

INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

DECEMBER 8, 2010

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present

Don Lawless, Chair
Charis Austin
Tim Cochran
Randy Gelderloos
Ira Hart
Lisa Haynes
George Heartwell
Jack Hoffman
Barbara Holt
Rick Morris
Richard Root
Terry Schweitzer
Rob VerHeulen
Jim White

Staff

Peter Varga, CEO
Robin Crothers
Alan Hartley
Taiwo Jaiyeoba
Meegan Joyce
Jennifer Kalczuk
Bill Kirk
Brian Pouget
Liz Schelling

Board Members Absent

Tammy Hopman

Others Present

Jeff Ammon, Miller Johnson
David Bulkowski, DAKC
Sarah Bydalek, City of Walker
Casey Dutmer, CAC
Rachel Foster, Miller Johnson
Richard Jackson, Union 836
Gopal Ji, CCIT
Kyla King, Grand Rapids Press
Watchdog Miller, Citizen
Laurie Parks, City of Grand Rapids
Bernie Porn, EPIC MRA
John Saltzgaber, EPIC MRA
Matt Smith, Future Affiliation
Brent Wheatley, Metro Cab of GR

MINUTES OF
INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
AS RECORDED ON DECEMBER 8, 2010

Commencing at 4:02 p.m., Mr. Lawless called the regular meeting of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board to order.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Watchdog Miller commented that the February millage is costing taxpayers too much money and violates the ADA. He believes that taxes given to the DDA are probably illegal because the Grand Rapids DDA does not hold public hearings. He stated that public hearings are required by the FTA. Now the DDA wants to use money on a second Rapid Station. He offered a suggestion on this.

1. Election of Officers and Committee Assignments for 2011:

Mr. Lawless mentioned that if anyone wants a committee change or has interest in any specific committee to please let the next Board Chair or Vice Chair know.

A nomination for Don Lawless for Board Chair was made by VerHeulen, supported by Heartwell. No other nominations were entered and nominations were closed. Motion passed unanimously.

A nomination for Barb Holt for Vice-Chair was made by Heartwell, supported by White. No other nominations were entered and nominations were closed. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Minutes of the November 27, 2010 Board Meeting:

A motion was made by Root, supported by Haynes, to approve the October 27, 2010 Board Meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Holt, supported by Haynes, to approve Consent Agenda items 3-7. Motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

Performance Oversight Committee

8. FY 2010 Fourth Quarter and Annual Report Cards - Fixed Route:

Mr. Schweitzer reported that the committee felt it was noteworthy to comment on the Fourth Quarter and Annual Fixed-Route and Paratransit Report Cards. He explained that the performance measures that have been set up to look at the various areas of performance are checked quarterly and at the end of the year. He mentioned that we have seen various levels of performance throughout the year, ending with a report of all green lights. The committee works with staff every year to evaluate the measurement standards and determine if any adjustments are necessary.

He noted that the paratransit reports had all green lights for the fourth quarter and annual report.

Mayor Heartwell commended staff for outstanding fixed route and paratransit year-end reports.

Mr. Lawless is excited that we ended with a 5% increase in fixed route ridership and believes this reflects on the effort of staff to run the agency efficiently. He also believes it shows the public that we are smart stewards of taxpayer funds. He recognized the 95% on-time paratransit performance and noted that this is outstanding given the nature of the service.

A motion was made by Schweitzer, supported by Holt, to approve the FY 2010 Fixed Route and Paratransit Fourth Quarter and Annual Report Cards. Motion passed unanimously.

9. FY 2010 Fourth Quarter and Annual Report Cards-Paratransit:

Discussed and approved under item 8.

10. Project Update: Silver Line BRT Conceptual AE Design Project:

Mr. Jaiyeoba reported that in November staff provided an update of the BRT Conceptual AE Design (Task 1) efforts to the Board. The conceptual design of the station has incorporated suggestions made at the stakeholders meetings, November Board meeting and at various meetings with the cities of Grand Rapids, Wyoming and Kentwood, the Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority, Grand Rapids Community College, Spectrum, Van Andel, and Division Avenue Business Association, among others.

