

Spokane Transit Authority
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BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
Meeting Minutes for January 8, 2014
Northside Conference Room
MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Amber Waldref, City of Spokane, Board Chair *
Chuck Hafner, City of Spokane Valley, Past Board
Chair
Mike Allen, City of Spokane, Performance
Monitoring & External Relations Committee Chair
Al French, Spokane County, Planning &
Development Committee Chair
E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer, Ex-officio

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance & Information Services
Beth Bousley, Director of Communications & Customer
Service
Jan Watson, Executive Assistant to the CEO & Clerk of the
Authority

GUESTS

*Chair

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Waldref called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. and conducted roll call.

2. APPROVE COMMITTEE AGENDA

Ms. Waldref said the goals of the meeting are discussion of the election of the Board Chair Pro Tempore and Committee assignments, review of the Board agenda and a Plaza renovation update by Mr. Otterstrom.

Mr. Allen moved approval of the agenda and Mr. Hafner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Waldref said that she and Ms. Meyer will be meeting with legislators as part of the Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI) trip in two weeks. The GSI agenda includes the West Plains Transit Center and the Central City Line.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION/DISCUSSION

a. December 10, 2013 Special Committee Minutes

Mr. Hafner moved approval of the December 10, 2013 minutes and Mr. Allen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. 2014 BOARD CHAIR PRO TEMPORE AND COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Ms. Waldref indicated in 2013 the small cities were asked to step out of Board chair rotation in preparation for a ballot measure in 2014. It is important that the small cities have leadership and education opportunities so they will be prepared when in rotation.

Ms. Meyer said that in 2014 Cheney will be a STA Board member with Millwood, and in 2015, Cheney and Airway Heights will be on the Board.

The committee discussed a two year Chair Pro Tempore position in preparation for the Chair position in 2016.

Ms. Waldref suggested that the Chair Pro Tempore be part of the Board Operations Committee in 2014 & 2015 and in 2015 would chair either the Planning & Development Committee or the Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee.

The Committee discussed adding the Chair Pro Tempore position to the Board Operations Committee.

Ms. Watson said adding that position would require amending the functional description of the Board Operations Committee and it will be included in the Board packet this month.

A discussion of 2014 Board Committee Member Appointments ensued.

Mr. Hafner said that the City of Spokane Valley appointments will occur at the end of January.

Ms. Waldref said that changes to the draft list can be made if there are conflicts with meeting times.

6. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA: JANUARY 16, 2014

Ms. Meyer said that the consent agenda includes minutes and vouchers. Also included are recommendations from the Board Operations meeting; election of Chair Pro Tempore, confirmation of committee assignments and confirmation of appointment of Chairs to Planning & Development and Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committees.

Ms. Watson said the change in the Board Operations Committee functional guidelines will be included.

Mr. Otterstrom said that the Plaza Renovation update to the Board could be the full report or a briefer version.

Ms. Meyer said that GSI received the entire report.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

7. PLAZA RENOVATION PROJECT

Commissioner French arrived at 12:54 p.m.

Mr. Otterstrom said that four major points are included in the entire presentation.

1. Transit has a 125-year legacy in supporting downtown Spokane growth and vitality.
2. Alternatives to the Plaza were publicly and objectively studied and evaluated before the STA Board unanimously concluded to retain and improve the facility as a core component of system operations in its comprehensive plan.
3. The goal of the Plaza renovation is to support a vibrant downtown by improving its functionality for the customer and community.
4. The Plaza renovation sets the stage for future investments to transit infrastructure and operations in downtown Spokane and throughout the region.

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed past studies and the Plaza development timeline.

In Downtown today:

1. There are nearly 14,000 workers within a quarter mile of the Plaza.
2. Vehicular traffic volume on downtown streets is 32% lower than in 1982.
3. 42 downtown businesses participate in the Employer Sponsored Bus Program.
4. 8 businesses reported more than 1,000 bus commute days in the last 6 months.

Mr. Allen suggested an interesting statistic would be to know how many more workers are downtown now.

Mr. Hafner said the numbers of businesses participating and reporting commute days is very interesting.

Ms. Meyer replied that those numbers are low and only show the rides that are logged in.

Mr. Hafner stated that accurate numbers are needed before a ballot initiative.

Mr. French asked where the riders are originating from.

Mr. Otterstrom said passenger counters track where riders get on, but not where they get off.

Mr. Blaska said data is available for City and County employees.

