



Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2015

Newport Transit Station

4:00 p.m.

Commission Members	Agency	Present
Mike Slavik	Dakota County RRA	x
Marion Greene	Hennepin County RRA	
Janice Rettman	Ramsey County RRA	
Jim McDonough	Ramsey County RRA	
Karla Bigham, Chair	Washington County RRA	x
Jen Peterson, Vice-Chair	City of Cottage Grove	x
Myron Bailey	City of Cottage Grove	
John Kummer	Denmark Township	
Mark Vaughan	City of Hastings	x
Cam Gordon	City of Minneapolis	
Tracy Rahm	City of Newport	x
Amy Brendmoen	City of St. Paul	
Keith Franke	City of St. Paul Park	

Ex-Officio Members	Agency	
Ron Allen	Goodhue County	
Jess Greenwood	Goodhue County	
Judy Mitchell	Canadian Pacific Railway	
Marc Mogan	Prairie Island Indian Community	x

Staff	Agency	Present
Jan Lucke	Washington County RRA	
Andy Gizlaff	Washington County RRA	
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County RRA	X
Josh Olson	Ramsey County RRA	X
Mike Rogers	Ramsey County RRA	
Joe Morneau	Dakota County RRA	X
Hally Turner	Washington County	X
Laura Kearns	Washington County	
Joe Scala	Hennepin County	X
Ray Hoover	Hennepin County	

Others	Agency
Melissa Taphorn	Washington County HRA
Betsy Leach	District 1 Community Council St. Paul
Kathryn Paulson	Washington County HRA
Cali Owings	Finance and Commerce
Ellen Biales	City of St. Paul—Ward 7

Agenda Item #1: Introductions

Chair Bigham called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM. Introductions were made by commission members, staff and others present.

Agenda Item # 2: Tour of the Newport Transit Station

Lyssa Leitner explained that the Newport Transit Station was developed for express bus service with the option to expand service in the future. Lyssa Leitner described the property boundaries and discussed that the site was chosen for its potential to grow with future development. The property is split into quarters and the transit station itself was placed in the southeast quarter so the building wouldn't be buried in the back of the property. The curb can be raised to accommodate bus rapid transit (BRT). The transit station has Wi-Fi and bathrooms with flushing toilets. Library kiosks will soon be located from Newport City Hall to the transit station. There is currently parking for 150 with ability to expand by another 200. There is also the option to build a structure if more parking is needed.

Pavement is currently incomplete and other minimal items like landscaping still need to be finished. These items should be completed before or after the grand opening once construction restrictions have been lifted.

The plan for the property includes dense housing and protected green space for area residents. Melissa Taphorn with the Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) explained that the site, also known as Red Rock Crossing, is 40 acres. The City of Newport and the HRA signed a joint powers agreement to work on redevelopment. A completed market study determined a need for high density housing. There will be office, some retail, and light industrial in the future. There was interest in using the transit investment to bring jobs and residents to the area. Developers are already being engaged.

They received a planning grant from the Metropolitan Council and are using transit-oriented development design guidelines which call for 30-50 units per acre. This is very high density for a suburban location.

The site will be developed in phases with Phase I focused on high density housing. Phase 2 is directly to the south which is currently mixed-use with small business owners. Phase 3 would be further south but won't include Tinucci's restaurant. Phase 4 is directly south of the cold storage facility to the west. The last phase will be for commercial development.

Cali Owings asked how many units would be onsite. Kathryn Paulson with the HRA stated that there will be up to 400 units.

Commissioner Slavik asked if more property would be purchased. Melissa Taphorn stated that the HRA has adopted an Acquisition and Relocation policy guiding the ability to acquire sites and relocate businesses once a project has been identified. There is some flexibility to purchase property sooner if need be. The HRA has already acquired a building where there wasn't another purchaser interested in the building.

Commissioner Peterson asked about clarification on affordable housing. Melissa Taphorn stated that there will be 200 units or less for affordable housing and maybe about a quarter for senior housing. These units would come with tax credits. However, median rents are lower in Newport than other areas of the metropolitan area so the units would be more market rate.

Commissioner Rahm arrived.

Joe Scala with Hennepin County asked about current ridership at the transit station. Lyssa Leitner stated that the ridership is low but improving. The county is working to promote the site. Lower Afton and Cottage Grove cars will have flyers placed on the cars by Metro Transit.

Commissioner Vaughan asked who is in charge of maintaining the building. Lyssa Leitner stated that the county maintains the building unlike most other metro area park and rides which are owned and maintained by Metro Transit. Commissioner Vaughan asked if the building gets locked at night. Lyssa Leitner thought the station automatically locks at 10:00 pm and that there would soon be security cameras in operation. Commissioner Bigham said that the library lockers will help bring people to the site.

Agenda Item #3: Approval of Agenda

Quorum was not present. Motion was made by Commissioner Peterson to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Vaughan. All in favor, motion carries.

Consent items were moved to the April meeting.

Agenda Item #4: Implementation Plan

Lyssa Leitner discussed that the Implementation Plan update will be standing item on the commission's agenda and that staff from Kimley Horn would be present with larger updates as appropriate. Since the last commission meeting, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met. The TAC includes staff from the corridor's cities, MnDOT, Metropolitan Council, and Metro Transit. The TAC will review the Previously Completed Work Memo and Project Management Plan. Documents will be brought to the commission as needed. The TAC discussed the Business and Civic Advisory Committee (B-CAC) and made recommendations of individuals to participate.

