



Meeting Minutes
April 29th, 2021, 4:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

Commission Members	Agency	Present
Wayne Johnson	Washington County RRA	X
Jim McDonough	Ramsey County RRA	X
Dave Thiede	City of Cottage Grove	X
Jane Prince	City of St. Paul	
Sandi Dingle	City of St. Paul Park	X
Mark Vaughan	City of Hastings	X
Marvin Taylor	City of Newport	X

Staff	Agency	Present
Joe Ayers-Johnson	Washington County RRA	X
Kurt Howard	Washington County RRA	X

Other Attendees	Agency	Present
Lonnie Garland	SWCTC	X
Caroline Ketcham	Ramsey County	X
Andy Gitzlaff	Ramsey County	X

Agenda Item #1: Introduction

Chair Wayne Johnson called the meeting to order, and communicated that due to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic the meeting is being held virtually.

Roll call was held. Quorum was met.

Agenda Item #2: Election of Officers

Mayor Sandi Dingle nominated Wayne Johnson for chair of the Red Rock Corridor Commission for the year of 2021. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion Carried.

Chair Johnson nominated Mayor Dingle for vice chair of the Red Rock Corridor Commission for the year of 2021. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion Carried.

Agenda Item #3: Approval of Agenda

Vice Chair Dingle made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner McDonough seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion Carried.

Agenda Item #4: Approval of Consent Items

Councilmember Vaughn made a motion to approve the consent items, including minutes from the October meeting. Vice Chair Dingle seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion Carried.

Agenda Item #5: Recognition of Outgoing Members

Chair Johnson introduced a resolution to recognize outgoing members of the Red Rock Corridor Commission.

Commissioner McDonough made a motion to adopt the resolution recognizing Councilmember Ingemann. Councilmember Taylor seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion Carried.

Chair Johnson spoke to the importance of recognizing the time Commission Members take to participate in the Red Rock Corridor Commission.

Agenda Item #6: Red Rock Corridor Overview

Joe Ayers-Johnson, Washington County Planner and Red Rock Corridor Project Manager, provided an overview of the Red Rock Corridor for new commission members or members of the public. Mr. Ayers-Johnson described the geography of the corridor, and named the partnering communities that participate in the Red Rock Corridor Commission. He introduced BRT as a transit mode, and described its differences and similarities to other modes. Mr. Ayers-Johnson introduced the Red Rock Corridor Implementation Plan (2017), and described the near-term and long-term recommendations that emerged in that plan, including the ongoing efforts to bring increased transit service to the corridor to demonstrate and grow ridership. Mr. Ayers-Johnson described the 2021 Work Plan adopted by the Red Rock Corridor Commission and the general activities that staff engages in to advance the corridor. The full presentation can be viewed on the Red Rock Corridor Commission playlist on the SWCTC's YouTube channel, and more information on the Red Rock Corridor can be seen in the April RRCC meeting packet or on the Red Rock Corridor project webpage. Following the presentation, Mr. Ayers-Johnson opened the floor to any questions.

Councilmember Thiede expressed some frustration with how projects like the Red Rock Corridor can sometimes drag on and on, and wondered if staff could host a workshop to

generate some analysis or strategy to advance the project more aggressively. If waiting on Metro Transit isn't working, Councilmember Thiede wondered about what kind of alternative solutions could be out there.

Mr. Ayers-Johnson responded that he was open to hosting a workshop to brainstorm or develop new strategies to advance the corridor more aggressively, but shared some of the limitations that exist in terms of ridership that make movement on this corridor a barrier. He indicated that something like a workshop would need the approval of the rest of the commission and opened the question to the RRCC to hear their thoughts.

Vice Chair Dingle responded that she felt it was premature to have a workshop until we have a better idea of what transit looks like coming out of COVID-19. If pre-COVID travel patterns return, and vaccinations roll out, she is hopeful that we would see demand for transit bounce back, but that maybe this is something we revisit at a future date when we know more about a post-COVID travel patterns.

Chair Johnson responded that recent news indicated that transit would likely not bounce back to pre-COVID ridership levels until around 2024/2025. Recommended staying the course until we get a better idea of who is traveling where and when, population trends in the region, and revisiting the question at that point. He thinks we keep the commission alive and on the radar, but wait until clearer picture emerges to make next moves. He expressed concern that if we *did* get federal dollars now to roll out demonstration service, this could be the worst time to do that demonstration.

Councilmember Thiede replied that he is frustrated that Red Rock Corridor isn't even on the map in terms of BRT, referencing his role on East Metro Strong and meetings he has had there, and expressed frustration that we continue to spend money on planning but nothing physical happens in terms of bringing transit here.

No further comments on this item.

Agenda Item #7: Rush Line BRT Update

Andy Gitzlaff, Ramsey County Planner and Rush Line Project Manager, introduced his colleague Caroline Ketcham, who gave an update on the Rush Line BRT, touching on the project route and background, regional connections, the Environmental Assessment process, station concept plans, and next steps. The full presentation can be viewed on the Red Rock Corridor Commission playlist on the SWCTC's YouTube channel, and more information on the Rush Line BRT can be seen in the April RRCC meeting packet or on the Rush Line BRT project webpage. Following the presentation, Mr. Gitzlaff and Ms. Ketcham stood for questions from the Commission.

Councilmember Vaughn suggested that the Environmental Assessment should come before the transit corridor is determined, in order to better justify any improvements that are ultimately made within the corridor.

Ms. Ketcham responded that something similar was done prior to determining what type of - if any - transit improvements were to be pursued, which included a corridor-wide inventory and assessment of how to best address needs in the corridor, and she thought that something like

that would be of interest to Councilmember Vaughn and would maybe address some of his thoughts. She elaborated that the Environmental Process is a technical phase for transit projects of this magnitude, but that it is not the first time those questions have been asked.

Chair Johnson asked Ms. Ketcham and Mr. Gitzlaff about any concerns they have with regard to budget as a result of potential delays to the process.

Mr. Gitzlaff responded that, with regard to construction costs and materials, they do factor in 'year of' costs and inflate those out so that they capture what they know about costs now but also include a lot of contingency to account for changes over time.

Chair Johnson thanked Ramsey County staff for their time and the presentation.

No further questions or comments on this item.

Agenda Item #8: Communications Update

Mr. Ayers-Johnson presented a communications update, and explained that communications predominantly take place on the Red Rock Corridor's Facebook page, which currently has 378 likes and 406 followers – a slight increase over the October meeting. Staff tries to post 1-2 times per week about transit related news and other relevant topics. No press has been released about the Red Rock Corridor since the last commission meeting. Mr. Ayers-Johnson stood for questions.

No questions or comments on this item.

Agenda Item #11: Other

A. Commissioner Reports

Chair Johnson asked if any Commissioners have any Red Rock Corridor-related news to share.

Vice Chair Dingle commented jokingly on the décor in Commissioner McDonough's office – décor that she also has in her office. A laugh was shared.

No further questions or comments on this item.

B. Next Meeting

Chair Johnson announced that the next scheduled meeting is July 29, 2021, but that if and where it would happen would depend on need and COVID-19 protocols.

Agenda Item #12: Adjourn

Chair Johnson made a motion to adjourn. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion Carried.