

**CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Meeting Minutes for June 10, 2009  
Northside Conference Room

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Fyrne Bemiller  
Victor Frazier  
Elaine Hoskin  
Dean Lynch  
David Swalling, Chair  
Brenda Smits

**STAFF PRESENT**

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations  
Molly Myers, Communications Manager  
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning  
Jim Plaster, Director of Finance and Administration

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Margaret Jones

**GUESTS**

None

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chairman Swalling called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and conducted roll call.

**2. MINUTES OF THE CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Corrections or Approval**

a.) Mr. Swalling asked the Committee to address the meeting minutes of April 8, 2009. Mr. Lynch said he recalled the guest at the April meeting wished to be anonymous. Ms. Bemiller recounted the same. The attendee's name was removed from the minutes and listed as "Tiffany (last name withheld by request)".

The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes by consensus.

**3. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

There were no public expressions at this time.

**4. TARIFF POLICY**

**a.) May 21, 2009 STA Board Deferred Action of Proposed Fare Increase/Subsequent June 17, 2009 Paratransit Funding Option Meeting**

Mr. Blaska reported the Board deferred a decision on the proposed fare increase until their meeting in June. The task is to further develop a process to address low income Paratransit users. Staff has arranged for two meetings to take place. The first meeting is on Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup> with staff from Spokane County Community Development. The second meeting is on Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> with the same invitees (advocacy groups, care providers/representatives) as the public outreach meeting that took place with the CAC in January 2009. The county will help identify what current mechanisms are available to get free or reduced passes. STA knows to who the passes are provided, however, the specific conditions under which the pass is provided is unknown. The meeting with the advocacy groups and representatives will help to better define the issue by providing managed program information, the number of people in those programs who use Paratransit services, and how many of those riders are low income, including the definitions used to determine low income. Mr. Blaska continued to say it is the intent of Mayor Munson and the Board for these agencies to partner with Spokane Transit in a way to establish a subsidy program for the price of a pass or a single ride rather than reduce the fare structure. Mr. Blaska referenced the Mobius pass program as a working example. He stated the general idea is to have a community solution and STA is willing to do their part.

Mr. Lynch stated he spoke with Mr. Rush and felt the conversation helped to provide additional information to Mr. Rush.

Mr. Lynch said Mr. Blaska did a good job at sharing the deferred action information with the CAC, however, feels the motion passed was a very poor use of Spokane Transit resources by having staff spend additional time on outreach at a time when fiscal accountability is key.

Ms. Smits agreed with Mr. Lynch, however, staff is governed by the Board.

Mr. Blaska felt as though there would be a decision at the June Board meeting.

#### **b.) June 18, 2009 Board Meeting – CAC Recognition**

Mr. Blaska invited the CAC to the June Board meeting in recognition for the many hours of service to Spokane Transit and the citizens of the PTBA (Public Transportation Benefit Area).

### **5. PROPOSED NEW PROJECTS**

#### **a.) Review of Proposed CAC Projects and Transit Research Program Report on CACs**

Mr. Blaska reviewed three potential new projects with the Committee as follows:

1. **Assess Spokane Transit's posture regarding its status and future contributions as a good steward of the environment.** Candidate areas to study and make recommendations:
  - a. Vehicle emissions improvements since the 1991 Kyoto Protocols.
  - b. Facility and maintenance measures.
  - c. Operations measures.
  - d. Administrative measures and procedures.
  - e. Assess and recommend Spokane Transit's participation in the APTA Sustainability initiative. This initiative is modeled after the LEED standards program.
2. **Act as the lead advisory committee for changes to the transit operations at The Plaza.** Candidate areas to study and make recommendations:
  - a. Re-configuration of Wall Street.
  - b. Improvement of operational capacity by reducing dwell time at Plaza zones for high frequency routes.
  - c. Recommend zone and sidewalk re-configuration to facilitate pedestrian traffic.
  - d. Recommend passenger information systems.
  - e. Recommend operational changes that reduce bus turns in the downtown core by matching/interlining select routes.
3. **Act as the lead advisory committee for the interior changes to The Plaza.** This project will be led by a Project Management office. Candidate areas to study and make recommendations:
  - a. Identify services to be provided on the first floor and recommend appropriate design concept.
  - b. Recommend passenger information systems.
  - c. Investigate and recommend potential uses for the second floor and supporting design concept.
  - d. Recommend whether to retain or eliminate the current escalator and waterfall.
  - e. Integrate public art.

