

#17 5/14/02

ROUGH DRAFT

CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
Regular Meeting - May 14, 2002
Partial Verbatim - Docket Item No. 17

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- 17. Verbal Report on the Status of Proposed Improvements to the CSX Overpass at the King Street Metro Station.

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Mayor: Mr. Speck. Then Ms. Woodson.

Speck: A couple of things. I, I felt better about the situation after I read that letter which I think was somewhat ?? notwithstanding the commitment they made. One of the things that puzzles me is that obviously this is not their only bridge. It's not their only steel bridge. It's not the only steel bridge that's in some state of disrepair. It almost seems like all of this is new to them. That they're discovering as this is unfolding about techniques for removing old paint or for, for repainting, and I, I want to be sure that we're not getting spun on this. So, speaking for myself, but I'm, I'm guessing that probably it's something that Council would agree to, is that this comes up on our docket again the first legislative meeting in June, and as far as I'm concerned, if we don't have a definitive commitment with a start date that we're really confident in, the sign goes back up. And you know what sign I'm talking about. And, I mean, I just, I don't think we can let up on the pressure, and I know you all are dealing with them, but I do, I feel like they're, they're trying to work this out but I still am a little skeptical about whether we're, we're getting all of the story. And the other thing I just wanted to mention because I think it's interesting because we, we discussed the, the headache bar. And it is interesting to hear a couple of things from Rich about this. The headache bar has now taken two hits which means two trucks that didn't hit the bridge, one of which hit it so hard that it actually knocked the bar off, which is a pretty good hit. And staff found out who the trucker was and, and tell everyone what, what the trucker said. This is unbelievable.

Baier: After we contacted, you know, the company, they had said that normally they could make that with, you know, kind of a lower, you know, tire pressure underneath there and they, they had claimed, you know, the bar was a little lower and so they said, gee, you know, we thought we could make it and they hit it and knocked it down and, you know, we're a bit surprised. You know, we basically said, you know, why are you risking this? I mean, you know, coming underneath a bridge that's really clearly marked now. There's several signs ?? too low.

Speck: Right. Now the trucker, the trucker said he'd made it before.

Baier: Right.

Speck: And, so, but his tire pressure was a little lower. I mean it's, it's scary to think that these folks are actually out on the road, but the, I guess it's serving its purpose then of avoiding more hits to the, to the bridge.

Baier: Just a note since you brought that up. The bar is off again. ...

Speck: The only way it can be damaged is to take a hit. That would make it the third hit since -

Baier: Since serving its intended purpose.

Mayor: Well, but, but more importantly, are trucks then stopping, somehow turning around and?

Baier: We, we have not had the, last year we had 7 times the bridge was hit and a truck was stuck underneath the bridge. We have not had that this year, and in part it's because, you know, we do have that up there. We have better signage, and people, you know, hit the cab of their truck. Now, I can tell you that we have had some complaints about trucks whose cabs were hit and scratched, you know, by the bar. So.

Mayor: Ah. Tell them to call Rob Schinn, and we know his phone number. Ms. Woodson.

Woodson: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I'd like to dovetail on Councilman Speck's comments. It also seems to me that since they are not new to procurement that it's hard for me to believe that they are just now realizing that their

procurement process is going to take so long. Why didn't they realize this when they gave us the dates that they suggested this work was going to begin in the first place?

Baier: What I understand was that this is being handled out of the administrative office which doesn't routinely do this, out of the, more the CEO's office. And in handling it that way, they have really not touched all the bases. You know, and I had said to a group this morning I was speaking to that this issue came up and impressed upon them again today, you know, that this causes, you know, both City staff, you know, and the Council, you know, a great deal of embarrassment when we rely on assurances even up to as I said, April 30th, from CSX, you know, a vice president, a very responsible position, you know, in a large company, and they can't follow through. And they cannot, you know.

Woodson: So what they've told you essentially is that the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing?

Baier: That's correct in this case.

Woodson: Well, here's my thought. That if at the CEO level, if that's actually where this ended up, I suspect that they're able to pretty much make this happen if they want to make this happen so therefore I don't believe that it's in their best interest for it to happen in the time frame that they've recommended. So, I suggest that not only do we put the sign back up but that we let them know that we're going to put the sign back up, and it seems to me that they were very concerned that they didn't want this information to get out to other jurisdictions that have bridges in similar disrepair. Am I wrong?

Baier: That's correct.

Woodson: Well, gee. I think we could probably make that happen with very little effort -

Mayor: We could probably take out an ad in the -

Woodson: At an executive level. Do you think you could make that decision, Mr. Mayor?

Mayor: I think we could probably, I think we could probably take an ad out in the Nation's Cities, the National League of Cities newspaper.

Woodson: There you go. Will you please let them know that we do know how to make executive level decisions. That the right hand does know what the right hand is doing in Alexandria, and if they don't think so, that they should continue down this path.

Baier: I will do. And I will make sure that in June at this, you know, same legislative session in June, that we have a, a definitive date or I will relay what Council's, you know, sentiments were.

Mayor: Okay. Thank you.

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