



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Council Session

Item I2

#2002-207 - Resolution to Close Seedling Mile Road from Willow Street East for Approximately 450 feet.

The section of undisturbed concrete on Seedling Mile Road east of Willow Road and North of US Highway 30 is eligible for listing with the National Register of Historic Places. Public Works Director Steve Riehle and Don Anderson briefed Council on the historical significance of this stretch of the Lincoln Highway at the April 3, 2001 Study Session. Don's wife Mary wrote the book about the Lincoln Highway titled "Link Across America".

A Resolution to close Seedling Mile Road to vehicular traffic from the Willow Road intersection east for approximately 500' was on the agenda for Council consideration at the April 10, 2001 meeting. Abutting property owners expressed concerns about the impact of closing Seedling Mile Road on their property. They were especially concerned because the details of the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) project to widen US Highway 30 were not yet finalized.

The item was tabled so Staff could work with property owners to address their concerns. A meeting was held with abutting property owners on May 15, 2002. Staff felt that the closing of this stretch of Seedling Mile Road would have to wait until the details of the NDOR's project were worked out. Copies of newspaper articles appearing in the Grand Island Independent on May 13 and May 16 are included for Council reference.

Construction work on the US Highway 30 project is well under way. A new frontage road connection between Seedling Mile/Stuhr Road north of US Highway 30 is now complete. The frontage road provides an access for the property owners that were concerned about closing Seedling Mile Road.

The Contractor was advised to keep construction equipment off this historical piece of road to preserve it. Unfortunately trucks and other traffic have still used the road. The road should be closed to all public vehicular traffic to preserve its integrity and prevent future damage.

It is recommended that Council approve closing the section of Seedling Mile Road to all vehicular traffic. Costs for installation of signs and barricades will be minimal.

Staff Contact: Steve Riehle, City Engineer/Public Works Director

Seedling Mile proposal creates confusion

Council's vote to close road may need to be postponed

By Tracy Overstreet
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The city of Grand Island and property owners affected by a proposed closure of part of Seedling Mile Road don't have an agreement after all.

Randy Rapien last month questioned how his triangular-shaped property could be accessed if an entry from Seedling Mile Road ceased to exist.

Public Works Director Steve Riehle thought Rapien was OK with a verbal commitment that a new driveway onto East Highway 30 could be constructed.

While Rapien said such southern access would be nice, he wants the offer "in writing" before consenting to have the road north of his property closed.

He also wants agreements spelled out on who will maintain the road property and who will pick up the

taxes currently assessed to him on nearly the full width of the road.

A special meeting has been set for 6 p.m. Tuesday to work out such details.

The Hall County Historical Society requested that 500 feet of Seedling Mile Road east of Willow Street be closed and placed on the National Register of Historic Places as an original "seedling mile" of a concrete transcontinental highway.

The 85-year-old Grand Island road was the first in Nebraska and the second in the United States to be made of concrete as part of the Lincoln Highway, society member Dick Good said.

The society made the request hoping that portion of the road could be formally closed during the Lincoln Highway Association's national conference June 13 through 16 in Grand Island.

The city council's vote to close the road, which Riehle has scheduled for May 22, may need to be postponed, he said. The council would have just one other regular voting meeting before

the national conference — and it would be on June 12, the day before the conference would start.

However, Rapien is not the only one with concerns.

"It's not settled and done," Richard Grudzinski said. "It's a bad deal."

Grudzinski leases the Kensinger Service Station, which would lose left-in and left-out access next year when the state Department of Roads widens East Highway 30, Riehle said.

That cutback in access to the south could mean a greater reliability on access from the north, Grudzinski said. That would be impaired if the stretch of Seedling Mile Road was closed.

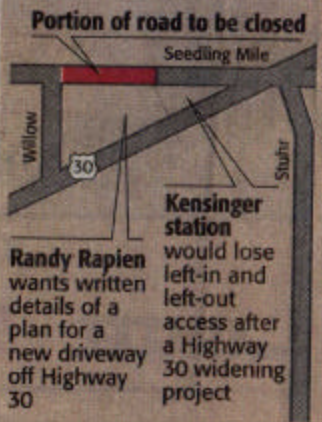
He's concerned also about the angle of the access from Highway 30, which may prevent semi-trucks from getting in and out.

