DIVINE, 2402 Rockingham circle, by means of a map showed the significance of the Barton Skyway Bridge as part of the City's overall transportation system. He spoke in support of the bridge.

JACK COX, 1803 Westridge, spoke in support of the bridge, but favored an environmental impact study.

COL. LESLIE S. MOORE, 2123 Barton Hills Drive, stated that he had surveyed the traffic passing his house as follows: from 7:50 to 8:00 - 231 vehicles; between 7:15 and 8:15 - 396 vehicles; between 4:30 and 5:30 - 322 vehicles. Despite the noise level, Col. Moore supported building of the bridge.

BARBARA DIVINE, 2402 Rockingham Circle, read a poem which indicated her support for building the bridge.

SALLY WITTLIFF, representing the Urban Transportation Commission, stated that the Commission had recommended that \$75,000 be included in the 1978-83 CIP for a Barton Skyway impact study. The Commission felt that the Robert E. Lee Road Project would cause increased traffic adjacent to Zilker Park and on neighborhood streets resulting in major environmental and safety problems. A better solution to the existing problems should be provided from the Barton Skyway impact study.

WILLIAM R. TURPIN, 1303 Robert E. Lee Road, stated that the Barton Hills Subdivision was approved only because the Barton Skyway Bridge was planned. He spoke in support of the bridge.

BEN TURNER, 2805 Oakhaven Drive, stated that neighborhoods on both sides of the creek had alternatives to the bridge for transportation. He felt that allowing the design and construction of the bridge would foreclose alternate courses of action as proposed in the MoPac Environmental Design Study and other alternatives whose relative benefits could not be evaluated until the southern end of MoPac was completed. After completion of MoPac and the Barton Creek Watershed Management Plan there was still time to build the bridge if it was then justifiable.

CARL NEWSON, 2604 Briarcrest Drive, supported building of the bridge. He said that he was tired of studies and that it was time for action. He requested that (1) fund the design and (2) then fund the construction of the bridge.

JACK Kriens, 3003 Oakhaven Drive, stated that it should be found out what was necessary to make Barton Skyway safe, if at all possible, and what would it cost. After that was determined, then the Barton Skyway Bridge could be discussed.

STEVE HANSON, 14734 Hornsby Hill Road, representing the Sierra Club, spoke against building of the bridge because of its impact on Barton Creek and the surrounding greenbelt.

JUANA ANTOKOLETZ, 2802 Horse Shoe Bend Cove, felt that the engineering study should not be conducted before an environmental and traffic study was done.

BILL CARSON, 2803 Rockingham, stated that he was a land planner and development consultant. He was opposed to the building of the bridge because it would create a pattern of crosstown traffic for the area.

JIM WILLIAMS, 2605 Tip Cove, spoke against building the bridge. He proposed the following alternatives: (1) consider a bike trail through the Zilker Park area, (2) build a north loop to Bee Caves Road, (3) have a reversible lane on Robert E. Lee Road, (4) re-time the light at Robert E. Lee Road and Barton Springs Road. He also stated that people in the area who wanted to go north could take Barton Skyway to Lamar Blvd., go south on Lamar to reach Loop 360.

John Jones, 2801 Cedarview Drive, spoke against building the bridge.

MARY E. LEY 801 Avondale Road, stated that Austin's transportation system should be studied and updated. She also spoke in favor of a mass transportation system.

TIM HUNKE, 2606 Fox Glen, stated that yesterday he took a traffic count of cars traveling south on Robert E. Lee Road between 4:45 and 6:20. There were 1,564 cars during that time period. He referred to a recent fire in Timber Ridge Office Park where Wallingford Drive was blocked totally for four hours, and expressed concern over the safety factor regarding response times of EMS and the Police Department. He then asked Joe Ternus where the proposed \$175,000 would be spent.

Mr. Ternus stated that the \$175,000 would be broken into two groups. \$75,000 of the money would be spent for a traffic study similar to the one recommended by the Urban Transportation Commission. At the end of that study the results would be brought back to the City Council, which would then make the decision to spend the remaining \$100,000 for design of the bridge. If the Council chose not to design the bridge, the \$100,000 would be available for redistribution either to implement other recommendations coming out of the report or for other CIP projects.

In response to Councilmember Himmelblau's question, Mr. Ternus stated that using an outside consultant the traffic study would take 6 to 9 months to complete.

TIM DUDLEY, 2811 Rock Terrace Drive, spoke in favor of the bridge because of delays in his getting back and forth to school. He pointed out that the greenbelt was inaccessible from Barton Hills unless it was through people's yards.

PATRICE ARNOLD, who lived on Trailside Drive, which was in the north end of Barton Hills. She stated that she would soon be moving to the southern end of Horseshoe Bend. She commented on the recent polls taken in the neighborhood concerning the bridge. Regarding the use of the alternative route, she observed that people in Horse Shoe Bend and Barton Hills would still have to travel east on Barton Skyway which would increase traffic.

ROSS BLUMENTRITT, a resident of Salado, stated that he officed in the Timberline Office Park and that his mother lived in Windridge Apartments. It was difficult for her to get to her polling place because there was no bridge. He supported the bridge and asked the Council to proceed without further study.

PAT FISK, who lived at the intersection of Rabb Road and Rundell Place, spoke in support of the bridge. She felt that the integrity of her neighborhood should not be sacrificed for the integrity of another neighborhood. She referred to the letter by AISD endorsing the Barton Skyway Bridge in 1975 and pointed out that Mayor McClellan was on the School Board at that time. She felt that it was inevitable that the bridge would be built.

Mayor McClellan stated that as a school board member she was looking at the problem from a stand point of overcrowding of schools in South Austin and underenrolled schools in the central city area. After looking at other factors, she had voted against the bridge last year. She pointed out that last year the Austin Transportation Study voted against building the bridge while completing MoPac to Loop 360.

MS. FISK then used two puppets to emphasize her support for building the bridge.

BUD MERRICK, 2406 Spring Creek Drive, stated that 14 years ago land along Barton Creek was offered to the City at a reasonable price, but the City did not buy it. He thought that the traffic problem at Robert E. Lee Road and Barton Springs Road could be alleviated by placing a No Left Turn sign there. He felt that people who wanted to go east and west should be able to.

THERESA SWEENEY, 206 Braeswood Avenue, thought that Austin should pursue a mass transit system rather than an antiquated freeway system. She opposed building the bridge.

BILL HARRISON asked the Council to disregard all bridge polls which had been submitted. He endorsed the remarks of Carl Newsome and recommended that the Council study them carefully.

MARY CAMPBELL, 2905 Rae Dell, a member of the EMS Quality Assurance Team, stated that safety was not a factor in regard to the proposed bridge. Citywide EMS response time was less than five minutes.

VOC FRIEND, 1906 Barton Parkway, spoke against building the bridge.

ANN MCAFEE, 4831 Timberline, stated that she had lived in South Austin for 50 years. She opposed building the bridge and felt that the \$175,000 should be used for mass transit. She supported the idea of a reversible lane.

An unidentified man who resided at 2512 Mountain View Drive, spoke against building the bridge.

KIRSTEN SOTEBIER, 2908 Cedarview Drive, spoke against the bridge. She requested that the City wait until MoPac was completed to Loop 360 and then make a traffic study of the area.

NANCY LOCKHOOF, 2501 Deerfoot Trail, spoke in favor of the bridge. She recommended building an overpass at Barton Skyway near the school for the children to use in getting to school.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned at 10:10 P.M.

APPROVED

Carole Keeton McClellan
Mayor

ATTEST:

Grace Monroe
City Clerk