



Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2010

Cottage Grove City Hall

3:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Myra Peterson, Washington County
Joe Harris, Dakota County
Mark Stenglein, Hennepin County
Janice Rettman, Ramsey County
Lee Helgen, City of St Paul
Barb Hollenbeck, City of Hastings
Cam Gordon, City of Minneapolis
Jen Peterson, City of Cottage Grove
Corbin Hopkins, City of Newport
John Hunziker, City of St Paul Park

Others Present:

Josh Olson, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County Regional Railroad Authority
Jon Solberg, MnDOT
Judy Mitchell, Canadian Pacific
Tom Dobbs, Hay Dobbs

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Marc Mogan, Prairie Island Indian Community
Ken Bjornstad, Goodhue County

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm.

Roll Call: Corb Hopkins, City of Newport
Barb Hollenbeck, City of Hastings
Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County Staff
Myra Peterson, Washington County
John Hunziker, City of St Paul Park
Jen Peterson, City of Cottage Grove
Lee Helgen, City of St Paul
Janice Rettman, Ramsey County
Joe Harris, Dakota County
Mark Stenglein, Hennepin County
Mark Mogren, Prairie Island
Ken Bjornsted, Goodhue County
Tracy Guild, Washington County Staff

Agenda Item #1 Consent Items

- a. Minutes of the October 28, 2010 Meeting**
- b. Checks and Claims**

Commission Member John Hunziker moved the approval of the Consent Items. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Stenglein and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #2 2011 Work Plan and Budget - WCRRA

Mr. Gitzlaff indicated the 2011 Work Plan and Budget were discussed a few times at previous meetings, so he would only review the changes in the work plan and budget. He referred the Commission Members to page 4 of 7 of the budget. The proposed budget is to continue the standard \$70,000 budget amount, but would make a change for travel and advocacy trips to bring the amount down to zero and put the remaining funds into a contingency fund. He referred to item 3 in the operating budget notes: Out of state travel costs to transit conferences, to learn about another transit system, or advocacy trip to Washington D.C. will be the responsibility of each individual member unless the Commission's financial members unanimously approve the use of contingency funds to pay for travel. He noted that the travel policy decision would be pushed into the next year's discussion with the new Red Rock Corridor Commission.

Commission Member Rettman acknowledges her appreciation of the changes in the budget language but noted that it doesn't change the bottom line in the budget. Commission Member Jen Peterson questioned if some board decisions could be made by email. Mr. Gitzlaff indicated that the current by-laws don't allow for this, but this could be something that could be changed in the future. He emphasized the need for every county or city to appoint a member and an alternate to allow for a fill-in when the member is unable to attend the meeting. If this happens it may not be an issue. Commission Member Rettman indicated that she doesn't feel email voting would be a viable option and would be reluctant to approve that change. Mr. Gitzlaff noted that a change in the by-laws would have to be adopted by the Commission and it may need to be approved by the each member of the Commissions respective agency.

Commission Member Stenglein moved the approval of the 2011 Work Plan and Budget. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Member Hopkins and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #3 2011 State Legislative Platform - WCRRA

Mr. Gitzlaff indicated the State Legislative Platform is on the agenda for approval tonight. He reviewed the platform priorities included in the agenda packets.

1. Support for Newport Park-and-Ride.
2. Support for High Speed Passenger Rail.
3. Support for Union Depot.
4. Support for Hoffman Junction/Interlocking Improvements.
5. Support for the Minneapolis Interchange.
6. Red Rock Corridor commuter bus service to Hastings and Newport.

He instructed the Commission Members to review the handout they received today, about the Minneapolis Interchange. He reminded the Members that the intermodal project team were out here and presented some information in January, but would also come out at a later date to give another presentation if the Commission desired. He noted that in a discussion recently with the project manager, he indicated that the opposition to this project was specifically referring one of the rail yard potential locations. One of these locations was the Harrison neighborhood also known as Basset Creek. There had been an ongoing discussion in regard to the affect of development if there is a rail yard located in that neighborhood. Mr. Gitzlaff noted that he had been in contact with Hennepin County and currently there is nothing proposed for this area. Currently, their legislative platform remains focused on connecting the central and southwest corridors together. They will continue to do outreach as this area develops, as well as further analysis and any necessary environmental mitigation.

