



Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2010
Washington County South Service Center
Cottage Grove
3:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Myra Peterson, Washington County
Liz Workman, Dakota County
Myron Bailey, City of Cottage Grove
Janice Rettman, Ramsey County
John Hunziker, City of St. Paul Park
Barb Hollenbeck, City of Hastings
Lee Helgen, City of St Paul
Jim Keller, Denmark Township

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Bob Kastner, Red Wing
Marc Mogan, Prairie Island Indian Community
Ken Bjornstad, Goodhue County

Others Present:

Josh Olson, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County Regional Railroad Authority
Tom Dobbs, Hay Dobbs
Allen Lovejoy, City of St Paul
Robert Vockrodt, MnDOT Metro District
Howard Blin, Cottage Grove
Phil Pasterak, Parsons Brinkerhoff
Dean Michalko, Hennepin County
Darin Broton, Tunheim Partners
Brian Anderson, City of Newport
Jon Solberg, MnDOT Metro District
Sam O'Connell, Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 3:36 pm.

Agenda Item #1 New Commission Members

Commission Chair Peterson introduced and welcomed new commission members.

Agenda Item #2 Election of Officers

A motion was made by Commission Member Hunziker to elect Commission Member Myra Peterson as the Chair for the Red Rock Corridor Commission. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Keller, and a motion was made by Commission Member Hunziker to close the nominations and move to proceed with a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Commission Member Hunziker to elect Commission Member Harris as the Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Workman.

A motion was made to close the nominations and move to proceed with a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #3 Consent Items

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

Agenda Item #4 Legislative Update- WCRRA

a. State

Commission Chair Peterson informed the Commission that she and Commission Member Hollenbeck recently testified before the Senate and today before the House Bonding committees. They both agreed it was a very positive experience. Commission Member Hollenbeck indicated she was appreciative of the encouragement by the representatives specifically in regards to the decision to build the park-and-ride directly in the downtown area of Hastings versus outside of town.

Andy Gitzlaff expanded on those comments to detail that the bill that was testified on was the \$500,000 bonding request the design and construction of park-and-ride facilities along the Red Rock Corridor. Even though the session doesn't begin until February 2, both the House and Senate indicated they want to complete this bonding bill very soon.

b. Federal

Andy Gitzlaff informed the Commission that the announcement came through today for the approval of stimulus funds for the high speed rail route from the Twin Cities to Chicago:

- \$833 million total.
- \$820 million for the Milwaukee to Madison extension.
- \$12 million for Chicago to Milwaukee improvements.
- The remaining \$1 million for high level environmental alternative analysis from Madison to the Twin Cities.

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He emphasized that this is a very critical event for the Corridor Commission and the State today. Commission Chair Peterson encouraged all members to go their own caucuses and town hall meetings and talk about the importance of high speed, commuter and freight rail.

Agenda Item #5 Red Rock 2010 Legislative Platform-WCRRA

Mr. Gitzlaff referred the Commission to review the Red Rock Corridor 2010 Legislative Platform. He indicated this is an updated version since the first review at the December meeting. Since the December meeting revisions and additions have been made based on some of the Commission Members requests to make this a more relevant document. He presented to the Commission a highlight of the requested changes:

- In regards to the \$500,000 request for environmental analysis, engineering, acquisition of real property or interest, and construction of a park and ride facility along the Red Rock Corridor Transit Way, we have expanded the focus of the area to include the entire Red Rock Corridor instead of just the Hastings area. This would allow us flexibility to use these funds for additional eligible projects, although Hastings remains the priority project for park-and-ride construction with those funds.
- A request for \$3,600,000 for the implementation for 3-year commuter bus service from Hastings to St. Paul and Minneapolis. This is a mitigation measure during the time when Highway 61 is under construction. We did add this item is not an eligible bonding request; therefore, we need to be looking for operation dollars and have those dollars come out of other sources such as the general fund, which probably won't happen this year due to the states deficit. Another avenue is general highway funds for bridge mitigation since the park-and-ride is adjacent to a state highway.
- The third request is a support statement for the planning and development for high speed rail along the river corridor. This statement has been expanded to include support for the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority, for \$10 million for high speed rail from the Twin Cities to Chicago.
- New support statements include support for the request of \$8.5 million by Ramsey County to match federal funds for environmental, engineering, and property acquisition for the Union Depot hub and support for Ramsey County for \$13.5 million to be allocated to MnDot for the Hoffman Yard, which is a major bottleneck that both passenger and freight rail service.

Commission Member Bailey moved the approval of the legislative platform. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Member Hunziker and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #6 Station Area and Site Master Planning Overview-Hay Dobbs
a. CAC Appointments

Tom Dobbs of Hay Dobbs presented a brief review of the current project status via a power point. He stated that building advocacy, support, and awareness for the project is really the key component to the success of the project.

Darren Broton of Tunheim Partners presented an overview on the new Red Rock Corridor website soon to be launched. Mr. Broton also discussed the upcoming press conference on Monday February 8, 2010 in room 181 at the State Office Building. He also mentioned that they are in the process of designing an electronic newsletter for supporters to help people learn more about the Red Rock Corridor and keep them aware of upcoming events and changes that may be occurring.

Commission Chair Peterson indicated that the cities have appointed members to the Citizens Advisory Committee. Andy stated the list is not in front of him but will get that printed and distributed to all members.

