



Draft Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2012

Cottage Grove City Hall

4:00 p.m.

Commission Members	Agency	Present
Joe Harris, Chair	Dakota County RRA	X
Autumn Lehrke	Washington County RRA	X
Janice Rettman	Ramsey County RRA	X
Mark Stenglein	Hennepin County RRA	
Barb Hollenbeck	City of Hastings	X
Jen Peterson, Vice-Chair	City of Cottage Grove	X
Keith Franke	City of St. Paul Park	
Steve Gallagher	City of Newport	X
Kathy Higgins	Denmark Township	
Cam Gordon	City of Minneapolis	
Amy Brendmoen	City of St. Paul	X

Alternate Commission Member	Agency	Present

Ex-Officio Members	Agency	
Ron Allen	Goodhue County	
Bob Kastner	City of Red Wing	
Marc Mogan	Prairie Island Indian Community	X
Ken Bjornstad	Goodhue County	X

Staff	Agency	Present
Andy Gitzlaff	Washington County RRA	X
Josh Olson	Ramsey County RRA	X
Sam O'Connell	Dakota County RRA	
Adele Hall	Hennepin County RRA	X

Others	Agency
Tim Boland	Northern Tier Energy/St. Paul Park Refinery
Linda Jungwirth	Assist. To Ramsey Co. Commissioner Rettman
Allen Lovejoy	St. Paul PWD
Joe Morneau	DCRRA
Carl Jensen	MNDot

The meeting was video recorded and can be viewed online at:

http://swctc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3666

Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

Agenda Item #1: Consent Items

- a. Minutes of the February 23, 2012 Meeting**
- b. Checks and Claims**

Note: Items as presented in packet, no additions or changes .

Motion made by Peterson to approve the consent items. Second by Gallagher. **All in favor.**
Motion carried.

Agenda Item #2: AA Update Scope / Schedule Overview - WCRRA

Gitzlaff summarized that at the previous meeting the Commission approved pursuing an update to the Alternatives Analysis - Option B and staff was directed to put together a scope of work analysis. Going forward, he will refer to it as Advanced Alternatives Update (AAU.) Gitzlaff then reviewed the AAU scope of work summary as outlined in the meeting packet. He also reviewed the proposed timeline for development of the AAU scope of work: request for proposal (RFP) process, selection of a consultant, along with consideration for accessing Federal funds.

Gitzlaff did attend a meeting earlier in the day with joint agencies, Washington and Ramsey County Rail Authorities and the Metropolitan Council, and their Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) specialists. Since Red Rock Corridor will be looking at using Federal funds, and those funds are under an existing grant agreement, they will need to do an amendment and cooperative agreement that will put the process in motion. Gitzlaff feels that the timeline before them is accurate based on the information from that joint agencies meeting.

Gitzlaff stated that one of the things they will be doing is to make sure they are getting the FTA's input on the scope of work while they work with the Metropolitan Council. Once the scope of work is finalized it will be brought back to the Red Rock Commission and the contract would be with the Washington County Regional Rail Authority since they are the fiscal agent. Gitzlaff stated that completing the study by summer 2013 will be good timing since the Metropolitan Council will be starting the update to their Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) policy during the summer; and what comes out of the AAU for Red Rock can go directly into the Metropolitan Councils TPP. Gitzlaff asked if there were any questions from the Commission and stated that Josh Olson with Ramsey Rail Authority was present and that Josh has been working on the funding portion of this project.

Commission Member Lehrke saw some people in the audience that she has not seen before so she just wanted to clarify for them that BRT means Bus Rapid Transit and inform them that the Commission agreed a couple of meetings ago to look into that alternative. She stated that right now they have commuter bus service to serve people coming and going to work; but, they are also looking into commuter rail that offers the same type of

service. She also shared that they are extending the study to include BRT, which is like Light Rail except on wheels, so it provides that consistent service every 15 minutes throughout the day. In the Alternative Development section under the BRT alternative, Commission Member Lehrke inquired if the BRT alternative included the hybrid version, where they could use the widened shoulder of existing lanes; or, if it was just the regular version with its own dedicated lane. Gitzlaff responded that the way it is set up, it is to be determined. He stated that you want to look at the potential options and then narrow it down to the one the data and feedback supports as there are many ways it could be done.

