

City of Blackburn
811 W.3rd St.
Blackburn, OK 74058
August 28, 2012

The Honorable Dennis Casey
Oklahoma House of Representatives, District 35
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Room 300B
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
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(405) 557-7344 Phone

Dear Representative Casey,

I am writing this letter to you regarding the Town of Blackburn per your request.

The biggest concern I have with the current road construction within the Town of Blackburn is the building of the road bed and paving of 5th Street in the downtown area. We were informed last week that in order to build the road bed, they would have to vibrate the ground to pack and asphalt the road. The Manhattan Construction crew supervisor and the ODOT representative indicated this process would shake the ground. The Manhattan Construction crew supervisor also informed the person that works the only operating business in the Town of Blackburn that things would fall off the shelves, and she should probably wear a hardhat. Vibrating the ground to pack the road bed is a major concern because the last five remaining business buildings in the Town of Blackburn have had little maintenance over the years. Two of these building have a good weather tight roof. One has a roof in major need of repair. The other two are free standing walls. They are basically three-sided buildings at this time. I own one of the buildings in town and another person owns the other four. I also have a house that began as a doctor's office or a mortician's office. This has been added on to several times through the years and is now a private residence. All of the buildings left were built before 1924 with the station being built in 1923.

I am under the impression from the construction crew that these six buildings, house included, may be severely damaged, if not destroyed, through the course of the road work.

This road construction was acquired by Guy Engineering for "Town Improvement". I completely support improvement for the Town of Blackburn. However, there is no town improvement if they destroy the town in the process.

I have been told by ODOT and Manhattan Construction that if they can't pack the road bed and the asphalt by vibrating the ground, they will leave the road as it is now (they have already torn up the road and lowered the grade level to begin this project), put gravel on it, and leave it to the county to chat and seal.

This part of the project is one block in town. It was approved and started as town improvement. It seems that if they really want to improve the Town of Blackburn, there would be a strong consideration to use cement instead of asphalt. My understanding is the use of cement to build this one block of road would do what was intended (to improve the town) without the risk of destroying the town. I was told the use of cement would not be considered because it is not on the plans. I was also told to just take pictures of all the buildings, and we would be compensated for the damages. If I have any damages to my property, I expect the damages to be compensated at

repair or replacement value. This is also the feeling of the owner of the other properties. There are only five buildings left in a town that used to be larger than what the City of Cleveland is now.

I have included pictures of the buildings. Hopefully, you are able to notice the detrition of the mortar in these buildings and their current condition. The person that owns four of the five buildings is in the process of repairing them as time and money permits, as I am doing the same with the one building I own. These buildings are safe to be around at this time, but they are in need of maintenance and/or repair. The owner of the four buildings, as well as myself, do not believe the buildings will survive the asphaltting of 5th Street in front of them as has been described to us this past week.

Residents on the west end of 5th Street, where the construction crew has started packing the road bed using the vibrating method, are complaining how much their houses are shaking. They are also beginning to notice damages to their homes and have been informed the vibrating will be much stronger when asphaltting begins.

Additional concerns I have with the projects proceeding within the Town of Blackburn are as follows:

- They are using satellites to survey the Town of Blackburn instead of the old survey markers. This survey method has 5th Street crooked to the town. I was told that Guy Engineering did the surveying of the Town of Blackburn, but whoever did the surveying of the town did not use the original survey markers. The survey used shows 5th Street going at an angle through the town. The original survey marker on 5th Street either has not been uncovered to show its location or it has been removed. I was told the streets in Blackburn are eighty (80) feet wide. The survey markers are between eighty-three (83) and eighty-six (86) feet wide. The construction crew has moved the fence line of several residences in town based on this survey. Some of these fences had been in place over 60 years.
- There were issues concerning the rebuilding of 5th Street and how wide it was going to be in what is considered downtown. Originally, a representative from ODOT and a representative from Guy Engineering spoke to the representative from the water department, to a few others, and to me. They came to an agreement that they could complete the project without tearing up the sidewalks in town. A few weeks ago, a different representative from Guy Engineering told the same representative from the water department that he had to move his water lines again. When the person from Guy Engineering was told what had been discussed originally, he stated that it wasn't changed on the plans so they would have to move the water lines again.
- I was informed that an employee of ODOT has made a statement to the effect that the owners of the buildings in town had better leave them (the construction crew) alone or there will be yellow tape wrapped around all the buildings and the buildings will be condemned. If this is the case, it is possible that my personal residence may be included. To me, this sounds like a threat but may have been someone just talking out of turn. Either way, it has several people in town concerned.

I want town improvement, but if they cannot improve the town without destroying what is left of it, please put it back the way it was before all of this started.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter,

Mr. Gary McClary
Mayor, City of Blackburn
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