Commission Chair Peterson suggested appointing Sandi Dingle to the Citizen Advisory Committee. Commission Member Hunziker made a motion to appoint Sandy Dingo to the Citizen Advisory Commission. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Workman and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #7 Minneapolis Interchange Project Overview- HCRRA

Commission Chair Peterson introduced Dean Michalko with Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority and Phil Pasterak and Chuck Collins with PB America to discuss planning for the Minneapolis interchange transit hub.

Mr. Michalko distributed a brochure that included an overview of the transit lines we are envisioning someday coming into the area where the Northstar Commuter Rail line and the Hiawatha LRT line currently converge. Mr. Michalko stated that they are planning for the future and setting the stage for a potential full build-out area for when additional services come online, like Red Rock, Northern Lights Express to Duluth, and high speed rail. Currently, \$52 million of local money is being used to prepare for passenger rail, including things like the Cedar Lake Bike Trail, to help get people to this area for transfers to buses, automobiles, high speed rail, and light rail.

Mr. Pasterak presented data through a power point presentation explaining where the study for the interchange is at now. He presented the forecasted commuter/intercity/light rail train operations for station sizing. He indicated the process for this study is due to be completed in May of 2010. He indicated it is important for them to listen to the needs of the community, corridors, and everybody involved in the complex undertaking of this transit process. Railroad freight operations are an important link to the success of the passenger trains as the tracks are owned by the freight operations. It is important to understand their operations and how it affects passenger lines. Additionally, he showed a slide that indicated all the lines that flowed directly into the proposed interchange. He indicated that one of the next items they will be doing is a capacity study to determine how many trains they can fit in the station. Additionally, they will examine alternative station sites.

Commission Member Workman asked when is there just too much stuff coming into the station area. Mr. Pasterak indicated that a big part of the study is to determine the capacity analysis of how many trains, tracks, and platforms will actually work.

Commission Chair Peterson commented that we need to recognize that we are a region and that we need to tie the region together. These hubs are important for the connectivity of the region, and if they are planned and utilized well, it will encourage transit orientated development around those areas.

Agenda Item #8 Draft State Rail Plan Final Report Comments

Commission Chair Peterson referred the members to the draft comment letter in the packet. Commission Member Rettman wanted Commission Members to refer to Chapter 7 under financial plan, and is concerned with the statement reading ‘no more than 25% of operations should be subsidized by the state and if there is a gap the County’s Rail Authority could make it up.’ Commission Member Workman offered that the Dakota County Rail Authority met on Tuesday and they also agreed that this is not acceptable and suggested to put a period after the word “State”. Commission Member Rettman requested to have this changed in the draft.

Andy Gitzlaff, indicated that a similar discussion occurred with the Washington County Board, and they would like to rewrite this paragraph to strengthen it by moving the 2nd sentence down and adding a statement that no cost participation for operations should be assumed or considered from regional rail authorities.

Member Chair Peterson reminded that we are responsible for the development of stations and to help market them, but we are not operationally responsible for high speed rail.

Commission Member Rettman still voiced her concern with leaving the words the “county rail authority could make it up” Andy indicates that can be removed.

Commission Member Peterson asked the staff to rewrite that paragraph. Commission Member Rettman motioned to change the paragraph and send the letter. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Workman and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #9 Administration

a. 2009 Budget Summary

Mr. Gitzlaff referred to the budget documents for 2009. He referenced the starting balance of \$161,000 and the ending balance of \$97,000. The majority of the costs were for the commuter bus feasibility study that was completed last year. At this time, there is enough fund balance to go into this next year, so we are not anticipating a need to ask for additional funds from the Counties.

b. Draft 2010 Work plan and Budget

Mr. Gitzlaff stated that last month we reviewed the 2010 work plan and budget which had a lot of upcoming projects and studies. In order to maximize the use of both state and federal funds He recommends working on finalizing the 2010 work plan and budget by calling a meeting of the Executive Committee, which is a recommending body that consists of the four funding partners– Hennepin, Washington, Ramsey, and Dakota Counties. Mr. Gitzlaff stated that the goal would be to have 2010 budget and work finalized and on the agenda for approval by the full Commission at the February meeting. He indicated that Commission Chair Peterson needs to formally call a special meeting and the staff would make the arrangements. All Commission Members could attend. Commission Chair Peterson called for the special executive committee meeting.

Agenda Item #10 Other

a. Invitations for Ex-Officio membership

Commission Chair Peterson informed the Commission that at the breakfast meeting last Friday there was a gentleman from Prescott there and they discussed with him joining the Commission. She would like to formally send an invitation to the City of Prescott to join as an Ex-Officio member. Additionally, she would like to suggest that we send a letter to Pierce County and ask them also if they would like to participate as an Ex-officio member.

b. APTA High Speed Rail Conference Chicago 2/9 – 2/11

Commission Chair Peterson reminded all Commission Members of the APTA High Speed Rail Conference in Chicago on 2/9-2/11. Commission Member Rettman and McDonough both will be in attendance.

Commission Member Hollenbeck stated her appreciation for the Commission allowing her to testify at the legislature recently. She indicated that the City of Hastings appreciated the support of the Commission behind this bill.

Commission Member Hopkins moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Member Bailey and passed unanimously.

The Commission adjourned at 4:42 p.m.