

## ODOT Public Engagement Meeting #1

Last night approximately 40 neighbors attended the first of several public engagement meetings concerning the ODOT realignment of Hwy. 47 through Carlton.

Attendees included the city's Hwy. 47 Citizen Committee, the Envision Carlton Committee, the Planning Commission, and most of the city council. Also joining the meeting were Anna Henson & Paul Welch, the area & project managers for the Carlton-Hwy 47 realignment, along with several of their team online & in-person.

This meeting coincided with the notice yesterday that Carlton has received a grant for updating our current Transportation Safety Plan...a project that has been long needed and that will dove-tail with managing many of the issues and concerns the realignment will raise, as well as compliment the comprehensive plan & development code update work we are doing.

Given the many starts and stops over the years of the discussions about, "What to do about Hwy. 47 truck traffic," this meeting #1 was focused on a final discussion of whether or not to fully commit to the realignment project as it was presented in 2020. The city, and ODOT, want to be sure that moving ahead now has the support of the citizens and council.

Two hours were allocated for the meeting, and thanks to City Manager Shannon Beaucaire's well-defined subject description and efficiently run discussion we were done well before the deadline. The consensus being that the realignment east on Monroe Street, then south on Pine is our best option.

That doesn't mean it's perfect, but we're in agreement that a change is needed and this will be the least disruptive. Obviously there are many concerns that still need to be addressed. Last night's meeting was basically the "green light" for the community, represented with these combined committees, to begin discussing those concerns in more detail.

Over the next couple of months, four discussions will be held, each focusing on a specific aspect of the project design: Traffic control that will slow vehicle speeds, Pedestrian/Bike Safety, on-street parking for economic enhancement & vitality in our downtown & landscape/beautification to enhance downtown & provide visual clues to also slow traffic.

All of these will be public meetings, and I urge you to note the subject, and speak up if you have concerns or questions about any of them. This is our city's chance to influence the details of a project we'll be living with for many years, and while nothing is ever perfect, we need to be sure we're doing the very best we can for our community now & in the future.