"We started this a while back," Riehle said of the proposed closure. "But I guess now we're on hold."

The meeting will be in the Public Works Department conference room on the second floor of City Hall, 100 E. First.

Closing the original Seedling Mile

At the request of the Hall County Historical Society, the city is looking at closing a portion of Seedling Mile Road. Some nearby property owners object.



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Compromise in the works for closing Seedling Mile Road

Kensinger Station looks at options for entrance

Last modified at 12:16 a.m. on Wednesday, May 16, 2001

By Tracy Overstreet
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The highway that built up Kensinger Station in Grand Island may now be its bane.

A project to widen East Highway 30, the very highway that has fed customers into the gas station since 1937, would cut off southern access and is making station manager Richard Grudzinski reluctant to give up the property's northern access from Seedling Mile Road.

But giving up both seems to be in Grudzinski's future -- like it or not -- as the city of Grand Island is strongly backing a request from the Hall County Historical Society to close part of Seedling Mile Road as a way to preserve the nation's effort in building a transcontinental highway.

The state's project to widen Highway 30 is scheduled for 2002-03 construction.

"It was a start to getting rid of the dirt and gravel roads and going to hard-surface," Steve Riehle, city public works director said of the 85-year-old stretch of Seedling Mile Road.

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Although the meeting was called to discuss Seedling Mile, talks frequently wafted back to the Highway 30 project because the Grudzinski and Rapien properties are sandwiched between the two roads on the north and south respectively.

"I actually want the stupid road closed because I'm tired of cleaning it up," Rapien said of Seedling Mile Road. "There are smut magazines and everything else back there."

But what Rapien wanted to ensure is that he could receive a permit to construct a driveway off of East Highway 30 -- a permit granted by the State Department of Roads -- so he could access his property from the south if the northern access was lost.

Riehle said by reducing the amount of Seedling Mile closed from 500 feet east of Willow Street, to 400 feet, the city could also guarantee Rapien room enough for a small driveway on the north where Seedling Mile would be dead-ended.

Rapien seemed satisfied and praised Riehle for taking time Monday night to come walk his property and personally view the issue.

But Grudzinski's fix wasn't so simple.

Alternative sketches were penciled over Nebraska Road Department maps by Project Manager Scott Gripenstroh.

He and Grudzinski both seemed optimistic about an option that would have the state build a cul-de-sac immediately north of Kensinger Station with a driveway in and driveway out onto a frontage road. The cul-de-sac would link to Stuhr Road.

"I'd have to get rid of a warehouse and a line of trailers" rented out as housing, Grudzinski said.

His mother-in-law owns the property and would have to give that consent.

Gripenstroh said the cul-de-sac option would have to be

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conjunction with the Lincoln Highway Association national convention in Grand Island June 13 through 16 -- a timeline that Riehle said is now unlikely.

"It was just an opportunity, but it's not a do or die thing," historical society member Dick Good said of the timing with the convention.

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RESOLUTION 2002-207

WHEREAS, in July 1913, the Lincoln Highway Association was formed with a goal of creating a "Coast to Coast" highway; and

WHEREAS, such highway was named "The Lincoln Highway" and began at Times Square in New York, passed through Grand Island, and ended at Lincoln Park in San Francisco at the Pacific Ocean; and

WHEREAS, the goal was to oversee the construction of concrete "seedling miles" to emphasize the superiority of concrete over unimproved dirt roads; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to ensure that the memories of the Lincoln Highway and efforts to build hard surfaced roads is not forgotten, it has been recommended that a portion of Nebraska's "Seedling Mile" be preserved by closing it off to vehicular traffic; and

WHEREAS, an application was made in 2001 to place the closed section of road on the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to preserve the historical piece of road, it is recommended to close Seedling Mile Road to vehicular traffic from the Willow Street intersection east for approximately 450 feet.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA, that:

1. A section of Seedling Mile Road, from the Willow Street east for approximately 450 feet is hereby closed to vehicular traffic
2. The Street Department is hereby directed to install signs and barricades to designate such area as closed to vehicular traffic.

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Adopted by the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska on July 9, 2002.

RaNae Edwards, City Clerk

Approved as to Form	?
July 5, 2002	? City Attorney