

Transportation Advisory Committee

MINUTES

February 3, 2009

Present: Kendall Lane, *Chair, Keene*; Susan Ashworth, *Keene City Express*; Dave Bergeron, *Pathways for Keene*; Rick Carrier, *Chesterfield*; Dean Eastman, *NH DOT*; Larry Hill, *Town of Winchester*; John Kallfelz; *NH DOT*; Dave Krisch, *Town of Swanzey*; Charles Miller, *Town of Walpole*; Bernie Schneckenburger, *Town of Hancock*; Ed Smith, *Town of Hinsdale*; Frank Sterling, *Town of Jaffrey*.

Staff members present were Tim Murphy, *Executive Director*; Becky Baldwin, *Office Manager*; JB Mack, *Senior Planner*.

Guests: William Rose, *NH DOT*; James Plourde, *Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.*

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Lane called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and introductions were made.

II. Minutes of September 30, 2008

The minutes of the September 30, 2008 meeting were approved as submitted.

III. NH DOT - Related Activities

Safe Routes to School Program: Staff member J.B. Mack reported that the Towns of Dublin and Winchester have submitted proposals for the third round of the Safe Routes to School funding program. Chairman Lane asked if there is a maximum amount that a community can apply for. J.B. Mack responded that there are three types of grants that each have their own limit. The general infrastructure grant has a \$100,000 cap, a grant for the creation of a travel plan has a \$15,000 cap and a preliminary planning grant has a cap of \$5,000 per school with a community maximum of \$15,000.

TE/CMAQ: J.B. Mack drew members attention to the draft schedule for next round of TE/CMAQ funding that was included in the agenda packet.

Community Transportation Summit: J.B. Mack reported that he attended the Community Transportation Summit on December 9, 2008 that was hosted by DOT, the Department of Health and Human Services and the State Coordinating Council. This was the first summit of its type

and was designed to share information and help create an action plan to improve community transportation in the State.

Economic Stimulus Package: J.B. Mack reported that the Governor has formed an Office of Economic Stimulus to help coordinate the efforts of stakeholders. NH DOT, the LGC and municipalities are developing a list of shovel ready projects in anticipation of the Economic Stimulus Package. He noted that it is unclear at present what role if any TAC will have in this process. Chairman Lane commented that it would be beneficial if funding from the stimulus completed some of the larger projects on the 10-Year Plan that would in turn free up funds for some of the other projects on the list. Tim Murphy agreed noting it is hard to look at the list and not see any projects on it for our part of the State. Dean Eastman noted there is a possibility that some of the TE projects may benefit as well. Chairman Lane suggested that it would be advantageous if some of the funding was used to address the red listed bridges in the State. Susan Ashworth noted that her organization has submitted a list of ideas to DOT for some transit related capital investments.

IV. SWRPC Transportation Program Update

J.B. Mack referred to the transportation program updates that were provided in the agenda packet and asked members to contact staff with any questions. He drew particular attention to the Road Safety Audit project noting that staff is in the process of assembling a team to help assess the safety issues for Manning Hill Road in Winchester, the intersection of Route 119 and Route 12 in Fitzwilliam and the intersection of Route 101, Route 123 and Old Street Road in Peterborough. He encouraged members to contact him if they would like to be a part of the team.

V. 10-Year Plan Update

J.B. Mack distributed a handout showing the current projects in our Region that are on the DOT 10-Year Plan. He noted that DOT recently met with the RPC Directors in response to their request for guidance on how to proceed with the update of the 10-Year Plan. He referred to excerpts from an e-mail provided by DOT Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance Administrator, Bill Watson that was included in the agenda packet that provides recommendations on how to proceed. Tim Murphy questioned how aggressively we should proceed in soliciting nominations for the next plan given the current economic situation. J.B. Mack pointed out that several projects were dropped from the last plan that were difficult for us to have removed and questioned if those projects should be revisited. Chairman Lane agreed noting that TAC wasn't given the opportunity to participate in the discussions that decided which projects were to be removed from the plan and we should reconsider those projects as a part of this process. Dean Eastman cautioned that if TAC plans to put some of those projects back on the list they will need to be prepared to possibly remove others. Chairman Lane noted that he's reluctant to solicit nominations for new projects from the communities when given the current status of the 10-Year Plan it would take about 20 years before they would be addressed. J.B. Mack noted that DOT is also requesting that TAC rank their projects using objective criteria that will substantiate their choices.