Mr. Blaska said this is a short list of ideas thought to be potentially meaningful and are the hot topics for the next eighteen months. The Committee is certainly welcome to submit project ideas. The sustainability project is closest to the CAC's charter as it is a product where the CAC would make direct recommendations to the Board to adopt certain goals. It is a useful project for the organization which would help set a standard and make an important contribution which the agency would not otherwise be able to accomplish.

Mr. Lynch asked if Mr. Blaska would be the staff point person for the next project.

Mr. Blaska said this has not been determined and it would depend on the project selected as to who the staff person would be.

Mr. Frazier suggested if the CAC and the Operations & Customer Service Committee each addressed one of the two Plaza projects, they could work in tandem with an occasional collaboration of efforts thereby addressing both of the Plaza issues at once.

Ms. Hoskin asked if it has been officially decided to renovate the Plaza.

Mr. Blaska replied that it is official. The Board decided to retain the Plaza as the center of the downtown operation. Both of the Plaza projects presented at this meeting are internal and external changes that need to be made. The Plaza is the best solution for the years to come and there is much detail to both projects.

Mr. Lynch asked if a decision needs to be made at this meeting.

Mr. Blaska reported a decision does not need to be made at this time.

Ms. Bemiller asked how the sustainability project interfaces with the public.

Ms. Smits said the Governor supports reviewing greenhouse gases where there may be a requirement for fleets such as transit agencies to report CO2 and gas emissions to the state in the next two years.

Ms. Hoskin asked if there will be standards to meet.

Ms. Smits replied there will be eventually.

Mr. Blaska said that the Plaza projects will take place whether the CAC chooses those projects or not, however, the sustainability project is an opportunity to be ahead of an issue and hopefully shape some decisions.

Ms. Bemiller said it would be an indirect effect on the public.

Ms. Hoskin asked if there would be any funding benefit to the agency for participating as good stewards of the environment.

Mr. Blaska said there is funding called TIGGER, Transit Investments in Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions. STA would be eligible for a grant to fund the differential for retro-fitting ten diesel buses to hybrid electric. He continued by stating if you have a handle on where you are and where you want to go with planning, it is helpful when applying and qualifying for funding.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Otterstrom for his thoughts on the projects.

Mr. Otterstrom said he agrees with Mr. Blaska in that the Plaza projects are narrow in scope and the Committee would act as a sounding board rather than direct advisory to the Board. The CAC would also be less involved with the community.

Ms. Hoskin said there may be aspects of each project where recommendations could be made for both Plaza projects in lieu of a single, ongoing project.

Ms. Bemiller suggested if one single project was chosen, it could be set aside temporarily to review and provide input on other projects.

Ms. Smits added the sustainability project brings a lot of potential as many people do not have a full grasp of what this project entails. The CAC could go through the learning process together and share the findings with the public. This makes for good interaction.

Mr. Blaska said STA is financially sustainable until 2012 at the current level of service and is not in the same position as many other transits having to ask for additional funding or choosing to cut service today. Capital programs have been deferred to sustain the current level of service and the initiative is to ask for more resources or additional sales tax in order to sustain current service levels. If both of these initiatives fail, the agency is faced with an approximate 15-17% cut in service. The election would take place in November 2010, which is as long as the decision can wait to be made. The comprehensive transit plan is a part of what will be used for a successful vote.

Ms. Bemiller asked if choosing the sustainability project would be beneficial in this process.

Mr. Lynch replied that choosing this project would put Spokane Transit in a good position when asking for an increase in sales tax.

Ms. Hoskin mentioned as changes begin to take place at the Plaza the CAC needs to be educated on the cost benefit analysis and delaying capital expenditures. She questioned if riders would know enough to appreciate or have an understanding as to why the Plaza needs these changes. Ms. Hoskin asked how much these modifications are expected to be.

Mr. Blaska said \$3M has been set aside for the Plaza projects. He added that keeping the CAC updated on these projects in order for them to at least provide their reactions would prepare STA for response by the public.

Mr. Lynch proposed to delay the project selection discussion to a later point in the meeting.

