

**CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Meeting Minutes for February 10, 2010

Southside Conference Rooms

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Fyrne Bemiller  
Victor Frazier  
Margaret Jones  
Dean Lynch  
Brenda Smits, Chair

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

David Swalling

**STAFF PRESENT**

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations  
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning  
Charlie Phillips, Operations Analyst

**GUESTS PRESENT**

Susanne Croft  
Will Flanigan  
Resa Hayes  
Ted Horobiowski  
Fran Papenleur  
Greg Ridgley

**GUESTS ABSENT**

Charles Hansen  
Larry Luton

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

Chairman Smits called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and conducted roll call. She asked each meeting attendee to introduce themselves and briefly provide their background information.

Mr. Horobiowski said he has worked for Avista for 29 years, and is currently their Manager of Strategic Transportation Initiatives. He has volunteered for several committees. He has a degree in planning, with special focus on transportation. He was born and raised in Spokane.

Ms. Papenleur said she works for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, however, has spent the majority of her career in the healthcare industry. She is a native of Spokane and lives in the Northwest area of the city.

Mr. Flanigan works as a loan originator for Guild Mortgage. He too is a native of Spokane and is interested in being politically involved in the community.

Ms. Croft has been a transit rider throughout her life. She previously worked as the City of Spokane Sustainability Coordinator and served as staff to the Mayor's Sustainability Task Force. She has since retired from her position with the city, and is currently working as the Executive Director for Sustainable Local Investment Partners.

Ms. Resa Hayes is a native Spokaneite and is currently working part-time for People First of Washington.

Ms. Bemiller shared that she is retired and is legally blind, which she describes as a 21<sup>st</sup> century adventure. Previously, she has worked all over the United States, raised a family, and has enjoyed being a member of the Citizen Advisory Committee over the last two years.

Mr. Frazier grew up in Michigan, attended college and was in the Air Force for twenty years and retired in Spokane. He has since worked in financial services for nine years and is currently working at the Spokane Club. Mr. Frazier said he has been involved with STA since 1998. He has served as a member of STA's Operations and Customer Service Committee, Finance, Planning and Administration Committee, and now has been on the Citizen Advisory Committee for two years. Mr. Frazier is also very committed to volunteering for the Northwest Neighborhood Association and is on the Board for the West Central Community Center.

Mr. Lynch has lived in Spokane since 1973 and has been on the Citizen Advisory Committee since its inception. He shared that the most recent project was the Tariff Policy. He currently lives in Browne's Addition and will soon be a resident of the South Hill. His background is in social services and is currently retired.

Mr. Blaska introduced himself as the Director of Operations for Spokane Transit and as staff support for the Citizen Advisory Committee. He enjoys working on projects with an involved group such as the CAC.

Ms. Smits shared she too has been on the Citizen Advisory Committee since inception. She has recently been appointed as the new Committee Chair. Ms. Smits currently works for the Department of Ecology and Air Quality

Program. Previously, she worked at Spokane Clean Air. She said she is very happy to see all of the participation with the CAC.

Mr. Phillips is a Maintenance Analyst for Spokane Transit. He is working closely with Mr. Blaska as support to the Citizen Advisory Committee for the Sustainability Project.

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

a.) Ms. Smits asked the Committee to address the meeting minutes of January 13, 2010.

**The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes by consensus.**

## **3. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

Mr. Horobiowski shared he recently watched a PBS program entitled, "Blueprint America; Beyond the Motor City". This program was about mass transit in the United States and focused on Detroit and how it was the center of the universe for transportation, not only due to manufacturing, but it had trolleys and buses for years. Now it is a large city with vast, empty space. Federal funds have been secured to resurrect the livelihood. Mr. Horobiowski said the documentary demonstrates how Detroit has come full circle. He highly recommended this program to be well worth taking the time to watch.

## **4. SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT**

### **a.) Definition of Sustainability**

In further determining the definition of sustainability for Spokane Transit, this is a recurring agenda item for the Committee's ongoing discussion.

Ms. Smits said a list of definitions has previously been provided to the Committee, however, this agenda item is an opportunity for the Committee to openly discuss, define and develop Spokane Transit's definition of sustainability.

Mr. Blaska reminded that one of the Committee's first tasks for the Sustainability Project is to ask, what is sustainability, what does it mean, and specifically, what does it mean to STA? The Committee asked for examples of other transits' sustainability programs, which have been and will continue to be provided for review and discussion. He said that Mr. Lynch also previously suggested having this as a recurring agenda item in order to keep the dialogue moving forward in developing STA's definition of sustainability.