He explained that at this time no action is requested, however, in the future, staff will be requesting that the Board approve the work done in Task 1 and allow consultants, Wilbur Smith Associates, to move into Task 2 of the design work. The purpose of Task 2 is to advance work done in the conceptual design and engineering phase. Task 2 of the contract will not proceed until The Rapid has secured federal and state funding, as well as operational funds to continue the project.

Mr. Jaiyeoba explained that typically when you have environmental work going on you also want some level of design engineering work occurring at the same time. This is so that if the environmental work uncovers any issues early on, the design engineering side is aware of them. He explained that at the end of the EA process the consultants moved into design of roadway and stations at a 15-20% design level. This allows us to take advantage of any outstanding issues that may be discovered along the corridor before the environmental work is completely finished

He mentioned that we have held 5 stakeholders meetings that provided input on station design and the design of the BRT along the corridor. Staff and consultants have worked together to ensure that the proposed BRT station design has incorporated features gathered from public input.

Mr. Lawless questioned if sidewalks along the stations would be standard width. Mr. Jaiyeoba replied that the intent is not to have wider sidewalks.

Mayor Root inquired if snow removal in front of the station is a concern due to the level loading component and if we will have an ice melt system on the platform to prevent it from becoming slippery. Mr. Varga replied that we are looking into the cost of including snow melt or snow removal.

Mr. Morris suggested we look at how Cleveland removes the snow. Mr. Jaiyeoba mentioned that the consultants advised us that the most practical way is to clear the snow because the effectiveness of snow melt is still questionable. Staff has requested that the consultants research the process of eliminating snow and report back to us.

Mr. Cochran commented that at a recent meeting with Mr. Jaiyeoba and the consulting team many detailed questions were asked and answered regarding the project. He explained that from a planning perspective the questions were answered very well and with great detail. There are a few details that can't be completely determined until Phase 2.

Mayor Root commented that this will be somewhat of a prototype shelter. When it comes to the details we need to make sure we get them right to make it easier to use this prototype in the future.

Mr. Morris mentioned that we are spending a lot of money with consultants who are working with staff to determine the details. He believes that what works elsewhere should work here.

Mr. White questioned if there are lights for evening hours. Mr. Jaiyeoba noted that there will be station lighting along with street lighting.

Governance Committee

11. Millage Election Date and Proposed Ballot Language:

Mr. Varga reported that the Board decided that in 2011 we would have a millage election to deal with the service improvements resulting from the Transit Master Plan. We are looking to implement the first five years of the plan. He explained that there are four possible election dates in 2011, however, we prepared the document for February so that we would be ready in the event that the Board wanted to move forward with the February election date.

Ms. Kalczuk commented that we have been working with EPIC MRA on survey work. Bernie Porn summarized the results of the survey which generally show support for the millage.

Mr. Varga commented that staff has carefully considered all the issues. We have talked to various groups and individuals who have offered us really good advice. The recommendation is that we do not hold a February election and try for May or November which have been determined to be the better selections. He noted that he has continued communication with Grand Rapids Public Schools who will likely hold an election in May, however, they are still conducting their own analysis and are not ready to fully declare this date. His recommendation is to authorize and prepare for an election in May or November of 2011. We should continue communicating with Grand Rapids Public Schools and not run concurrently with them. He does not recommend using the February date due to time constraints.

Mr. Lawless inquired why August was not recommended. Mr. Varga noted that based on information received, May or November would be better selections than August due to the broader voter turnout.

Mr. Morris questioned what is involved in the GRPS election. Mr. Varga replied that GRPS will have school board elections in May. Mayor

Heartwell added that there will most likely be a bond issue along with the school board elections.

Mayor Root inquired if we have looked into what other school districts are doing.

Mr. Morris noted that East Grand Rapids has a school board election, but no bond issue. Mayor Root noted that he is not certain if the Kentwood Public Schools will be on the ballot. Mr. Cochran noted that Wyoming is not moving forward with any proposed election plans. Mayor Heartwell noted that Kent County announced that they will not have anything in 2011.

