

8/29/17
citizens
comments

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May 19, 2017

County Commissioner Valerie Covey
710 Main Street
Georgetown, TX 78626

Subject: A Bridge to replace the present low water bridge in Cedar Hollow Subdivision

Dear Commissioner Covey:

I live in the Lost River subdivision and am opposed to making our neighborhood more of a thoroughfare, especially in opposition to our deed restrictions. I am also opposed to the present status of decision-making, as I will explain.

I understand that you have handed off construction decisions to the county engineers and will likely be guided mostly by their recommendations as to the "most cost-effective" solution. This approach is often a hollow exercise, since cost-effectiveness misses the point: costs can be well quantified, whereas the *quality* of each outcome is more subjective. In other words, "values" are not numerically weighed and thus are not adequately considered. The result is what is "cheap," what is minimal, but not what is satisfying-- in this case to the desires and needs of your constituents.

In contrast in considering values, we must weigh desires and needs of the two affected neighborhoods. The Cedar Hollow subdivision wants a bridge; the Lost River subdivision does not want a road. In short, properly weighing *values* points toward only one outcome: build the bridge.

"Cost-effectiveness" reached its zenith and decline with Robert S. McNamara's approach to problem-solving, finally as Vietnam War-era Secretary of Defense. He was described then as, "He knows the cost of everything, and the value of nothing." Infamously he ruled against chrome-plating the barrels of M-16 rifles vs. an extra \$5 cost. Values of reliability and maintenance were not properly weighed; objections were overridden. This resulted in killing many soldiers and marines as weapons jammed in the jungles and paddies of southeast Asia and incidentally in destroying McNamara's reputation.

Closer to home, today at HEB we can buy any of several bottles of "chocolate flavored syrup" or for a little more Ghirardelli's dark chocolate syrup. The taste of the latter, the real stuff, excites the palate and satisfies cravings. As a wise man once said, "The bitterness of poor quality remains after the sweetness of low price is forgotten." Considering values, a bridge for Cedar Hollow is a similar winner.

I urge you and our engineers to incorporate well values into your determinations and as a result, to build the bridge.

Respectfully,