Mr. Blaska also stated the "Parking Lot" agenda item is also new and is a place to list ideas to revisit as the project develops.

Ms. Bemiller said she thought the definition from Champaign-Urbana to be very complete as it encompassed the total population beyond just the transit.

Mr. Frazier echoed Ms. Bemiller's comments. He said it is a good framework from which to build. He read aloud the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District Sustainability Definition. *Sustainability is about practices that make good business sense and good environmental sense. It is balancing the economic, social and environmental needs of a community. For the public transportation industry, this means: Employing practices in design and capital construction, such as using sustainable building materials, recycled materials, and solar and other renewable energy sources to make facilities as "green" as possible. Employing practices in operations and maintenance such as reducing hazardous waste, increasing fuel efficiency, creating more efficient lighting and using energy efficient propulsion systems. Employing community-based strategies to encourage land use and transit-oriented development designed to increase public transit ridership.*

Mr. Blaska said the Committee will be working to determine what the recommendation to the Board ought to be as the transit for the region. Should the focus be internal or should it be more regional focused? Mr. Blaska believes

from a policy perspective, the Board will want the Committee's insight. If the Committee were to take a regional stance, then supporting information would be required, especially if it means additional resources are necessary. The rationale or benefit would need to be demonstrated.

Mr. Lynch reminded the Board has recently experienced significant change in membership. The CAC has traditionally had strong support and appreciation from the Board, however, with recent elections, the direction of the Board is yet to be determined. He believes the support will continue and the Board will look to the Committee for guidance, and there will be much latitude in this project.

Ms. Croft suggested this directly relates to STA's core mission.

Ms. Papenleur asked if the Board has a strategic plan.

Mr. Blaska said perhaps it would be valuable to review STA's mission, stated priorities, and performance measures. As of now, sustainability is not included as a priority. There is a large component of community trust, specifically regarding fiscal responsibility.

Ms. Papenleur said she perceives STA to be a regional player and it would be interesting to know the community's perception of STA regarding sustainability.

Mr. Frazier stated in all of his experience with STA, the recent turnover in the Board is the most significant he has ever seen. He views this change as a chance to lead on the Sustainability issue, however, they do have the prerogative to change or even reject a recommendation from the Citizen Advisory Committee.

Mr. Horobiowski said with a relatively new Board and Citizen Advisory Committee, this is a good time to reaffirm the STA core values and reiterate the economic, social and environmental direction of STA.

Ms. Croft reported when working on the Mayor's Sustainability Task Force, the grant defined the scope of the project. Some people felt the scope should have been more limited than it was, by only looking at internal functions of the city departments rather than both internal and external.

Mr. Horobiowski referred to the City of Spokane Sustainability Action Plan and noted that STA is referenced in the material. He suggested the CAC build upon this document rather than reinventing the work.

Ms. Smits said this is why the CAC has been reviewing other transits and their sustainability programs. She said the CAC is still in the beginning stages of this review.

#### **b.) Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District – Sustainability Definition**

The Committee and guests reviewed and discussed the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District Sustainability definition earlier the meeting while discussing item 4.a., Definition of Sustainability.

Ms. Smits added she thought the information to be vague and said information that is measurable would be more helpful.

There were no further comments submitted regarding this agenda item.

#### **c.) UTA Sustainability Program**

*For ease of reference, please see the February 10, 2010 Citizen Advisory Committee meeting packet for a complete copy of the UTA Sustainability Program.*

Mr. Blaska reported UTA is a property almost four times the size in population, bus fleet, and ridership. They also have heavy rail and light rail. They are truly a regional transit entity. The geographic configuration is between Salt Lake and the mountains. Multiple counties and cities are served by UTA. UTA has approximately twenty-six

passengers per hour of service vs. STA's twenty-eight passengers per hour of service, and their operating cost is approximately twenty percent higher than STA's operating cost.

Mr. Blaska added UTA has a complete and formal sustainability program, with staff people specifically assigned to environmental management. UTA's program has been designed to meet the International Standards Organization (ISO) requirements. The CAC has yet to fully review the ISO standards, which are very regimented.

Mr. Flanigan asked why there were approximately two million less rides given in 2008 vs. 2007.

Mr. Blaska speculated they may have had a service reduction.

The Committee and guests reviewed the UTA Sustainability Program as presented both in their meeting packet and visual presentation by Mr. Blaska.

Ms. Bemiller verified with Mr. Blaska that this is the transit he utilized while attending a sustainability conference in 2009. She asked if it would be possible that the bus service was reduced due to the establishment of a light rail.