Rettman stated that when she saw the timeline she was very disappointed by its length and would like to see the timeline moving along much more quickly. She had hoped to keep things moving along at a quicker pace as she stated at the last meeting, that the study could be completed before Chair Harris leaves the Commission. She wants to keep it broad enough and keep it moving and believed that other Corridors are moving along much more quickly. Rettman also stated that this Corridor could move along much more quickly, too. Her concern is if they don't move the timeline up, they will miss out on their share of the funding. Rettman would like to see the RFP's out by at least June 1st and would like to know what the other members were thinking about the proposed timeline.

Chair Harris stated that he is not a transportation expert; however he feels that Red Rock Corridor will get their fair share of funding and stated that to the best of his knowledge there is not a lot of movement with any of the other proposed corridors. He commented that no one is getting a lot of money from the State or the Federal government at this point. He is not concerned about an extra 2 to 4 months in the proposed timeline to complete the study by summer 2013. He further mentioned that Dakota County is looking at opening up the first BRT to operate in this region in early 2013 and they could see how it is operating in their own region and observe the BRT's track record first.

Rettman expressed concern that the Red Rock Corridor is not ready to move because they have not updated the numbers. She sees the AAU as just updating the numbers and compares it to Gateway, who she feels is further along. Rettman believes that Red Rock is lagging behind and wants to make sure that they are ready for anything. She pointed out that it is an election year and they need to be ready when the Federal funding is available.

Chair Harris said that there doesn't seem to be much happening on a State or Federal level right now on transit funding. He said if the direction here is to put this on the fast track, then they can certainly look at doing that. Chair Harris stated that staff brought this timetable before them and if the Commission would like to get it back more quickly, and if it is possible they could look at doing that.

Gitzlaff stated that staff shares Rettman's frustration, but the problem is not on the County side but on the need to go to the Federal Transportation Administration side, to have them review the grant agreement and the scope of work to access the Federal funds. Gitzlaff said that they just know from past projects that the FTA's review can take about 5 months, they can certainly fast track it, but they will need FTA to sign off and that could be the hold up on that scope before they release it.

Commission Member Brendmoen does understand that there might be some things that hold them up along the way; however she believes that perhaps they should shorten the timeline to less than a year. She feels that if the expectation is that something may happen in a shorter timeframe, it can and if you have to end up making an exception then so be it, feeling that it would be better than stretching it out as shown.

Harris noted that the timeline was not an action item for this agenda. Gitzlaff stated that this is information only and the next step is drafting an RFP and staff can look at the timeline and where they can speed it up. Gitzlaff's main concern was if the Scope of Work before them is what they want it to be before drafting the RFP. Gitzlaff further explained that staff has done a lot of RFP's and has the expertise to put them together and can certainly look at what can be done to shorten the timeline.

Commission Member Rettman stated that she would be willing to make a motion to speed up the timeline, but would like to hear what other Commission members are thinking.

Commission Member Lehrke stated that she agrees with Rettman and thinks if the timeline could be shortened she would be in favor of that. Lehrke also expressed concern if there might be consequences for rushing through it, than it might be better to leave the time line as it is.

Commission Member Gallagher inquired if staff could put the RFP together at the same time the FTA is reviewing it and make any adjustments after receiving the FTA's comment.

Chair Harris expressed concern, that until they get the approval to spend the money how they want to spend it, why go through the RFP process; if they don't know if they will have the money to be spent? He stated that they could have staff spending a lot of extra time developing something and then not get the approval to spend the money.

Gitzlaff stated that staff will develop the Scope of Work and they have been shifting around staff to manage this and they have enough dedicated resources to manage this study. Gitzlaff also stated that the two things that would hold them up will be: One, the FTA's review of the scope, and he commented that you would want to get an ok from them before you release an RFP, otherwise you might jeopardize use of the funding. Two, the length of time the RFP is out there, as they will also have to follow Federal procurement procedure and allow a minimum of six weeks out per the time limit on Federal processes.

