

## ST. ALBANS \*(and Nitro) WAITS ON WORD REGARDING FUNDS FOR NEW BRIDGE

Publication: CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL

Published: Tuesday, September 21, 2010

Page: 7A

Byline: MARY CHILDRESS FOR THE DAILY MAIL

St. Albans \*(and Nitro) residents could know within six months whether the West Virginia Department of Highways will spend \$30 million to fix up the 75-year-old St. Albans-**Nitro** Bridge or whether they will build a new one with a bigger price tag.

Resident John Casto, a businessman and a member of St. Albans Partnership, discussed the possibility of building a new bridge at the St. Albans City Council meeting Tuesday night.

"DOH said they could replace the girders and deck or push the sidewalk to outside the span of old bridge," he said. "The bridge could possibly end up with three lanes, depending on the assessment of the bridge piers by the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

"Whatever DOH decides to do, the partnership has requested they give strong consideration to building a new bridge that would cross the Kanawha River at Walnut Street," Casto said.

The St. Albans Partnership is composed of members of the St. Albans Chamber of Commerce and St. Albans business community.

"Building a new bridge at Walnut Street would give the city closer access to Interstate 64," Casto said. "This is our only opportunity to connect to I-64. We believe this is vital to the economy of St. Albans."

If work is done on the existing bridge, it could be closed for as long as nine months to a year.

"If a new bridge was built, we could keep the existing bridge open until the new bridge was completed," Casto said, "thus avoiding any loss to the city's economy that would be created by closing the old bridge for repairs."

Casto, along with Dale Withrow and other members of the Partnership, requested Mayor Dick Callaway appoint a transportation committee to enter into discussions with DOH. His suggestion was approved by council.

Withrow hopes the committee will consider everything involved with repairing the old bridge or building a new one - not just the cost.

"And we need to get **Nitro** behind us on this too," Withrow said. "They want a new bridge built as much as we do."

In other news, council passed on second reading two ordinances that will start the ball rolling on replacing 15 percent of the city's water lines and making upgrades to the sewer treatment plant by issuing revenue bonds for up to \$15 million.

Work is expected to start in the spring of 2011 and be completed in a year.

After council members rejected a proposed ordinance in August that would have made the speed limit on some city streets 15 mph, ordinance chairman Jerry Cogar asked council members to check the variances in the speed limits from block to block in their wards and report back to the ordinance committee. Once this information is obtained, the ordinance committee will report back to council.

NOTE: \*(and Nitro) entered by webmaster – not in original article