

Citizen Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2007

Voting Members

Mr. Jon Broadway
Ms. Valarie Harman
Mr. Johnny D. Jackson
Ms. Kathy LeCroix
Ms. Ruth Ott
Mr. Blair Rehnberg
Ms. Mary Stephens
Mr. Edward Stevens
Ms. Gracie Stroud
Mr. Theodore White

Guests

Ms. Carol Hall, ALDOT
Ms. Barbara Hendricks, ALDOT
Mr. Kelvin Miller, MATS
Mr. Bill Williamson, First Transit, Inc.

MPO Staff

Mr. Robert Smith
Mr. James Askew
Ms. Allison Settles
Ms. Diana Drummond

At the regular scheduled meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) on April 17, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. at the Alabama Department of Transportation, Central Office Complex, Conference Room #7, 1409 Coliseum Boulevard, Montgomery, Alabama, the aforementioned members were present.

In accordance to the by-laws, in the absence of the president of the committee, the MPO staff has the responsibility to chair the meeting; however, the staff member would not have voting ability, due to not being a member. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Robert Smith of the City of Montgomery MPO staff. Mr. Smith recognized guests who were in attendance and gave special recognition to Mr. Kelvin Miller, General Manager of MATS and Mr. Bill Williamson of First Transit. Mr. Smith stated that Mr. Williamson of First Transit was an upper manager and that he was in the city to attend the Transportation Means Business Conference. An extended welcome was given to Mr. Williamson. Mr. Smith announced that a quorum was present. A motion was made to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2007 meeting; however, committee members noted grammatical errors in the minutes that they wanted corrected. After the noted corrections to the minutes were made, Mr. Smith stated that the corrections would be posted to the minutes on the MPO website. Mr. Smith asked which of the committee members were familiar with the MPO website and began to demonstrate how to access the website for the members. Ms. Ott asked for the domain name. Mr. Smith stated that it was www.MontgomeryMPO.org , and that the website was maintained by the MATS IT Manager. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2007 meeting, and the minutes were adopted.

Mr. Smith then referenced the proposed amendment projects to the FY 2006-2008 TIP:

EC-12-AM (Fort Toulouse to US-231)

ST-1-AM (Bell St/CR-235/ from Washington Ferry Rd to CSX Railroad Bridge)

ST-2-AM (SR-110 from CR-137/Vaughn Rd/ to BridleBrook Blvd.)

TR-9-AM (City of Montgomery ITS Acquisition and Implementation)

TR-10-AM (Montgomery Regional Airport off US-80/Selma Hwy.)

10.0 (Install overhead street signs at major intersection/Downtown Montgomery)

11.0 (Install overhead street signs at major intersection/Citywide in Montgomery)

M-12-AM (Purchase & install traffic cameras at various intersection/Montgomery)

M-13-AM (Perry Hill Road from I-85 on/off ramp to CR-235/Atlanta Hwy.)

M-14-AM (Ann St. from Highland Ave. to re-align with Federal Drive)

Mr. Smith made the committee aware that an action needed to be taken on the proposed amendment projects to the FY 2006-2008 TIP and that the TCC Committee had approved the amendment projects; therefore, the CAC Committee needed to take action. A motion

was made and seconded to approve the proposed amendment projects to the FY 2006-2008 TIP, and the projects were adopted. Mr. Smith informed the committee that the MPO was still in financial constraint and stated that a financial spreadsheet had been provided for the committee's review.

Mr. Smith then referenced the FY 2008-2011 TIP Kick-Off and referred to the memo entitled Request for Input in the Development of the Fiscal Years 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He asked the committee if any members had reviewed the memo prior to the meeting and none had, so Mr. Smith explained the details of the memo. He stated that the memo gave information about the Transportation Improvement Program such as requirements, funds availability for programming, and instructions on project sponsors assistance with submissions of project proposals for review. He then referred to the attached Project Development Form at the end of the memo. He explained that the form would be used to submit proposed projects. The form had been revised specifically for submissions of Transportation projects, and he had expanded the project types to include bicycle and pedestrian projects. Mr. Smith also told the committee that the form was for the submission of projects from areas such as the City of Montgomery, City of Prattville, Town of Coosada, City of Wetumpka, City of Millbrook, as well as the counties. They (MPO member jurisdictions) would send the form to him for the project to go into the Transportation Improvement Program document. He stated that the new federal requirement was that the TIP would become extended from three (3) years to four (4) years; therefore, the new timeframe would be from Fiscal Year 2008-2011. Toward the end of this fiscal year, a new document with a new set of projects would be established.