Mayor Root noted that if it is only Grand Rapids having a school bond issue he would be comfortable moving forward with the May or November date.

Mayor Heartwell noted that he originally was an advocate for the February date in order to secure state match funds. However, due to the time constraint he is reconsidering. He believes we should not lock in on May if Grand Rapids Public Schools could possibly use that date but would be supportive of May if it is determined that GRPS will not run an election at that time.

Mr. White inquired if we have a backup plan, if the millage fails. Mr. Lawless noted that our last collection under the current millage is in July 2012, so we do have an opportunity to revisit this with the community.

Mr. Cochran noted that he believes that with the last millage effort the public did not receive enough information about the proposal to make an informed decision. It seems that the survey results show the same feedback especially concerning the BRT and he hopes that whatever timeframe we decide upon we give ourselves enough time to get the message out.

Mayor Root commented that there will also be an economic influence impacting the millage. He noted that specialists are already predicting an increase in fuel prices.

Mr. Lawless asked members if anyone had any concern with moving forward with the schedule of proposed service enhancements given the Master Plan and survey results.

Mr. Schweitzer commented that the most important enhancement is the increase in frequency creating consistency and reliability of the service. If fuel prices increase, people will be more likely to use the system and the increased frequency will make a big difference in the

service. We need to explain to the public that the more reliable and frequent the service, the better it is.

Mayor Heartwell noted that there is a direct correlation between transit and economic opportunity. He believes this is a positive move and if the message is presented right it will be embraced by the community.

A motion was made by Heartwell, supported by Holt, to approve the millage language stated in the resolution with the exception of the date. Language will be written with the opportunity to go in May 2011 or November 2011, depending on what GRPS does, based on the recommendation of staff. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Lawless explained the motion that we are looking for an opportunity to go for a millage vote consistent with the 5-year plan that is summarized in either May or November 2011 based on the recommendation from staff. This decision could be made as early as the January 2011 Board meeting.

Mr. White understands the BRT to be an integrated part of the complete system which enhances the connectivity of all the routes. It helps individuals to make more use of the enhanced services.

Mr. Varga explained that what we have done at The Rapid is consistently improve the network. The network is interlinked. The weak parts of the network are that the service quality is not consistent resulting in some challenging transfers. By improving the frequency and increasing the network we make access more reasonable. He noted that the BRT is a 10-minute frequency route in a high demand corridor with several routes intertwining over it. As you improve those routes and connectivity you construct a more effective network.

Mayor Root noted that in the last campaign we missed the opportunity to clarify the question. The success of the BRT will result in more routes and we need to explain that this BRT line is the first of many BRT lines.

Mr. Morris noted that he has some concerns about the BRT, however, he will support this because he does support making the service we provide to the public better.

12. Board and Committee Meeting Schedule for 2011:

Mr. Lawless noted the Board and Committee Meeting Schedule for 2011. If there is any interest in changing please let him know.

A motion was made by Haynes, supported by Heartwell, to approve the Board and Committee Meeting Schedule for 2011. Motion passed unanimously.

CEO's REPORT

13. CEO Monthly Report:

Mr. Varga commented that he would present a more detailed analysis in January of how public transportation improvements deal with economic development in Europe and Africa based on his recent opportunity to lead a transit team to these areas. He noted that BRT is a very significant part of their system and we can learn from their improvements and mistakes.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Lawless introduced Bill Kirk, The Rapid's new Public Outreach Coordinator.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

No report.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Hoffman commented that Mr. Kirk created a very informative spreadsheet of the results from the last four millages if anyone else would like one.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

There was no discussion on the following information items.

- A. Minutes of 11-16-10 Governance Committee Meetings
- B. Minutes of 12-1-10 Performance Oversight Committee Meeting
- C. Minutes of 12-1-10 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
- D. Minutes of 12-2-10 External Relations Committee Meeting
- E. Communications

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Crothers, ITP Board Secretary