Stakeholder engagement will kick off with the grand opening on April 27th at 4:00 pm. The grand opening will include an open house format for engagement for the Implementation Plan. HRA staff will have engagement activities as well. Washington County staff has asked Metro Transit for a Red Line bus though a bus is unlikely to be available since the grand opening will be held around rush hour. Invitation letters will be sent to all elected officials along the corridor including the cities, the state, and federal officials.

Washington County staff will be doing normal promotion for the grand opening. Information about the transit station and the grand opening will also be included in the next Washington County newsletter to be delivered to all county residents.

There will be an upcoming meeting with the B-CAC. The first meeting will be informational and will include details on the corridor, request for feedback on engagement, and information on how these individuals could participate in the Implementation Plan. The B-CAC will not make decisions for the corridor but will make recommendations and provide feedback.

Lyssa Leitner asked the commission for feedback on the list of individuals to be asked to participate in the B-CAC meeting. Commissioner Bigham recommended the Newport Business Association and clarified that the packet should state "Renewal by Andersen" not just "Andersen." Cali Owings recommended the East Side Area Business Association (ESABA). Commissioner Bigham recommended Greater MSP. Commissioner Peterson recommended the school district. Lyssa Leitner asked for a contact name and Commissioner Bigham recommended Barb Brown. Commissioner Bigham added Warner Electric and stated that business representatives along the corridor have said that the limited transportation options make it difficult to recruit new employees. Commissioner Peterson asked about the economic development authorities and Lyssa Leitner stated that these organizations are engaged through the TAC. In general, appointed and elected individuals are not engaged in the B-CAC. Commissioner Peterson recommended the Cottage Grove Senior Center. Commissioner Bigham commented that Hastings and South Washington County Community Education groups could be included. Cali Owings recommended Gerdau Ameristeel.

Lyssa Leitner reminded the commission that everyone is welcome to attend the B-CAC meeting in April. April is a busy month with the B-CAC and grand opening. There will be several updates for the commission at the next meeting in April.

Lyssa Leitner commented that there have been some safety concerns over buses operating on shoulders. MnDOT staff will be at the next commission meeting to discuss operating standards.

Commissioner Vaughan asked for clarification on recommended community education representatives to the B-CAC. Commissioner Vaughan wanted to know if the community or leadership would be asked to participate. Commissioner Bigham said that staff, usually the director, would be contacted. Commissioner Vaughan explained that sometimes the Pioneer Press will get everyone in one room to discuss different topics and the commission could be involved in those conversations to save time and labor.

Lyssa Leitner clarified that if anyone can't make it to the B-CAC meeting that Washington County staff is happy to present to different groups. Commissioner Bigham added that many of the individuals on the B-CAC list are involved in the area chamber organizations and any chamber presentation would include many of the individuals and groups being discussed.

Commissioner Bigham stated that she would like small business representation on the B-CAC and more variety in the types of businesses. Lyssa Leitner added that the intent is to

include a broad group of individuals to be representatives for the larger community and that the list can grow if more people are interested in joining.

Commissioner Bigham reminded the group that Washington County staff would be presenting at the Cottage Grove Chamber in May. Commissioner Bigham also expressed interest in joint meetings with cities and other stakeholders in a workshop rather than seeking out individual meetings.

Commissioner Vaughan stated that a press release to the local paper would be helpful. Lyssa Leitner explained that there would be a press release for the grand opening and Implementation Plan in a couple of weeks. Commissioner Bigham added that there is always social media available to aid in communications.

Agenda Item #6: Communications Update

Lyssa Leitner explained that the Johnson Group is working to update videos and these videos will be posted as they are available. Johnson Group is also working on Facebook ads which are an inexpensive way to promote the project, to get more “Likes,” or for eNews sign-ups. These ads are paid for per click. You only pay for active engagement. The ads will come out soon.

Commissioner Bigham asked the group to share the corridor’s page and help to drive more traffic to the page. Lyssa Leitner stated that an email when out to the TAC to also engage with the corridor via social media and to help share the information.

Commissioner Peterson commented that there wasn’t a link to the meeting’s agenda on Facebook or a link to the website. Commissioner Bigham stated that there should be a reminder the week of the meeting.

Agenda Item #7: Other Information

a. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Slavik discussed the recent high speed rail meeting. The group did a bylaw review and discussed quorum issues. Commissioner Peterson added that there was a discussion on the communications request for proposals. Commissioner Bigham confirmed that the next high speed rail meeting would be the first Thursday in May in Red Wing.

Commissioner Bigham stated that Chair Duinck is confirmed to speak at the grand opening. Commissioner Bigham added that the CTIB meeting included an update on Southwest Light Rail’s agreement made with the Parks Department.

b. Next Meeting, April 23rd at 4:30 pm at Newport City Hall

Agenda Item #8: Adjourn

Motion was made by Commissioner Peterson to adjourn. Commissioner Slavik Seconded. All in favor, Motion Carries. The meeting was adjourned at 4:46PM.