Ms. Ott asked a question that had been asked previously regarding how to specifically submit a project of interest to be included in the TIP as well as the specific procedures for submitting such projects by committee members. Ms. Ott also asked that if someone had a project in mind to submit, should the member just fill out the Project Development Form with the descriptions. Also, since the sponsor of the project would not know the source of the funds to fund the project, what would someone do to submit a project idea? Mr. Smith said that since the CAC Committee was a citizens' committee, they would not be considered project sponsors. He would encourage them to submit their comments during the solicitation period for public comments. He also suggested that they submit their comments

to a particular council member, Mayor or County Commissioner. Mr. Smith said write a letter to the Mayor or whatever they felt would get their comments noted. The submission would be made a part of the official record provided to the MPO before the approval of the actual document. Ms. Harman asked if the Project Development Form was on the MPO website. Mr. Smith stated that it had been posted to the website. Ms. Harman also asked that if a committee member knew someone else who could sponsor a project, such as a State representative or legislator, or a County representative, if the sponsor of the project could fill out the form for the committee member and submit it to the MPO. Mr. Smith replied yes.

Mr. Smith then referenced the proposed amendment projects to the Montgomery Study Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, presented the actual document plan, and stated that the plan was accessible via the MPO website. It would be listed under MPO documents. Mr. Smith stated that he devised the plan in coordination with the local bicycle club, and the plan consisted of proposed projects. He explained that project # 1 consisted mainly of a preliminary line-on-the-map, where no particular engineering had been taken into account as to the feasibility of the project. Mr. Smith also stated that this phase was called the bicycle facility project. It was used to possibly construct lanes and put signs along the entire route where feasible for the City of Montgomery. He stated that the bike route began on Fieldcrest Drive and went to downtown Montgomery along the one-way system. He stated that the one-way system was to be converted into a two-way system which might allow for a better “situation downtown” with the bicycle lane project.

Mr. Smith then referenced amendment project #2 , and he stated that this project concerned the proposed rails to trails route, an abandoned rail line that ran from downtown Montgomery to Eufaula, Alabama. Mr. Smith stated that since the abandoned rail line was not in use anymore, one of his co-workers, a long-range planner, re-introduced the rails-to-trails project, and the long range planner organized a committee to determine the feasibility of the project to possibly combine a rails-to-trails bicycle and pedestrian combination type project. He stated that the City attorney had contacted the CSX railroad, who owns the abandoned rail line, to ask if the CSX would donate the abandoned rail to the City of Montgomery. Mr. Smith stated that the railway property seemed clear from the Riverwalk to the other side of I-85, but there were a couple of residents who owned pieces of the properties where the railway ran. He stated that the owning of this property was called a

Quit Claim Deed, and it would probably take the use of eminent domain to regain the property for public use. It would be best to begin with the Northern end of the project first and to have it added to the Montgomery Study Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Mr. Stevens wanted to know the total miles between Montgomery and Eufaula, and he suggested that an annual bicycle race could possibly result from the distance between the two cities. Mr. Smith stated that he was not certain of the actual mileage between Montgomery and Eufaula, but the only distance that this particular project would cover was 2.4 miles of the railway. Mr. Smith also stated that the one concern that impeded the rail line was the property on the South East Blvd where the Wal-Mart Super Center and shopping centers were located because these retailers were built directly on the rail line, and no one probably gave much attention to this concern when the retailers were built.

Ms. Stephens and Ott felt that the former Mayor was responsible for the Wal-Mart shopping center that had been built on top of the rail lines because the CAC committee asked for the railway to be developed 15-20 years ago when it stopped being used. Mr. Smith stated that if the idea had been mentioned at that time, the railway could have been converted back into a light rail line or possibly something else. Ms. Stephens mentioned that the idea was requested at that time. Ms. Ott stated that everyone concerned had the same idea to turn the railway back into a rail line because there was an application from the Federal government for which the committee could have applied, but the former Mayor threatened that if employees mentioned the railway to the citizens, there would be consequences. Mr. Broadway stated that he felt that the retailers were purposely placed on the railroad tracks to keep the tracks from being used in the future for railway purposes. Mr. Smith stated that he was not an employee with the City of Montgomery at that time and was not familiar with the process.

Ms. Ott stated that the CAC committee appreciated the undertaking of the project once again and that maybe this time something could be done with rail line. Mr. Smith stated that the City of Montgomery would do all that it possibly could do with the project although there was the impediment of the retail businesses and some private property owners. Mr. Rehnberg stated that this project would be an enhancement to the downtown area especially when the downtown area became developed. Mr. Smith then stated that the committee needed to take

action to amend the Montgomery Study Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and maybe sometime in the future during a TIP cycle, someone could form an actual estimated cost and budget, the preliminary engineering, or a study to go forward with the projects. A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed amendment projects to the Montgomery Study Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and the amendments were adopted.

