

Minutes

Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: December 18, 2003

Members Present:

Lanny Wilson, Board of Transportation, Chair
Laura Padgett, City of Wilmington, Vice-Chair
Gary Doetsch, Council Member, Carolina Beach
Jane Gilbert, Council Member, Town of Leland
Nancy Pritchett, Commissioner, New Hanover County
Jim Quinn, City of Wilmington
Avery Roberts, Mayor, Wrightsville Beach
Bill Sue, Commissioner, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Mayor, Town of Navassa

Staff Present:

Mark Tinkler, Senior Transportation Planner, Wilmington MPO

1. Call to Order:

Vice-Chairman Bill Sue called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

2. Election of the new Chairman:

Vice Chairman Sue made the motion to elect Mr. Wilson as Chairman of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Ms. Gilbert seconded the motion. Mr. Quinn made a substitute motion to nominate Ms. Padgett as Chairman. There was no second for the substitute motion. Mr. Sue called for discussion.

Ms. Padgett expressed her concern to members over a possible dilution of impact by not having separate strong Board of Transportation (BOT) and TAC Chair representation in Raleigh.

Mr. Quinn asked Mr. Wilson if he represented the BOT on any other MPO TACs. Mr. Wilson said no and told members that Mr. Sewell represents the BOT in Jacksonville. He said he is on the RPO TAC, but no other MPOs. He told members that under the current set of circumstances with the projects that are underway, he feels it would be a benefit at this unique time, to have the BOT member as TAC chair.

Mr. Doetsch told members he felt that any lobbying efforts would not be affected by the chairman carrying a dual role because the TAC would participate as a group in any lobbying efforts.

Ms. Padgett expressed concern that since the TAC answers to elected officials, it may be more appropriate to have an elected official as chair.

With the end of discussion, Mr. Sue called for a vote on the original motion to elect Mr. Wilson as chairman. The motion carried in a 7-1 vote.

Mr. Tinkler reminded members that the Vice-Chairman also needs to be re-elected for the new term. Mr. Quinn nominated Ms. Padgett for Vice Chairman. Ms. Pritchett seconded the motion. With there being no other nominations, Mr. Wilson called for a vote. Ms. Padgett was elected Vice-Chairman unanimously.

3. Approval Of Minutes for October 30th

Mayor Willis made the motion to approve the October 30th meeting minutes and Ms. Gilbert seconded the motion. The vote to approve the minutes carried unanimously.

4. Public Comment Period:

There was no one in attendance that wished to speak.

5. Old Business

Chairman Wilson asked members if there were any items of old business to be discussed. With there being no items, Mr. Wilson said we would move on to item 6.

6. NC133 growth and development issues – Three resolutions:

Mr. Wilson recognized Mr. Tinkler.

Mr. Tinkler told members he circulated a memo with maps and the proposed resolutions. He explained that essentially we are requesting an NCDOT feasibility study of route 133 from 17/74 down to Town Creek, which is the MPO boundary. The NC133 feasibility study would be funded by NCDOT. There is currently an on-going Route 17 study across Brunswick County that is also looking at access issues. Making sure the collector street plan is in place for the two roadways in this portion of the County is essential to the success of both corridor studies. Funding for the collector street plan can be allocated by de-programming the Military Cutoff Extension Corridor Collector Street Preliminary Engineering Feasibility Study previously funded, and reallocating a portion of those funds to the new project.

a. NC133 Feasibility Study Request:

Ms. Padgett moved the motion. Mr. Sue seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion carried unanimously.

b. Delete funds programmed for Military Cutoff Collector Street Preliminary Engineering Feasibility Study (-\$70,000):

Mr. Sue moved the motion. Ms. Gilbert seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion carried unanimously.

c. NC133/Route 17 Collector Street Plan (+41,160)

Ms. Gilbert moved the motion. Ms. Padgett seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion carried unanimously.

7. Regional household and employment forecasting for Long Rang Transportation Plan:

Mr. Tinkler apologized to members for the late introduction of this item. The item needs to be addressed now in order to get a regional growth forecast for the traffic forecasting model. He told members he has been in contact with Dr. Hammer, a private consultant, who has provided a cost estimate for the project. Dr. Hammer has done similar forecasts for Charlotte and Asheville and they were happy with his work. The cost figure for the project is \$16,000 and will be subject to local match by members. Dr. Hammer will provide residential and employment forecasts for sub-areas within the four county region. It will give us the control totals that we will use to sub-allocate to the model transportation analysis zones. For residential development we will work with local members and go through zone by zone to review what development is expected. These control

totals will give a realistic check on these locally derived totals. The employment growth forecast will be the most valuable, as we have no other source for this information. We are in a time crunch and Dr. Hammer could have initial data results in about 90 days if this item is approved tonight. Ms. Padgett made the motion for approval. Mr. Doetsch seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the vote carried unanimously.

8. 2004 Meeting Calendar:

Mr. Tinkler told members the date selections were an effort to avoid conflict with NC Board of Transportation meeting weeks. The January meeting is scheduled for Thursday the 29th. Ms. Padgett pointed out that the City's Budget Retreat is scheduled for January 29th.

Ms. Pritchett told members that as the schedule stands, the meetings will conflict with County staff meetings for a few of the dates proposed. When County Commissioners meet the 1st Monday in the month, their staff meetings are held the Thursday before that Monday. January 29th is one of those dates.