Chair Harris suggested that perhaps they just direct staff, that if there is any way that they can shave some weeks or month off the proposed timeline to do so; as there are several moving parts that they don't have control over with this process.

Rettman expressed that she assumes the FTA has received the outline of the scope of work?

Gitzlaff stated that at Washington County they have somewhat regular contact with the FTA as part of the station planning study.. So, he indicated that staff can get that Scope of Work over to the FTA right away.

Peterson asked for clarification under the Scope of Work section, "Review Recently Completed Studies" and asked Gitzlaff if the Met Council Travel Behavior Inventory and the Region's ridership Model was done or in process? Gitzlaff replied, that the data has been collected, but the update of the regional model still needs to be done and would be done in early 2013.

Rettman asked that the records reflect the Commission's direction that staff speed things up on the proposed timeline as much as possible. Rettman also inquired if they still plan to have a May meeting as previously there had been talk about not and now with the direction just given staff they may need to, especially if staff could have the update on full scope of work for the AAU ready they could speed things up a month. Chair Harris stated that they could still plan to have the meeting and can always cancel later if not needed.

Agenda Item #3: Website Hosting & Communication Services - WCRRA

Gitzlaff explained that, as part of the station area planning study contract, the website was updated and it is the Commission's main platform for communicating with the public and disseminating information. Gitzlaff stated that their prime consultant, Hay Dobbs, effectively managed and completed the work during the study and provided ongoing website hosting and maintenance services through a subcontract with Appevision and that the contract for those services will be expiring at the end of June. Gitzlaff mentioned that for 2012 they do have money budgeted for website hosting and management; and that staff had requested that Hay Dobbs put together a proposal, see Hay Dobbs proposal on page 13 of meeting packet. Hay Dobbs proposed to complete the website hosting and up to 3 hours of maintenance service for \$250 per month (\$1,500 for 6 months) through a subcontract with Appevision and to provide supplemental communication services billed at an hourly rate up to a not to exceed amount of \$6,500, for a total not to exceed contract of \$8,000. Gitzlaff commented that the Commission could direct staff to prepare a not to exceed hourly contract with Hay Dobbs for services from July 1st through December 31st and they could approve at the next meeting, or they could look at other options.

Commission Member Brendmoen was happy that staff received a proposal from Hay Dobbs and thinks that the \$250 is a fair amount. She inquired if there was data available to show who drives users to the website, and who the users of this website are, plus how much traffic they have, or how many new visitors they get each month. Gitzlaff did not have the specifics with him for this past month, but responded, that during the station area planning phase, there were between 300 and 500 visits per month and the referrals to the site have been coming mainly from the Met Council, Cities and County partners of the Commission. Gitzlaff said they occasionally do receive some comments submitted to the email associated with the website. He also commented that there is an e-newsletter option that people can subscribe to and it has grown to around 500 people. Brendmoen asked Gitzlaff if he can tell who the audience on the website is. Gitzlaff said that Google analytics does not offer that information, and social websites, such as Facebook offers more along the lines of that type of information. Brendmoen stated that the Red Rock Corridor is a nice simple website and it is not a lot of money they are talking about, but she questioned if they really needed their own website, or if they could look at making the Red Rock Corridor information available through another site.

Rettman expressed concern that if they do not have or add anything new to a website people will not keep coming back to it. She stated that people need to have a reason to return to a website so they would need to show continuous progress and updates or it will become stagnant. Rettman asked what are they going to have on the website that will make people want to visit.

Gitzlaff shared a few examples of information that could be published on the website, such as: the Newport Transit Station moving into the design stage, information about the bus transit facility, City and County announcements relating to their project, and links to the Union Depot or High Speed Rail information. Gitzlaff stated there are several things going on where they could utilize the website to provide information to the public.