Mr. Smith then referenced the Internet Travel Survey for Montgomery Transportation Study Area and stated that he sent out a memo and letter that explained the study. He stated that the project was being conducted by Dr. Michael Anderson, a Transportation Engineering Professor with the University of Alabama at Huntsville, in conjunction with the City of Montgomery, the MPO, ALDOT and the Transportation Research Center of Alabama at UAH. Mr. Smith also stated that the purpose of the project was to collect needed travel pattern data from citizens in the tri-county area that would be used to update the Regional Travel Demand Model parameters, which are tools used to predict future travel demands. He said that this survey was a much needed project and began to demonstrate how to access the Travel Survey via the internet and fill it out. He asked the committee how many members had actually completed the survey, only one had, so he began the demonstration. Mr. Smith stated that in order to access the survey the user must log onto the MPO website at www.MontgomeryMPO.org and click the Travel Survey button on the bottom left of the page. He said that once the Travel Survey page opens, follow the instructions on how to input the data. He also mentioned this was an area-specific State-wide survey that was created for each MPO in the State. The survey includes instructions for the Montgomery area with pages that consist of household characteristics, number of daily one way trips, household income data, type of vehicle or other mode of travel and a mapping exercise to collect start and end trip information for the first trip of the day.

Ms. Harman asked what the results of the data would predict. Mr. Smith stated that Dr. Anderson and the ALDOT needed the statistics to update the model parameters because the last parameters were about twelve (12) years old. He stated that the parameters needed to be updated about every five (5) years; therefore, the survey would be conducted about every five (5) years. Mr. Smith also stated that there had been some discussion regarding low to moderate income households that did not have access to computers or the internet. Ms. Harman stated that all libraries in the city had computers that were accessible to all citizens.

Mr. Smith stated that he and Dr. Anderson had agreed to set up shop at any location to assist citizens in the completion of the survey to possibly obtain a high volume and accurate response rate. Mr. Smith asked the committee members to inform all persons with whom they might come into contact about the survey, and media announcements would be used to promote the survey.

Finally, general session was opened for discussion. Mr. Broadway asked why the location of the meeting changed to the ALDOT facilities. Mr. Smith said that the original facilities (City/County Personnel Board Room and the Incubator) were all unavailable. Mr. Smith said that once the Intermodal Transfer Center, which includes a large MPO conference room and parking structure, was completed that there would be a permanent location to have the meetings. Ms. Ott stated that the ALDOT conference room was a very nice location in which to have the meeting and thanked ALDOT personnel for allowing the meeting to take place in their facility. Ms. Ott wanted to know if there was a report from the Montgomery Transit System. Mr. Smith noted to the committee that Mr. Miller of MATS left before the meeting ended but reported that the Transit System was in good standing and ridership had increased, and MATS has predicted over 1,000,000 passenger trips this fiscal year. Ms. Harman stated that she noticed that the bicycle racks on the buses were being used often, and Mr. Smith agreed. Ms. Ott inquired about the fare on the buses. Mr. Smith stated the fare is \$1.00, and on April 24th the free lunch trolley express would become effective. He then explained the free trolley process.

Ms. Ott asked about the Transportation conference that was scheduled for April 18, 2007. Mr. Smith explained that the conference was called the Transportation Means Business Conference, and it would be held at the Embassy Suites. Attendees included state, local and business interests meeting to consider the importance of transportation in business. Ms. Ott asked if the agenda for the conference would be printed in the newspaper because she wanted to attend but had not registered. Mr. Smith stated that the conference was full. The organization had a website with the domain name www.TransportationMeansBusiness.com , or she could visit the website of www.Envision20/20.org for more information.

Mr. Stevens asked about the street maintenance crews in the City of Montgomery. He wanted to know if there were street maintenance supervisors. Mr. Stevens asked if there

were supervisors who rode the streets to make sure that the signs were in suitable condition, to record curb sides that were in need of repair and repainting, to check certain streets that were in need striping or ditch drainage, or to have debris removed. Mr. Smith stated that the City of Montgomery had inspectors, mostly traffic engineers who were responsible for traffic striping. He stated that the city's maintenance department was responsible for everything else which included storm debris, sidewalk repairs, ditch drainage or repairs. The inspectors rode the street but probably did not notice all needed repairs. Mr. Smith advised Mr. Stevens that it would be best if Mr. Stevens, as a citizen, would call the city and report any repairs or problems as he noticed them.

Finally, there being no further business, the chairman made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 p.m.