Commission Member Rettman expressed her concern that there is a large sum of money being spent on The Union Depot and understands there are potential lawsuits that might result from ownership issues on this property. Commission Member Stenglein confirmed that the intermodal and interchange property Hennepin County does own. He indicated that the neighborhood opposition was in regard to the storage tracks west of there. This was additional land that they were going to purchase but has been off the table since November 2, 2010. There are two functioning trains coming in there now; so central is a reality and southwest a possibility. Commission Chair Peterson suggested the Board goes forward to continue to advocate for this on our platform; but the reality is that there may not be funds at the federal & state level. Commission Member Stenglein noted that the Central Corridor will be a reality due to open in 2014. Commission Member Rettman is concerned with supporting this interchange and would like to take this item off the platform. Commission Member Harris indicated he is not interested in taking this off the platform and feels we should be supportive of transit outside of the Red Rock Corridor area. Commission Chair Peterson reminds the Commission Members that this is a vision and we need to be supportive, and not dwell on picking apart some items. She preferred to vote on the platform as one item, but if there is a motion to separate them out and address each item individually, we could also do that.

Commission Member Rettman wanted the minutes to clearly reflect her concerns about the Minneapolis Interchange project being part of the legislative platform.

Commission Member Stenglein moved the approval of the 2011 State Legislative Platform. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Jen Peterson and passed unanimously.

Commission Chair Peterson suggested that the Commission have a presentation in regard to the Minneapolis Interchange in early 2011. It was reminded to all Board Members that the platform is not in any specific order. Additionally, this platform is something that each member needs to incorporate into their individual corridor platform. Mr. Gitzlaff will send out our legislative agenda to all our legislature members in the corridor.

Agenda Item #4 Station Area Planning Study Update – Hay Dobbs

Tom Dobbs presented an update on the Station Area Planning Study. He provided a power point presentation of the progress of the Station Area Planning Study.

He stated that we are currently in the Community Outreach, Process and Feedback stage which includes:

- Community Newsletters

- Newsletter #1 (Oct. 2010) Newsletter #2 (Dec 2010). Total of four newsletters

- Website updates – (ongoing)

- E-News Blasts (ongoing)

- North Star Maintenance Facility Tour (Nov 2010)

- CP/BNSF RR Review and Comment (October 2010)

- Planning Commission & Council Updates (TBD)

- PMT and CAC Monthly Meeting (Ongoing)

- Second Public Meeting/Open House (January, 2011). He presented the Commission members a handout of the update of the open house, with the dates in January of January 10, 11, 12 and 13.

Mr. Dobbs indicated that, since the last meeting, there has been a process to select the preferred site in Cottage Grove for the red Rock station. The project team presented both sites; (Hamlet Park & Langdon Village) in visioning sessions and at public meeting #1 where they used an audience response system to gain real-time feedback from participants. He continued to present some of the results of the study. These results included who participated in the study and where they lived and worked. Commission Chair Peterson reminded the Commission that the Langdon Village site is in the true center of the city. Additional questions specifically focused on which site best met the City's needs now and in the future, as well as each individuals preferred location. Langdon Village Station was the preferred location in both situations. The project team shared these results with the Cottage Grove City Council and the Railroads. He confirmed that since then, the City of Cottage Grove has endorsed the Langdon Village Site. Both Commission Chair Peterson and Commission Member Jen Peterson commented on how effective the use of the audience response system was at that public meeting.

Mr. Dobbs continued to provide an update on the proposed station sites.

Lower Afton Station:

He referred to the parking deck to the north with a bus feeder loop and a car drop-off loop with an overhead bridge that comes up to the platform. All of this is consistent with what we have seen prior, but in more detail now. Buses and dial a ride can come in and circulate down and drop off. There is a small plaza near Point Douglas Road as well as a small civic amenity. The fall of the landscape slopes down from Point Douglas Road to the river, so upon entry you are at grade and then it drops down to the ramp lower level. Existing Park-and-Ride facility will be returned to storm water management and open space. He noted that the distance coming across the parking ramp is about 250 feet.

This is the shortest distance due to the existing constraints where the current rail way is, and the infrastructure will be enclosed similar to the Coon Rapids Station. This will keep people out of elements, but will not be heated or cooled. Commission Member Stenglein questioned the platform length. Mr. Dobbs indication it is 600 feet with a 5 -6 car train set with the ability to extend to a 7 – 8 car train set. They wouldn't accommodate a 10 car train due to cost. Mr Dobbs. Noted that during the design phase this question may arise again. Additionally, there is a planned MnDOT trail connecting to Battle Creek Park, providing bike and pedestrian access down to the platform itself. The plan is for a 265-car-single-deck parking structure to begin with and upgrade to a double deck as needed. The current Park-and-Ride is over capacity at 110 stalls.

