
City of Grand Island



Tuesday, January 20, 2004
Study Session Packet

City Council:

Carole Cornelius
Peg Gilbert
Joyce Haase
Margaret Hornady
Robert Meyer
Mitchell Nickerson
Don Pauly
Jackie Pielstick
Scott Walker
Fred Whitesides

Mayor:

Jay Vavricek

City Administrator:

Gary Greer

City Clerk:

RaNae Edwards

7:00:00 PM
Council Chambers - City Hall
100 East First Street

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

A - SUBMITTAL OF REQUESTS FOR FUTURE ITEMS

Individuals who have appropriate items for City Council consideration should complete the Request for Future Agenda Items form located at the Information Booth. If the issue can be handled administratively without Council action, notification will be provided. If the item is scheduled for a meeting or study session, notification of the date will be given.

B - RESERVE TIME TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

This is an opportunity for individuals wishing to provide input on any of tonight's agenda items to reserve time to speak. Please come forward, state your name and address, and the Agenda topic on which you will be speaking.

MAYOR COMMUNICATION

This is an opportunity for the Mayor to comment on current events, activities, and issues of interest to the community.



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Item -1

Discussion Concerning Use of 1/2 Cent Sales Tax for Fire Station #1 and Training Center

The replacement of the fire station at Koenig and Pine has been a proposed project for several years. This station known as fire station one was built in 1936 and has served the community for sixty five years. The design and location of the station were both appropriate for their time. Continued growth of the city and changes in the equipment and services along with deterioration of the building over time has brought this need to the forefront. It is our hope to develop a plan for this replacement facility that will ensure that the new station will equal or exceed the value of the service the present building has given to the community.

A Training Center for the fire department is an on going need. Training and education are of greater importance in the modern fire service than ever before. The Grand Island Fire Department along with every other fire department in the country is faced with ever increasing demand for service in a greater variety of situations. The use of chemicals and transportation of those chemicals in a variety of methods has prompted the development of Hazardous Materials Response teams. The need for specialized rescue teams for trench, confined space, vehicle extrication and others requires more training and a need for space and facilities in which to learn, train, and practice these needed skills. The basic skills for fighting fires and emergency medical service are best learned and maintained in this type a facility.

Staff Contact: Jim Rowell



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Item -2

Discussion Concerning Use of 1/2 Cent Sales Tax for Train Noise Reduction

The community has discussed noise from train engine horns for a number of years. Kearney has closed crossings, built over and underpasses, and installed wayside horns on the Central Avenue crossing with the Union Pacific Railroad mainline tracks. Grand Island has not proceeded with the wayside horns because the railroads electronic circuitry needs upgraded, a cost the railroad expects the city to bear. A new rule change was recently approved by the Federal Railroad Administration that formalizes the requirements regarding railroad crossings. They allow the use of wayside horns and also "Quiet Zones". Public Works Director, Steve Riehle will update the council on the rule change with a series of PowerPoint Slides.

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

Railroad Horns

Can we quiet them?

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We have Numerous Railroad Crossings

- 10 on the Union Pacific Railroad Mainline
- 5 on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe
- 6 on the Power Plant Spur
- 4 on the Central Nebraska Railroad

Railroad Engine Horns

- When should they Blow
 - For 15 to 20 Seconds Prior to Arrival at Crossing
 - Sometimes for ¼ mile Prior to Crossing
 - If a Vehicle is in the Crossing
 - If a pedestrian is on the Tracks
- What Pattern should they Blow?
 - Pattern is 2 long - 1 short - 1 long (and repeated)
 - Pattern Can Vary if Crossings are close together
- How Loud should the Horn be?
 - Minimum sound level of 96 decibels
 - New maximum sound level of 110 decibels