Mr. Otterstrom added that data is collected from license plates at the Park and Rides to see where riders live.

Mr. Allen asked about the new smoking section on Wall Street.

Mr. Otterstrom said the fabrication of the glass is taking additional time.

Ms. Meyer said the glass was not made to the required specifications and had to be returned.

Mr. Otterstrom discussed the design principles for the Plaza. The first floor layout includes customer service, retail, restrooms and customer waiting areas on the North and South sides of building. The proposed plan relocates the escalator to parallel the south wall. The customer waiting areas allow viewing of all zones from inside the building.

Mr. French asked about the retail space. Discussion ensued regarding retail access and new and existing vendors.

Mr. French asked about the cougars.

Ms. Meyer said that the artist will need to approve any decision to relocate the cougars.

Mr. Allen said the waterfall is a pleasant transition to the second floor.

Mr. Otterstrom said in the afternoons the waterfall is turned off to lower the noise level.

Ms. Warren said approximately \$400 is collected annually from the waterfall.
Mr. Otterstrom said the maintenance costs exceed what is collected.

Mr. Otterstrom said that on the second floor are STA functions which include a mobility center, staff break room, security, and call center. Along the Southside are meeting rooms. The traffic pattern has changed and benches have been removed. There has been a lot of positive feedback for meeting rooms.

Mr. Hafner asked about the exhibit space and if STA has had inquiries.

Mr. Otterstrom said the exhibit space is 6,000 square feet. Some preliminary discussions have been held with the Museum of Arts & Culture (MAC).

Ms. Waldref said that the MAC is the only place that has space currently to display Native American Tribe artifacts.

Mr. Allen recommended a dynamic changing exhibit that would continually draw people.

Mr. Otterstrom said that the area has good skywalk access and is secured at night. Studies have shown that the escalators in the center of the building distract from a security perspective.

Mr. Otterstrom showed potential renderings of the Plaza space. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Otterstrom said that ALSC Architecture has credibility and experience in design. ALSC works with new tenants in Riverpark Square. A scope and schedule for the Plaza project is planned for March 2014.

Mr. Otterstrom discussed 2014 - 2020 conceptual service evolution which includes routes that “load and go” at the Plaza. This is a regional grid network.

Mr. Hafner said there is a large increase with routes not dwelling at the Plaza from 2014 to 2016. He suggested overlays to show the increase.

Mr. Otterstrom shared an illustration of a “load and go” station. The waiting area is a fare paid area, clearly defined. All doors of the bus would open at once for quick loading and unloading.

Mr. Allen asked about the projection of volume of routes not dwelling at the Plaza.

Mr. Otterstrom said that conceptually, approximately 75% of total buses will be “load and go” upon full implementation. Additional staff would be required.

Mr. Allen asked about congestion on Riverside versus Sprague.

Mr. Blaska said that the groups of people that congregate are different and always changing.

Mr. Otterstrom said that only the Plaza Renovation section will be reviewed at the Board meeting.

8. CEO REPORT

Ms. Meyer said that a pre-proposal meeting was held for those companies interested in the West Plains Transit Center. Approximately 70 interested parties asked for copies.

Mr. Otterstrom said all of the funding has not been secured, therefore, the project is not at the design-build stage yet.

Ms. Meyer said the project will allow STA to pull off of I-90 eastbound into a flyer spot. Pedestrians exit the bus and walk over the pedestrian bridge to the park and ride lot. Costs are estimated at \$13M which includes property acquisition. This project adds very little to operating costs. This allows connection to Airway Heights, Medical Lake and Cheney without going downtown.

Mr. Otterstrom said the largest expense is building the transit lane in the highway.

The Zone 1 trial which the City of Spokane required of STA in exchange for their commitment of a parking space on Post Street for a Paratransit stop has failed due to zone conflict. A bus will stop in front of another business to wait until the zone opens up and all passengers choose to exit at that time creating congestion.

Board member orientations are taking place for Councilmember Mumm and Mayor Trulove this week. Project updates, bus rides and tours will take place later.

Ms. Meyer said she has been invited by Governor Inslee to attend as a guest at the State of the State address on January 14. Governor Inslee will be talking about STA and the Central City Line.

9. NEW BUSINESS - NONE

10. ADJOURN

Ms. Waldref moved to adjourn the meeting and all members approved by consensus. With there being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Waldref adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Merilee Robar
Executive Assistant