Newport:

Mr. Dobbs indicated that through dialogue with the railroads and those participating in the visioning sessions, it had been determined to allow for some industry to stay and become a quieter eco-industrial park. This will allow for a multi-modal interface with the emphasis in developing Maxwell Avenue as the primary roadway, which is a change from the previous models. The County parcel to the north would be developed over time and phased into these components. The existing rail spurs will stay which service the cold storage facility. The dashed line on the long term 2040 model, suggested a roadway extension. Due to the existing petroleum tanks, it had been determined to keep the industrial nature of the area rather than promote residential growth; which would mean, light assembly, light manufacturing, office, or office warehouse. The new scheme respects the existing plat, and just adds a new segment to the existing streets. It is a fairly inexpensive scheme to development, with new uses in one area but the existing uses will stay. It is believed that this is a better path to success in the overall plan.

Langdon Village:

Mr. Dobbs continued to explain that the Near-Term- 2020 focus on Langdon Village is on property already owned by the City of Cottage Grove. This will allow for the development of a Park-and-Ride facility in the near-term as a surface lot that will be developed in the long-term as a structured facility that then will connect to the transit plaza and the platform. Most changes won't occur until we see the commuter rail system is in place. In the Long- Term 2040; development will be on the historic city grid. Its main focus is on a public open space to connect the eastern edge of the station back to the transit plaza itself. The automobile orientated uses will remain on the edge of the development. The north-northwest area will remain mixed use for office and retail. The south area will be a residential village. The overall plan allows for a commonsense approach which allows for reasonable development without massive infrastructure changes.

Hastings:

Mr. Dobbs indicated that the model for the Hastings site is the same as we have reviewed in the past. It focuses on the Park-and-Ride north of Second Street fronted by commercial and mixed use buildings. It could then be expanded to the north as development progresses. The potential for an open-air-use public plaza would be in the center. The southern end would focus on new multi-family residential development. A new addition to the model is in an Interpretive Center or Information Center on the Riverfront.

Mr. Dobbs informed the Commission Members of the timeline progress of the Station Area Planning Study:

Current Focus:

(November to January)

Refining the plans – Incorporate the environmental historical aspects

Develop Illustrations & Models

Develop Rail Platform Components- Modeled from the North Star Rail

Quantify Potential Development & Required Infrastructure

Develop Outline Cost Estimates

Public Meetings/Open Houses-Round 2

Mr. Dobbs referred the Commission Members to the hand out provided today with the upcoming dates and locations for the Open Houses in January.

1/10/11	Newport at the Newport City Hall
1/11/11	Hastings at the Hastings City Hall
1/12/12	Cottage Grove at the Cottage Grove City Hall
1/13/14	St Paul at the Battle Creek Recreation Center

Agenda Item #5 East Metro Rail Capacity Study Update – RCRRA

Josh Olson indicated that the Project Manager Mike Rogers was unable to make this presentation. He noted that they will come back after the New Year to make a full presentation. The East Metro Rail Capacity Study started earlier this year and it is an 18-month study. The study is to evaluate railroad capacity on the east metro; specifically focused around The Union Depot but also all the railroad corridors that enter St Paul through the east and the south. The study is about getting trains in and out of The Union Depot and up and down the Corridor. He reminded the Commission that 5% of all freight rail in the country enters and leaves the Hoffman Yard. It is an important area in the railroad yard. Mr. Olson informed the Commission Members that they have been conducting Stakeholder meetings with the Railroads, Cities and Counties. At this phase they are gathering vital information, key issues and constraints. Additionally, they have conducted community engagement meetings that are focused at keeping all residents informed that live near this area. It is a highly congested and active place. The project team is working closely with our railroad partners to find solutions or modifications that might increase capacity through this yard.

He indicated to the Commission Members that they had a very productive meeting on October 27 prior to the High Speed Rail Summit. They were able to have representatives from three of the railroads. All came away with a positive outlook on the progression of this project. They have been meeting with the railroads individually and together to outline the parameters of the next phase of the project, which is modeling. In this phase they will work closely with the key stakeholders to ensure the parameters for this phase meet their needs. He reminded the Members that by early next year we will have more information. Chair Peterson reminded the Commission the importance of this

study, and thanked Ramsey County for working so closely with the Railroad partners to enhance the metro region.

