

Meeting Minutes
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning
Organization Board Meeting
Date: March 29, 2017

Members Present:

Gary Doetsch, Town of Carolina Beach
David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington
Skip Watkins, New Hanover County
Jonathan Barfield, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

Others Present:

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO
Karen Collette, Division Engineer, NCDOT

1. Call to Order

Mr. Doetsch called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Reminder

Mr. Doetsch asked if any members had a conflict of interest with any items on the meeting agenda. No members reported having a conflict of interest.

3. Approval of Board Members' Excused Absence

Mr. Doetsch stated that the following board members have requested to be excused from today's meeting: Ms. Emily Swearingen, Mr. Eulis Willis, and Mr. Hank Miller.

Mr. Kozlosky added that Mr. Joe Breault, and either Mr. Landon Zimmer or Mr. Danny McComas are also not able to attend today's meeting.

Mr. Doetsch noted that Mr. Mike Forte is present in place of Mr. Williams.

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to excuse the absence of Ms. Swearingen, Mr. Willis, Mr. Miller, Mr. Breault, Mr. Zimmer and/or Mr. McComas from the meeting. Mr. Piepmeyer seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Kozlosky requested that several items be added to the discussion portion of the agenda as follows: acknowledgement of Ms. Penny Bray's last meeting due to her retirement; introduction of Ms. Tracy Manning; and the scheduling of a potential June 15, 2017 meeting at 1:30 p.m. for a meet and greet with Transportation Secretary James H. Trogdon, III.

Ms. Batleman made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Mr. Rivenbark, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment Period

Mr. deAndré Corniffe spoke to the board. He expressed concerns regarding traffic and public safety impacts to neighborhood streets as potential consequences of planned railroad crossing closures identified in the Traffic Separation Study (TSS). He requested that the crossings, particularly at Henry and Clay Streets, not be closed without further opportunity for public input.

A question/answer and discussion period was held. Mr. Kozlosky explained the closure process, which includes adoption of the TSS by Council and the MPO Board, identification of funding by the NCDOT, and inclusion of improvements in the MPO's long-range plan for funding. He noted that the number of

recommended public closures was scaled back due to public input. He added that the closures have not be designed yet and would need to return to Council for the local contribution and feedback on design. He pointed out that today's action would adopt the plan only, and that the public would have further opportunity to comment.

Ms. Jennifer Maksymiak spoke to the Board regarding the 140-Bypass through Leland. She expressed concerns regarding the lack of a barrier between the highway and her neighborhood. She requested that the board consider a barrier that would enhance public safety such as a six (6)-foot-tall chain-link or privacy fence. She noted that she signed a waiver regarding the Bypass when she bought her home four and a half (4½) years ago, but did not expect it to be so close to the highway.

Ms. Collette explained that the DOT has no opportunities in these areas. She noted that the Declaration of Recordation was completed before the Compass Pointe and Windsor Park neighborhoods existed; and, no noise studies were done prior to their development. She noted that Compass Pointe left an adequate border between the edge of the right-of-way and its homes; however, Windsor Park did not. She added that the DOT has standards for controlled access designs. She suggested that the developer could install a measure if it were to meet DOT design criteria. She explained that the Department has no funds for installations after the fact.

6. Presentations

a. Cape Fear River Crossing, Joanna Rocco, AECOM

Ms. Joanna Rocco gave a presentation/update on the Cape Fear River Crossing Project. She acknowledged the presence of AECOM Deputy Project Manager Celia Foushee and Project Engineer Neil Dean, and NCDOT Project Engineer Jay McInnis. She distributed copies of the project impact table and reminded the board that the Cape Fear River Crossing study was reinitiated in 2013. She noted that functional designs on 12 Detailed Study Alternatives (DSA) have been completed; technical documentation is in progress; and meetings with agencies are anticipated in a couple of months, followed by preparation of a draft environmental statement, for which data is currently being collected and evaluated.

In response to a request by Ms. Batleman, Ms. Rocco responded that Concurrence Point (CP) 2A will be held in Wilmington at the end of May. Mr. Kozlosky stated that he would forward meeting details to the Board for attendance in a guest capacity when finalized.

Ms. Rocco gave an overview of various recommended crossings, and a status update of current and upcoming tasks. A question and answer period followed.

Mr. Watkins made a motion to schedule a work session to discuss the proposed alternatives at 1:30 p.m. prior to the regularly scheduled WMPO Board meeting of April 26, 2017. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rivenbark and carried unanimously.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that he would forward today's presentation on river crossings to board members.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

The minutes for the February 22, 2017 meeting were approved unanimously.

b. Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area MPO's FY 18 Unified Planning Work Program

c. Resolution Certifying the Transportation Planning Process for the Wilmington Urban Area MPO

d. Resolution amending the FY 16- 17 Unified Planning Work Program

e. Resolution approving the STIP/MTIP Amendments (January)

- f. **Resolution approving the STIP/MTIP Modifications (February)**
- g. **Resolution adopting the Wilmington Traffic Separation Study**
- h. **Resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation designate the Hampstead Bypass as US 17 Bypass and retain US 17 on the existing route**

Mr. Barfield made the motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Watkins seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

8. Regular Agenda

Mr. Barfield requested that page numbers accompany Items on the agenda face, especially big projects.

a. Resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation re-examine the Traffic Noise Policy

Mr. Kozlosky stated that issues have occurred associated with the timeframe between the Date of Public Knowledge and the North Carolina Department of Transportation's building of a project, and surrounding development such as Windsor Park. He noted that the community has expressed a desire for protection from noise. He added that this resolution requests that the North Carolina Department of Transportation re-examine its Traffic Noise Policy. He noted that, if adopted, this resolution would be forwarded to the NCDOT for consideration. A brief question/answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Watkins made the motion to support the resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation re-examine their Traffic Noise Policy. Mr. Doetsch seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

b. Resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation assign all highway projects in the Wilmington Urban Area MPO Planning Area Boundary to the NCDOT Division 3 office

Mr. Kozlosky told members that projects are being managed in two different ways -- some at the central office in Raleigh and others locally by the Division 3 staff. This resolution is to request that all projects within the WMPO be assigned to the local Division office. He noted that the Division office has the ability and has been successful in accelerating projects, and staff would like this success to continue.