Committee members reviewed the projects contained on the DOT project list for the Southwest Region and Chairman Lane pointed out that not all of them were recommended by TAC. Tim Murphy agreed pointing out that some of them were placed there by DOT. Chairman Lane questioned where the funding for the Alstead project was coming from and J.B. Mack responded that it is funded by Emergency Relief funds. Chairman Lane noted that it would be helpful to know what kind of funding range we had to deal with when making our recommendations. Tim

Murphy questioned what we should do if we feel some of our projects should be ranked higher than those that were added to the Plan by DOT. John Kallfelz noted that the DOT Commissioner is very interested in fixing red lined bridges in the state. Chairman Lane suggested removing the welcome center from the list which would free up a lot of funds. Charles Miller agreed noting that a Welcome Center in Bellows Falls already serves this area. William Rose suggested if TAC wants to shift the list they need to focus on items that don't already have funding attached to them. He further encouraged TAC to recommend placing the three Road Safety Audit projects (see Agenda Item IV) that were removed from the 10-Year Plan back on the list if they feel those projects are more important than others that are there. Frank Sterling noted that he feels the Jaffrey dog-leg should be considered and asked if we should contact the municipalities for their input as to what they feel should be on the list. Chairman Lane stated that he is reluctant to give false expectations to the municipalities. He added that short of emergencies we need to address existing safety issues prior to looking for other projects. Frank Sterling suggested that TAC reprioritize the projects listed for this Region and committee members agreed.

Committee members identified fourteen projects on the list that TAC would need to review as follows:

- Chesterfield - Route 63, Project #13597
- Hinsdale, NH/Brattleboro, VT - Route 119, Project #12210
- Keene - Winchester St., Project #10109, B
- Keene - Bypass Projects, Project #'s 10309 J, L & P
- New Ipswich - Route 123/124 Bridge Replacement, Project #14465
- Peterborough - Route 292 Reconstruction, Project #14772
- Peterborough - Route 101 and Route 202 Bridge Rehabilitation, Project #14772
- Peterborough - Granite St. at Main St. Reconstruction, Project #14772 A
- Sullivan/Roxbury - Route 9, Project #10439
- Stoddard/Antrim/Hillsborough - Route 9,
- Walpole/Charlestown - Route 12, Project #14747
- Walpole - Bridge St. Bridge Replacement, Project #12905
- Winchester - Route 119 Bridge,
- Winchester - Route 10 Bridge Replacement, Project #12906

J.B. Mack asked if the Committee wanted to add the four projects that were dropped from the list during the GACIT hearings. Tim Murphy pointed out that a lot more than four were dropped but those were the ones that TAC was the most concerned about. Chairman Lane noted that he would like to review the list of all the projects that were dropped off the list for our Region. Tim Murphy suggested that staff work with DOT to identify the projects that we need to look at.

VI. Project Scoring/Ranking Discussion

Chairman Lane asked if DOT has developed a ranking system or if each RPC continues to use their own. Dean Eastman explained that if the criteria were developed by DOT there would be no need for TAC input. What they want is for the RPCs to work together to develop their criteria. William Rose asked if our TAC has a criteria and J.B. Mack responded that we developed criteria about ten years ago. He added that staff has been working with four of the other RPCs in reviewing their criteria and referred to the comparison chart contained in the agenda packet. William Rose advised against making the ranking system more complicated than necessary and offered DOT's assistance in developing a process. J.B. Mack asked members if they wanted to meet again as a whole group to work on the criteria or form a sub-committee.

Chairman Lane asked what the time frame was and Tim Murphy responded that the process needs to be completed by April. He suggested that we may want to approach DOT to see if there is a possibility of their granting an extension to the middle or end of May. Chairman Lane suggested that TAC meet early in March to finalize the criteria and review the list of projects, then meet again in April to conduct reviews and give a recommendation to the Board of Directors for their review and approval. William Rose said that he would pass that proposal on to DOT on our behalf. Tim Murphy asked when we might receive word if the proposal was accepted and William Rose said he would start the process tomorrow. Chairman Lane expressed his desire to have the entire TAC involved in the process but noted he would be in favor of forming a sub-committee if time becomes an issue. Tim Murphy asked for a point of clarification that DOT is in allowing each region to develop their own criteria since each one is so different from the other. William Rose agreed that this was the case.

VII. Other Matters

A. Safe Routes to School Program

Tim Murphy noted that we have been advised by the DOT that it is not necessary for Safe Routes to School Program applicants to provide a presentation to both TAC and the Statewide Review Committee. J.B. Mack pointed out that TAC is still expected to rank the applications. Chairman Lane asked if the statewide review is required and he was told that it is. Frank Sterling suggested that we still give applicants a chance to present their proposal to TAC so they can provide suggestions and comments prior to the statewide review. Dave Krisch agreed adding that in through the presentation TAC members are able to better understand the quality of the proposed project and the amount of community support it has. Tim Murphy suggested that we continue to provide the opportunity for applicants to give their presentations to TAC but not hold it against them if it creates a hardship. J.B. Mack noted that the Town of Winchester asked staff to assist them in preparing their presentation so we will have to recuse ourselves from scoring this particular project. Chairman Lane noted that it is a good idea for staff to assist the municipalities in preparing their applications and presentations.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of TAC was scheduled for March 16, 2009 at 3:30 p.m.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin
Office Manager