With that in mind, Mr. Wilson suggested that the next meeting date be set for Wednesday, January 28, and come back and review dates for the next several months. Meeting times will stand at 4:00pm. Mr. Wilson suggested to Mr. Tinkler that he send out an email to members inquiring which day of the week will work best with their schedule.

9. North Carolina Turnpike Authority meeting in Wilmington – March 17-18, 2004:

Mr. Wilson told members that the NC Turnpike Authority meeting will be held here March the 17th and 18th for the purpose of soliciting input and level of support from the community for a Southern Bridge between New Hanover and Brunswick County. The 1st of the input meetings was held in Gastonia a couple weeks ago with 179 people registered. The meeting in March will be our opportunity to show local support for building the facility now versus years in the future. Mr. Wilson reiterated that it is absolutely imperative that we have strong community support.

Mr. Don Bennett with the RPO asked Mr. Wilson what was his sense of timing for the new bridge. He told members he was discussing the project with the Secretary of Transportation a few weeks ago and his idea is that if we did a design/build bridge, optimistically it could be built in 10 years. The project can move along at a faster pace because federal funds are not being used.

10. Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) membership:

Mr. Tinkler told members this item was continued from the October meeting. There had been some discussion in favor of the Wilmington MPO rejoining the national organization. The national organization provides lobbying and research to keep its members informed regarding important issues affecting MPOs. The membership fees have been restructured and now are based on population to encourage the smaller MPOs to join. The dues for the Wilmington MPO will be \$860 per year. He told members he feels it is a valuable organization and recommends that our MPO join. With no further discussion, Ms. Padgett moved the motion and Mr. Doetsch seconded it. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

11. North Carolina Transportation Hall of Fame request:

Mr. Tinkler told members he received communication from a group establishing the North Carolina Transportation Hall of Fame. They are just getting their efforts off the ground and are trying to get word out regarding their efforts. They are only requesting support on the principal that the Transportation Hall of Fame and the MPO have a mutual interest in recognizing, commemorating, and rewarding excellence in transportation. They have sent a form for us to complete that will

identify ourselves as a cooperating agency. No funding has been requested at this point, they only want acknowledgement of their organization. Mr. Tinkler asked members if they would like him to complete and return the form. Mr. Doetsch moved the motion and Mr. Sue seconded it. With no further discussion the vote carried unanimously.

12. Project Updates:

a. Transit Service Master Plan:

Mr. Tinkler told members that staff is making significant progress on the Transit Service Master Plan. Implementation of this plan will significantly restructure the public transit system in this area. The current draft report can be downloaded from the consultant's web site. Public meetings were held on December 4th.

Mr. Tinkler told Mayor Willis that the Brunswick Connector route is being added to the master plan.

Ms. Gilbert asked when the route is taken over by the WNHTA, will the Brunswick side get a place on the Board. Mr. Tinkler and Mr. Wilson both agreed the issue may be given consideration once the merger is complete.

Mr. Tinkler he also want to remind members that there will be a joint meeting of the New Hanover County Commissioners and Wilmington City Council for a presentation on the transit plan and issues that will need to be addressed by both bodies in creating the new Authority in late February.

b. Regional Travel Survey Report:

Mr. Tinkler told members that he has taken delivery of the Regional Travel Survey Report. He has a limited number of copies available. The PDF is also available for download if you prefer. Please contact him for information regarding the download site.

c. Navassa Collector Plan Update:

Mayor Willis told members he would like to update everyone on the Navassa Collector Street Plan. The efforts are going well. The Contractors for the project, the Town Planning Board and the Town Council, all met on the 25th of November to go over the details for the project. They anticipated having a Preliminary Collector Street Plan ready by the middle of March.

13. New Business:

Mr. Wilson told members he has two items of new business.

a. Multimodal Modal Facility Tour :

The rail division has been working closely with the City to schedule a bus tour of Multimodal Modal facilities in the state for mid-February. The purpose of the tour is to take a closer look at opportunities associated with the development of a multi-modal transportation facility. This is a one-day trip and Mr. Tinkler said he will provide the TAC and other interested parties with the itinerary and details for the trip as they become available.

b. Department of Transportation NC Moving Ahead Public Transportation Portion:

The Board of Transportation has slated the approval of the Moving Ahead Public Transportation portion in January. Mr. Wilson told members he is a little hesitant to mention this because it has been on their agenda for the last two months but continues to be delayed. Our area has the most funds allocated for projects. Of the \$54 million that will hopefully be allocated in January, we have about \$8.5 million for projects within the area.

The majority of this funding would be targeted for the new Wave Transit maintenance/administration/transfer facility.

14. Announcements:

Mr. Sue said he had one announcement he would like to make. Tonight is Ms. Jane Gilbert's last meeting with us and he wanted to take the opportunity to thank her for her dependable and faithful service to this board. Everyone joined in applause for a job well done and told her how much she will be missed.

Mr. Wilson said he had one other thing he wanted to briefly mention. There is a small amount of funding available in Division 3-Small Urban Funds that have not been allocated. If you have sidewalks, turn lanes, small resurfacing projects that members would like to see funded, requests need to be made in January so they can be allocated.

15. Adjournment:

With there being no further business, Mr. Sue moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:03.

Respectfully submitted

Mark Tinkler
TAC Secretary
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