

Atchison Trail Project Remains In Budget

(KAIR)--After nearly a half hour of discussion by Atchison City Commissioners, money allocated for a pedestrian trail in the city remains in the 2016 budget.

Commissioner Charlie Perdue had proposed an amendment during Monday afternoon's meeting to withdraw the money for the trail from the 2016 budget. He said that he felt that the money could be put to better use. Perdue also cited safety concerns with the trail being located close to U.S. Highway 73, and a trail in that location could impede the expansion of the highway. He suggested expanding the trail by the riverfront so that those using it could be safe as well as have scenery to enjoy.

Several Atchison residents voiced their thoughts on the trail. Sally Irons said that she felt the money allocated for the trail could be better spent on city infrastructure, especially sidewalks. The safety issue was also addressed by the public, with City Manager Trey Cocking offering his assurance that safety barriers would be in place to protect trail users from the highway.

Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce President Jacuque Pregont said that the Chamber is excited about the project, and it is exactly what the city needs to attract professionals to the city. Maur Hill-Mount Academy President Phil Baniewicz said that he felt it would be a mistake to remove the trail from the budget, as it would be a waste of the nearly \$1-million federal grant facilitated by KDOT for the project. He added that the trail would also be a benefit to the international students attending his school.

The proposed budget amendment to strike the trail project from the 2016 budget failed on a 3-2 vote, with Perdue and Commissioner Larry Purcell casting the no votes.

Many Signals Communications