## **6. NEW MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT**

Mr. Swalling proposed to discuss the membership recruitment and the charter as they go hand in hand. He pointed out the 2006 charter changes made by the Committee were not pursued any further and suggested for the Committee to review for additional modifications in preparation for Board review.

Ms. Bemiller asked if it would help with recruitment if the new project were selected in advance.

Mr. Lynch said the choices are to either recruit first and then determine the project, or select a project and then recruit based on the specifics of the project. He thought it to be easier to have a task selected in advance.

Mr. Swalling said the charter has a list of entities from which to solicit potential new members.

Ms. Hoskin questioned if the Committee recruits with a project in mind are they representing the community or the project. If expertise is needed, it can be asked for as the project develops.

Ms. Smits shared it does not need to be exclusive. A project can be selected and there can be an open invitation. Expertise is not needed, only willingness.

Mr. Lynch added if the project is selected, there may be individuals beneficial to have on the CAC to assist. It would be unfavorable to populate the Committee with like minds. Mr. Lynch said he would like to see a campaign for recruitment.

Ms. Hoskin suggested being mindful of revising the charter.

Mr. Lynch stated the recruitment process should begin in September for finalization in October with a target total membership of fifteen people.

Ms. Hoskin seconded the motion.

Mr. Swalling said that a target number would need to be determined.

Ms. Smits suggested for a topic to be selected prior to recruitment.

Mr. Lynch said direction for recruitment creates pressure to select a topic.

Ms. Smits stated if she were to join a committee, she would want to know the focus and project. She reiterated the charter is currently in an editing phase allowing for a change and suggests to pick a project prior to solicitation.

Ms. Hoskin shared she does not like this approach and states she does not fully understand the full scope of the sustainability project and is not ready to vote on a project.

Mr. Lynch motioned again to see a campaign for recruitment prior to selecting a new project.

Ms. Hoskin seconded the motion.

The motion passed all in favor.

## **7. STATEWIDE CAC MEETING**

Mr. Swalling announced the 2009 statewide CAC meeting is to be hosted by King County Metro and will be held in Seattle on Friday, September 25, 2009.

Mr. Blaska stated two members and one staff person may attend the meeting.

Ms. Smits said she would like to attend in representation of the CAC.

Mr. Frazier asked if a private vehicle could be used in lieu of flying.

Mr. Plaster said the Spokane Transit reimbursement rate of \$.55 cents per mile is available.

## **8. CAC CHARTER**

*Please see item number 6. "New Membership Recruitment" for additional discussion regarding this item as the topics were jointly discussed.*

Mr. Lynch said he does not have an issue with the existing changes to the charter. He motioned to alphabetize the list of groups from which members are selected in Article V, and added that once the changes are incorporated the CAC should take to the Board for approval.

Ms. Smits seconded the motion.

Mr. Frazier asked why there are terms for service.

Ms. Smits replied it is to ensure a commitment for a long-term project.

Ms. Hoskin suggested revising the membership rotation process and changing the Chair selection from "January" to "annually" in addition to clarifying language regarding membership and recruitment.

The discussion ensued and all voted in favor of the changes to the charter.

## **5. PROPOSED NEW PROJECTS – DISCUSSION RESUMED**

Mr. Lynch motioned for the Committee to continue to evaluate the sustainability project to achieve better understanding of this primary potential project for a final consideration in September.

Mr. Swalling said he is not opposed to this motion, rather, he is unsure as to what exactly the Committee's task would be for this project.

Ms. Hoskin asked Mr. Blaska for further guidance and information on the sustainability project.

Mr. Blaska said he will e-mail additional information during the summer for consideration and discussion in September.

Ms. Hoskin asked for the Committee to be advised if another viable project is identified over the course of the summer.

Ms. Bemiller stated out of the three choices that the sustainability project is a good project to be advanced for political and environmental issues. She asked if Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail is ready for any type of study.

Mr. Blaska replied not at this time.

The Committee voted all in favor to continue the evaluation of the sustainability project for a final consideration in September.

**9. GENERAL BUSINESS**

There was no general business at this time.

**10. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING**

As decided by the Committee, there will be no meeting in July.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 9, 2009 – 5:00 p.m. (Regular Meeting) – Spokane Transit, Northside Conference Room.

**11. ADJOURN**

With there being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Naomi Dunning

Executive Assistant