Timeline for Horn Rule Change

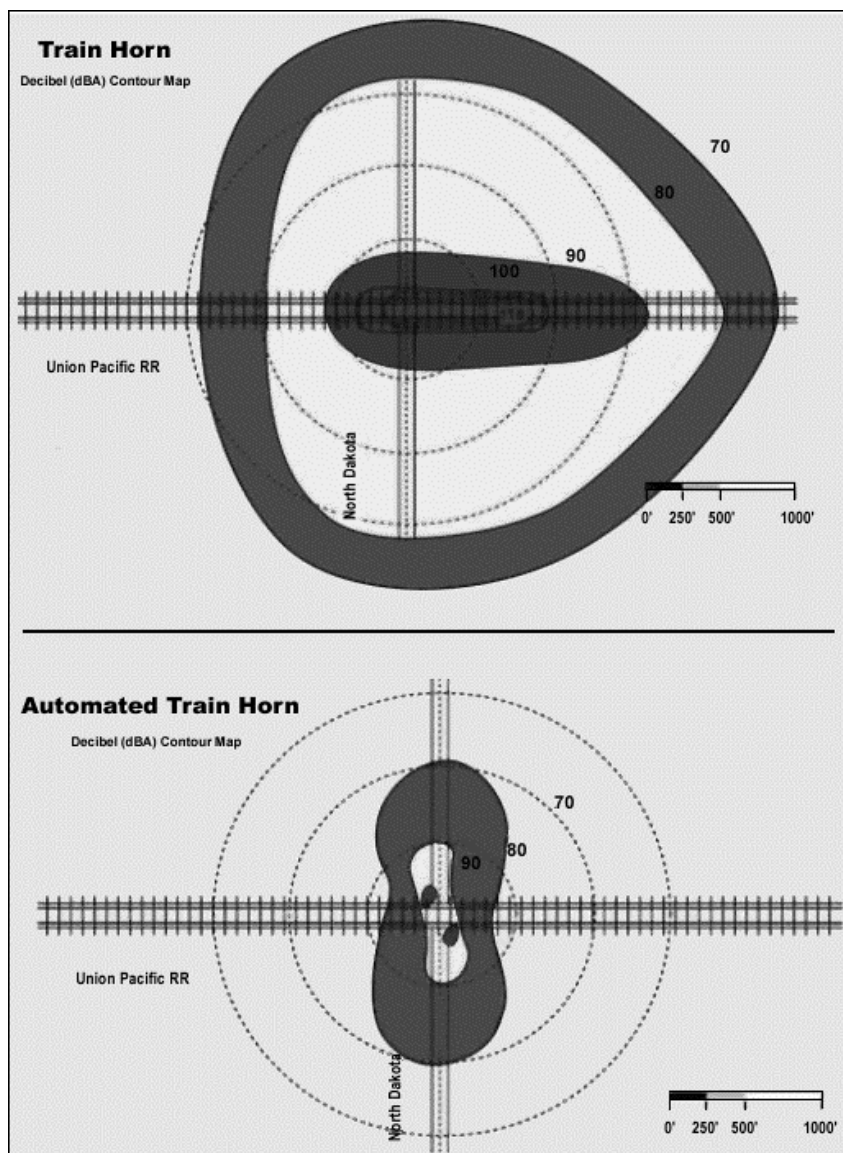
- Before 1991 – A few Communities issued Whistle Bans
- 1991 - Federal Department of Transportation issued an Emergency Order pre-empting “Whistle Bans”
- 2000 - Draft Environmental Impact Statement Released
- December 18, 2003 - Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued Interim Final Rule Making
- December 18, 2004 - Final Rule takes Effect
 - Pre-empts State & Local Laws
 - Allows **Automatic Wayside Railroad Horns**
 - Communities can create **Quiet Zones**

Wayside Horns

**(Directional or
Automated Horn
System AHS)
would Reduce
Noise Pollution**



Sound
Comparison:
Train Horn
VS.
AHS™



What is a “Quiet Zone”

- Horns are Prohibited (Whistle Ban)
- Horns will Sound
 - If a Vehicle is in the Crossing
 - If a pedestrian is on the Tracks

Quiet Zone May be Created if:

- Crossing has a Low Risk of Collision
 - All public Crossings have Lights & Gates
 - And Either
 - The Average Risk at Crossings is below the NSRT “National Significant Risk Threshold”
- Or
- Safety Improvements are made to Compensate for the Loss of the Train Horn as a Safety Device

Establishing Quiet Zones

- **Make Safety upgrades**
 - Four Quadrant Gates
 - Median Divider
 - Increased Enforcement
 - Temporary Closure
 - One Ways
 - Education and Enforcement

Next Steps

- **Put Together a Plan**
 - Categorize Crossings
 - Choose measures to Implement
- **Coordinate with**
 - Hall County
 - Nebraska Department of Roads
 - Federal Highway Administration
 - Railroads
- **Must Implement within 8 years if coordinated with State**



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Item -3

Presentation by the Humane Society Regarding Wildlife Damage Control

The Humane Society is interested in providing animal control services for wildlife such as trapping skunks and other animal species that may be a problem with the current rabies outbreak in the City and the surrounding areas. The Humane Society would provide this service through the end of the year. This matter is being brought up for your consideration at this time because the Humane Society will need to order additional traps to provide these services this spring when the skunk and rabies problem starts to occur. The Animal Advisory Board has requested that the Humane Society make a proposal for performing these services because the Board feels that they will provide this service in an effective and humane manner.

Staff Contact: Doug Walker