

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes for November 11, 2009
Northside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Fyrne Bemiller
Victor Frazier
Dean Lynch
Brenda Smits, Chair

STAFF PRESENT

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Susan Millbank, Ombudsman
Jim Plaster, Director of Finance and Administration
Charlie Phillips, STA Maintenance Analyst

MEMBERS ABSENT

Elaine Hoskin
Margaret Jones
David Swalling

GUESTS

None

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Smits called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and conducted roll call.

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

a.) Ms. Smits asked the Committee to address the meeting minutes of October 14, 2009.

The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes by consensus.

3. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS

There were no public expressions at this time.

4. NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT

a.) Candidate Interview Update

Ms. Smits provided an update regarding the CAC candidates and said both she and Mr. Blaska interviewed three applicants. The first being Greg Ridgley, a Gonzaga Prep student, who is very interested in government, and has run for City Council; Charles Hansen rides Fixed Route, is active in his Whitman Neighborhood Association, and is an accountant; Resa Hayes is an advocate with People First and rides Paratransit. Basic meeting information and requirements were shared with the applicants, all of whom felt the requirements would be do-able.

Mr. Blaska said he shared with each of the candidates that the primary objective of the interview is to ensure the cross-section, or representation of the community is upheld without over representing one specific view point. Each candidate was informed that the CAC is actively conducting another recruitment outreach process now that a project has been selected by the Committee. He recommended the Committee consider whether to bring new members on board now so these candidates may receive notification as to whether they have been accepted or not, or decide to hold on the selection process so the Committee may select from all of the applicants as a result of the second outreach. The expectation following this meeting is to be able to advise these applicants if they are accepted or if the Committee has put the project on hold.

Ms. Smits said the newly selected projects were shared with each candidate.

Mr. Frazier asked what the candidates' reactions were to the new CAC projects.

Ms. Smits replied they each were positive and showed interest.

Mr. Blaska reported Mr. Ridgley is very articulate and will be applying to Gonzaga University following graduation this year. Ms. Hayes has recently joined the Paratransit Users Group (PUG), and if selected, would be joining with a Paratransit user perspective as well as an advocate of the disabled population. Mr. Hansen is a long time resident of Spokane, lives in the Whitman neighborhood and is on the Hillyard Steering Committee.

Mr. Lynch proposed extending an invitation to these three candidates to attend the December CAC meeting as the Committee is not ready to offer a position to anyone until additional candidates are available. This would allow for the candidates to meet the Committee members and vice versa.

Mr. Frazier agreed.

Mr. Lynch said no matter who is added to the Committee, it will change the dynamic of the group and the Committee will have to adjust to whatever strength a new member brings. It would be best to know ahead of time to see if the candidates would be a good fit. He added the current project is an agenda of sustainability, and if a new member is serious about taking part in this project and contributing to the group, there is a plus in pursuing it.

Ms. Millbank reminded the importance of making clear what the CAC does not do, such as service issues, Operations matters, etc.

Ms. Smits stated that Mr. Blaska did a good job during the interviews of making a point to say what the CAC's charge is and made it clear the CAC is not a venue for making changes with bus routes and operations. She added that she liked the idea of having the candidates attend a meeting so they may have a better understanding of what exactly takes place during a meeting.

Mr. Frazier moved to invite the three current CAC candidates, Mr. Ridgley, Ms. Hayes, and Mr. Hansen to attend the December meeting only as interim Committee members, to observe and participate with the Committee without voting rights.

Mr. Lynch seconded the motion.

Ms. Bemiller asked how the candidates reacted when Mr. Blaska communicated that the CAC is not the venue for addressing personal agendas.

Ms. Smits said Mr. Hansen had somewhat indicated that he would like to see operational changes, however did not see personal agendas with the other two candidates.

Ms. Bemiller asked if they understood sustainability.

Ms. Smits said they each showed interest in sustainability and The Plaza projects. She reiterated each candidate understood the CAC is not a platform for addressing personal agendas.

Ms. Smits expressed she too would like to invite the candidates on an interim basis to the December meeting so they may sit at the table with the Committee members, participate in discussion, see how the meetings progress, get to know the Committee members and vice versa, and participate in discussion regarding the newly selected sustainability project.

Mr. Lynch asked about the timing for the Committee to make a recommendation based on December's meeting.

Mr. Blaska suggested to wait at least until the February Board meeting as the January 2010 meeting will be the first meeting for the new Board members, which is when they will divide the Committee responsibilities.

Ms. Bemiller said she would be interested in interviewing more people before making a recommendation.

For clarification purposes, Mr. Blaska reiterated the final understanding of the motion to the Committee as an invitation on an interim basis currently for December's meeting only pending final selection by the Committee for a formal recommendation to the Board. The candidates will be invited to sit at the table with the Committee members, participate in discussion, and will not have voting rights. This will give them an opportunity to see how the meetings progress, get to know the Committee members and vice versa, and participate in discussion regarding the newly selected sustainability project.

Mr. Lynch suggested the Committee be mindful of when and how to move from an interim status to extending an invitation.

The motion passed unanimously.

b.) Staff Update on New Member Outreach

Mr. Blaska referred to the list of business associates and interest groups provided to the Committee in their packet. He suggested for the Committee to discuss this list and add any additional organizations if desired. He added that both he and E. Susan Meyer can make personal appeals to the Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP) and Downtown Spokane Business Improvement District (BID), of which they are Board members. He said personalized solicitations will make for a successful outreach.