Commission Member Rettman observed that freight is a very important aspect of rail. Our country was built on the freight system and the Railroad Partners own the rail lines. Their accommodation and participation for the development of passenger transportation is greatly appreciated.

Commission Member Hopkins questioned plans for intermodal container site in the St Paul area. Commission Member Rettman indicated that there are currently two in St Paul; one is at the Hwy 280 & Pierce Butler area. She noted that this is an important aspect of rail. Commission Chair Peterson agreed on this importance and reminded the Commission Members that one ton of freight going 426 miles will use only 1 gallon of fuel.

Agenda Item #6 Legislative Update - RCRRA

a. State

Mr. Gitzlaff informed the Commission that we are waiting on the outcome in the Governor's race. There was a big shift in the State Legislature. Not only a change to a Democratic controlled Senate but an overall 30% change in new members. With the new Legislature coming in, there remains some uncertainty with regard to projects and the bonding bill. Some suggestions are that there may be a small bonding bill to no bonding bill. Also he noted that the committee appointments were recently announced. Denny McNamara will be the committee chair for the State Governor Finance Committee. In regard to other changes for representation, the Commission should look closely at the new members as to who we should target for our platform planks.

b. Federal

Andy Gitzlaff informed the Commission Members that there is more uncertainty at the Federal Level. The Senate has a slim Democratic majority. In the House side, Minnesota lost Oberstar. This will result in new committee chairs, most notably the committee that Oberstar chaired will now be replaced with John Mica from Florida. He has stated support for Highways and transit; but has had skepticism for high speed rail and the grants programs of the Obama administration. Additionally, the surface transportation bill reauthorization has been extended numerous times; and is now due to be extended to July 4th of next year. Commission Chair Peterson indicated that she received an email this afternoon that suggested that if they can obtain the approval for the extension yet this year, they will try to extend it for two more years. She encouraged all members to email their congress members and suggest the continuation of the Surface Transportation Bill. Lastly, Mr. Gitzlaff noted that in regard to the elections in Wisconsin and Ohio, where the governors indicated that they will return the rail money or reallocated the funding to only road projects; he suggested that we continue to focus on the importance of our projects as this does have a big impact on the future. Commission Chair Peterson additionally noted that Talgo was contracted to manufacture rail cars in Wisconsin bringing in 600-800 jobs, and it has been indicated that if the Governor returns the transportation funding that Talgo will take the manufacturing jobs with them out of state.

Agenda Item #7 Other

a. Next Meeting- Thursday, December 30, 2010

Commission Member Gordon noted an additional item for the agenda. He presented and read Resolution 2010-08, a Resolution thanking Commissioner Myra Peterson for her many years of service, advocacy and leadership on the Red Rock Corridor Commission. He personally noted that he and many other Board members have appreciated her leadership of our Board and her years of advocacy.

Commission Member Helgen thanked Commission Chair Peterson for all her dedication and leadership of her community over all these years.

Commission Member Harris extended his very best wishes to Commission Chair Peterson. He noted it had been a pleasure working with her on many committees and she has been an excellent County Commissioner representing Washington County. You will be missed on the Eastern Side of the Metro area.

Commission Member Rettman referenced the great relationship they have had over the years. She noted the strength that Commission Chair Peterson had in making everyone listen and understand what you said. It will take many others to fill your shoes.

Commission Member Peterson indicated that on behalf of the City of Cottage Grove, thank you for everything, you have been an amazing resource.

Commission Member Hollenbeck extended her appreciation from the City of Hastings. There has never been a stronger advocate for the City of Hastings Commuter Bus Station.

Commission Member Hunziker on behalf of the City of St Paul Park thanked Commission Chair Peterson for her dedication and service. You always had time to listen when anyone had a problem.

Commission Member Hopkins of Newport recognized all the great things you have done for all of us. You will be sorely missed by us all. Thank you.

Commission Member Gordon moved the approval of the Resolution 2010-08. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Hunziker and passed unanimously.

There being no further business Commission Member Gordon moved a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Member Hunziker and it passed unanimously.

The Commission adjourned at 4:48 p.m.