A question/answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Piepmeyer made the motion to approve the resolution requesting that NCDOT assign all highway projects in the WMPO planning area boundary to the NCDOT Division 3 office.

Mr. Forte seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

c. Resolution supporting the allocation of Remaining Direct Attributable funds to the Town of Carolina Beach and City of Wilmington

Mr. Lowe told members that the Town of Carolina Beach has requested \$220,000 for the Island Greenway (bikeway) project, and the City of Wilmington, \$240,000, for its Park Avenue (Multi-use path) Phase II Project to support unanticipated costs. He noted that this would come from the reserve that was agreed upon at the last Board meeting.

Mr. Doestch explained that the Town of Carolina Beach is dealing with three (3) different agencies and is having difficulty getting everyone on the same page. He noted that every change requires additional man hours and increases the cost of the project.

Following a brief question/answer and discussion period, Ms. Batleman made the motion to approve the resolution supporting the allocation of Direct Attributable funds to the Town of Carolina Beach and the City of Wilmington. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

9. Discussion

a. STBGP-DA and TASA-DA Reserve Anticipated Expenditures

Mr. Lowe told members that the table included in the agenda packet describes the anticipated additional funding requests. Based on project estimates, the expected overage in fiscal year 2017 (ending in October of this year) is anticipated to be \$718,000, \$460,000 of which was just approved in the prior resolution. In fiscal year 2018 (beginning in October 1st of this year), the projected overage is \$604,000; and in fiscal year 2019, \$486,000. He noted that these are preliminary estimates since a few projects are still in the design phase.

b. Surface Transportation Block Grant Program-Direct Attributable (STBGP-DA) and Transportation Alternatives Set Aside-Direct Attributable (TASA-DA) Process Improvements

Mr. Lowe told members that staff held a workshop on February 21st with TCC members to discuss concerns regarding the STBGP-DA and TASA-DA program. He added that staff also received written comments from members who could not attend the meeting. He categorized comments and concerns the STBGP-DA and TASA-DA process as follows:

1. Project Management

Mr. Lowe reported that staff received several requests for additional assistance due to local agency staffing challenges, particularly those of smaller administrations. He told members that staff introduced a workshop series to provide guidance through the STBGP-DA and TASA-DA process beginning with new projects awarded in January. He noted that NCDOT staff from Raleigh participated in the first hands-on workshop on March 3, 2017 to walk participants through the process of inputting agreement requests into the system. He added that staff hopes to build upon this by holding other workshops; the next in the summer to address onboarding and the competitive selection process for consultants.

2. Preliminary Analysis/Applications

Mr. Lowe stated that concerns revolved around the accuracy of estimates and project scopes. Staff proposed to introduce a "due diligence" process prior to application submittal. He added that it has been implemented in other areas of the state, such as the Raleigh and Greensboro MPOs. He noted that staff will follow-up with proposed process alternatives such as encouraging planners and engineers to meet earlier to improve project design.

3. Project Process and Coordination at the Local Level

Mr. Lowe stated that staff instituted monthly meetings with current project managers in order to discuss project status and help identify potential obstacles to project advancement.

4. NCDOT/FHWA Process

Mr. Lowe told members that although many of these factors are outside the control of the MPO, staff will bring its concerns to the NCDOT. He noted that a question was raised at the workshop regarding increased NCDOT involvement and the cost for NCDOT to take over management of the projects from start to finish. Mr. Lowe said that staff will include it in discussions with the Department if the Board agrees.

A question/answer and discussion period. Mr. Kozlosky proposed to schedule a meeting with the NCDOT and TCC and/or TAC members and other members who wish to attend, such as Town Managers or their representatives, to discuss process improvement.

c. STIP/MTIP Modifications (March)

Mr. Kozlosky told members that the STIP/MTIP Modification for March is for information purposes only. Staff will bring the modification to the Board for consideration at their April meeting.

Additional Items for Discussion

- **Scheduling of a potential June 15, 2017 meeting at 1:30 p.m. for a meet and greet with Transportation Secretary James H. Trogdon, III**
Mr. Doestch made a motion to approve the scheduling of a meet and greet with Secretary Trogdon, seconded by Mr. Barfield, and the motion carried unanimously.
- **Introduction of New Administrative Assistant, Tracy Manning**
- **Recognition of Retiring Administrative Assistant, Penny Bray**
Mr. Doestch read and presented Ms. Bray with a plaque of appreciation for her many years of service to the Board. Ms. Bray expressed appreciation.

10. Updates

Updates are included in the agenda packet.

11. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Kozlosky
Executive Director
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

**THE ABOVE MINUTES ARE NOT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS.
THE ENTIRE PROCEEDINGS ARE RECORDED ON A COMPACT DISC AS PART OF THIS RECORD.**