Mr. Frazier said he has solicited at the West Central Community Center and other networking groups he is involved in. He added of the three current candidates, he felt Mr. Ridgley to be a good representation for college and youth.

Ms. Bemiller suggested soliciting Work Source for those who are currently unemployed who may be interested in a volunteer position.

Mr. Frazier asked if someone on the CAC could remain on the Committee if they were to be employed by STA.

Mr. Plaster said they would not be able to do this.

Mr. Lynch said there are many other organizations that should be added to the current outreach list. He called the Committee's attention to The Fig Tree Community Resource Directory and The Directory For Seniors, both as potential sources for extended outreach.

Mr. Lynch felt all school districts should be added, library districts, Spokane Youth Sports, Washington Information Network (WIN), and in general the Spokane Valley area.

Mr. Blaska said the list currently provided in the meeting packet is a staff compilation of associates of STA or STA staff members.

Mr. Lynch suggested that staff obtain a copy of The Fig Tree Directory.

Ms. Smits said she had a potential candidate in mind and would inquire personally with that candidate.

Staff will add the newly suggested resources to the outreach list.

Mr. Lynch said he would like to give permission to Ms. Smits and Mr. Blaska to interview any new applicants rather than hold the applications until the next CAC meeting.

Mr. Blaska replied that upon receiving any new applications, an email will be sent out to the Committee with the application and interview information attached. All CAC members are welcome to attend the interviews as their schedule allows.

5. SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

a.) New Project Proposal to Board Recap

While attending the October Board meeting, Ms. Smits said it seemed the Board's main concern regarding the CAC's newly selected Sustainability Project is the amount of staff time involved. She reported the project was approved as written in the Board packet. Several members of the Board expressed their gratitude for the Committee members' time and effort towards the Tariff Policy Project.

b.) Survey of Interest Regarding Sustainability Information Sent via Email

Given that the Sustainability Project is such a broad topic, Mr. Blaska said he is interested in receiving Committee's feedback on what type of information they wish to receive and via which means of communication.

Mr. Frazier said he would prefer to receive policy focused material.

Ms. Bemiller said the Committee needs to see the possibility of the policies and how they can be applied to Spokane Transit.

Mr. Blaska said the resource material will be provided to the Committee as requested. Additional daily types of news such as web articles will also be forwarded via email as appropriate.

Mr. Lynch said anything that assists in directing policy would be helpful.

Ms. Smits stated she is confident there will be an abundant amount of resources available as the focus of the Sustainability Project is determined.

c.) Draft Project Calendar

Mr. Blaska reminded the Committee that phase one of the sustainability project is to determine if STA should have a formal sustainability program, and if so, why. If the answer is yes, phase two will include definition and development of the program model.

Ms. Bemiller stated she thought the Committee had already decided to have a sustainability program and are in the process of taking the first step towards this implementation.

Ms. Smits replied the Committee needs to look at other programs as a part of this determination of what it would mean for STA.

Mr. Lynch said his understanding is the Committee is going to explore the world of sustainability and determine whether or not and/or if so to what extent the Committee would recommend that STA pursue a sustainability program. The Committee will do the research and make a recommendation to the STA Board as to what kind of sustainability they might wish to pursue, however, a determination has not been made to have a sustainability program. He added that part of this meeting's purpose is to create a project timeline.

Ms. Smits added the Salt Lake City workshop mainly reviewed the APTA sustainability program which encompasses many levels of commitment. Ms. Smits thought this particular program involved many staff hours, however, it was only one example of a sustainability program.

Ms. Bemiller suggested looking at some of the programs to determine a starting point.

Mr. Frazier shared that he too thought the CAC had made a commitment to accepting an undetermined level of sustainability, and thought the level of participation to be what is needed to be determined.

Ms. Smits said there will be regulatory requirements whether STA elects to have an official program or not.

Ms. Bemiller said she would like to see a comparison of other transits that have sustainability programs in addition to a comparison of their service areas.

Mr. Lynch said he would like to look at other programs, and the existing local, federal, and state requirements/goals.

Ms. Smits suggested looking at the APTA website.

Ms. Bemiller said it would be helpful to have any applicable website addresses sent to the Committee members.

Ms. Smits noted there are differences between the APTA Sustainability Program and the APTA International Sustainability Program and suggested to review the APTA program and website first.

Mr. Frazier thought it would be helpful for the Committee to have a sustainability related terminology and acronym list.

Ms. Smits felt it to be useful to have a guest speaker from another transit who has already implemented a Sustainability Program.

Mr. Lynch said local businesses with large fleets, such as school districts, Avista, trucking companies could be a resource as well.

The discussion ensued and Mr. Blaska asked the Committee to review the information he captured on the white board. Based on the meeting discussion, the APTA Sustainability Program and identification of other resources will be reviewed at the December meeting at which time the Committee will determine which set of tasks to begin on, either pursuing other examples (Community lexicon, International APTA, ISO Standards, other agencies, guest speakers, compare findings), or defining requirements (Community lexicon, federal, state, and local requirements, goals and initiatives, compare findings). A draft project calendar will be provided to the Committee in December.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

There was no general business at this time.

7. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

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

8. ADJOURN

With there being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Naomi Dunning
Executive Assistant