Lehrke asked what is the threshold to go out and get bids on something like this. Gitzlaff stated that it is at the discretion of the Commission on how they would like to hire someone, and in Washington County under \$25,000 they can just do a vendor contract and not go out for an RFP, so that is typically a protocol that would be followed. Gitzlaff stated there are a few ways to do this; they could do RFP's with a scope of work, or requests for information whereby people submit their qualification and the Commission choose by a short list. The reason only Hay Dobbs was asked to submit a proposal is because effectively they had done the work through the duration of the station planning study and since it is a relatively small contract amount and they submitted their proposal it was enclosed. Gitzlaff commented that Hay Dobbs is very eager to continue working on this project. Lehrke has no problem with the website or what has been done, however she does agree with some of the comments that have been made and was just wondering if Hay Dobbs would be willing to go to a per time fee amount to update the website, rather than hourly rate not to exceed contract if they only need to update the website a few times yet this year.

Chair Harris stated that the Commission could choose to do what they wish with the website and just needed to provide staff with some direction.

Brendmoen added that she likes the idea of having Hay Dobbs work for the Commission on a per needed basis and she feels that the rates Hay Dobbs put forward is reasonable and believed that a typical advertising agency would charge two times that amount. Brendmoen wondered if they need a standalone website, or if they need the newsletters and perhaps they could do an occasional press release; but she was concerned that maybe they do need their own site since not anyone of their cities or townships house this project. Brendmoen feels that the amounts listed are reasonable for the website communications. She thinks the site is nice and simple but she just doesn't know if it's needed.

Chair Harris stated that this item is not an action item, but that staff was going to propose and bring back a not to exceed contract with Hay Dobbs, so unless the Commission wants to give other direction to staff and make a motion at the next meeting this would come back as a contract.

Gallagher asked if next month would be too late to make changes because the website could go down. Chair Harris stated that they have until the end of June to line something

up. Chair Harris also stated that he is fine with the staff recommendation. Brendmoen stated that she is fine with the staff recommendation; she just has a broader over all question regarding the need for the site.

Chair Harris stated that this contract would only take them through 2012 and this fall when they are developing their 2013 budget they could have a broader discussion on what to do with the website at that time.

Agenda Item #4: Newport Transit Station Design Update - WCRRA

Gitzlaff did not have a formal presentation, but did want to give an update and provided a handed out at the meeting showing a broader design summary and project schedule by quarter, from 2010 through mid 2013. His handout also showed each phase since land acquisition. Gitzlaff stated that there have been two meetings of the projects technical committee so far and the design is in the conception phase. Gitzlaff also suggested that the consultant could come to the Commission meeting to provide an update and to receive the Commission's input in the process.

Rettman asked Gitzlaff that as they go through some of the phases of the Newport Transit Station project schedule and the steps to the design process if they could place some of that information on the website. She felt that it might help drive people to the website and let people know what they are thinking about. Rettman asked if this is something that Hay Dobbs could place on the website. Gitzlaff responded that is exactly the type of information they would want to place on the website.

Agenda Item #5: Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission Update - RCRRA

Gitzlaff stated the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission did not meet last month and asked to table this item until the next meeting when they should have a more formal presentation on information from that group.

Agenda Item #6 Legislative Update – RCRRA

Josh Olson of Ramsey County summarized new activity to date from what was provided with the meeting packet.

a. State

Olson said that on the State level the Omnibus transportation bill continues to pass through committees and seems to have taken a back seat in some ways compared to other discussions going on at the State Capital, but is all inter-related with multiple things going on. Olson also stated that the bonding bill on the House and Senate sides did not contain transit related investments, but that in the Governor's version of the transportation bill transit funding is supported.

b. Federal

Olson provided a quick update on the information included with the packet, commenting on a few things have happen since. Olson stated that action by the House on the transportation bill passed April 18th extending it until the end of September along with a couple of riders. Now the House and the Senate each have a different version of the transportation bill going on to start the conference process. The bill does carry a couple of items up for debate, and one is the Keystone Oil

pipeline project. Olson expressed that while this is good movement they are not in the clear as extending is a reoccurring theme.

Agenda Item #7 Other

a. New Starts NPR Regional Comments

Gitzlaff stated that the FTA issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the New Starts/Small Starts Program. The packet contained comment letters from CTIB and the Met Council on the proposed rulemaking.

b. Next Meeting- Thursday, May 31, 2012:

Next meetings are scheduled for May 31, 2012 and June 28, 2012.

Motion by Gallagher to adjourn. Seconded by Lehrke. **All in favor.** Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:01p.m.