Mr. Otterstrom added in 2007, UTA performed a comprehensive operational assessment of their fixed route system which resulted in a major change to their routes which was ultimately a cost savings and a way to make their system more efficient.

Ms. Croft made reference to a four-step program entitled "Natural Step", which does not have an economic consideration, as it is environmental and social based. She said she considers this approach as a subset to the "triple bottom line". It is a matter of what fits best for an organization's message and mission.

Mr. Blaska asked if expressing either one of these theoretical frame works would be important to do, and if adding this selection to the CAC's "Parking Lot" would be helpful.

Ms. Croft replied it is important to decide which one STA wants to utilize as it will guide the criteria for the program. She referenced the Bruntland definition as a general usage to define sustainability, then a specific sustainability framework or management system is chosen to further define a program.

Mr. Blaska said if the CAC were to propose for STA to be ISO certified, it would be an extremely staff intensive effort.

Ms. Croft added some Fortune 500 companies employ the ISO standard as it promotes confidence of stockholders.

Ms. Smits asked if ISO is an ongoing certification.

Ms. Croft replied it is ongoing and involves significant data collection and reporting in order to remain in compliance.

Mrs. Jones said she thought STA could devise a system of its own and achieve the same outcome.

Mr. Flanigan asked if that would be reinventing the wheel.

Mrs. Jones replied STA does not have the staffing to maintain the data collection and reporting for ISO certification.

Mr. Blaska asked the Committee what value the community would place in STA being ISO certified.

Ms. Croft said the City of Spokane Solid Waste Department has decided to adopt an environmental management system according to the ISO 14001 standards as a guidance system, however, without the intention of being certified.

Mrs. Jones shared she thought this to make more sense for STA.

Mr. Lynch suggested not getting too far ahead of where the Committee actually is, and that the Committee has discussed the level of involvement over the last few meetings. He reminded everyone the Committee is still gathering information and as they become more knowledgeable about the standards they can discuss creating vs. adopting. He said any further discussion at this time is premature.

Ms. Smits suggested that APTA guidelines could also be followed without stringent reporting and data collection.

Mr. Lynch said at this point there is no clear value to be ISO or APTA certified. There are no benefits of grants with this certification, so the consideration needs to be what is in the best interest of the Spokane community, as opposed to following an established program.

Mr. Blaska said a specific sustainability or objective is not currently included in STA's strategic plan. This Committee could consider whether this should be and could make a recommendation to do so.

#### **d.) STA's Current Practices and Procedures**

The Committee had previously requested an outline of practices and procedures currently employed by STA regarding issues related to sustainability. Mr. Blaska provided a draft outline of current examples that could be included in the overall STA Sustainability Program. The internal organizational practices listed by Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District program was used as a model.

*For ease of reference, please see the February 10, 2010 Citizen Advisory Committee meeting packet for a complete copy of the Spokane Transit Internal Organizational Efforts.*

The sustainable practices categories outlined are vehicles, facilities, operations, and STA policies.

Discussion took place regarding establishing a baseline year for comparison in order to measure achievement.

Mr. Blaska noted it is important to meter expectations and goals according to the potential to achieve them. Staff could provide additional information if it is decided to set objectives based upon a baseline year, however, there would be constraints based upon the lifecycle of equipment.

Mr. Flanigan inquired about the typical life cycle of a bus.

Mr. Blaska said it is fifteen years, and the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) minimal requirement is twelve years. STA has determined that the most economical life cycle is fifteen years based on one engine replacement, two transmission replacements, and repainting the bus once.

Mr. Flanigan asked if STA owns or leases the buses.

Mr. Blaska said STA owns the buses.

Ms. Bemiller asked when STA received its first hybrid bus.

Mr. Blaska reported the first hybrid bus was received in 2007.

Mr. Flanigan asked why STA does not have more advertising on buses.

Mr. Blaska said STA has a contract with an advertising company for ads on one-hundred buses, seven of which are wraps. There is a fixed amount received per year for the advertising. The contractor oversees selling the ad space and advertising revenue. He added this is a sensitive issue as some view the advertising as visual pollution, and others see the value in an additional revenue stream.

#### **e.) "Parking Lot" of Future Items to Address**

The "Parking Lot" is a new, recurring agenda item for the Committee's ongoing reference and discussion. It will house a list of future items and questions to revisit or address.

Ms. Smits referenced the item regarding inviting the Board to attend a CAC meeting.

Mr. Blaska asked for the Committee to select a few dates for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Lynch reminded the Committee had decided to wait until the new CAC members had been brought on board so they may be included in the discussion.

Mr. Horobiowski suggested adding Sustainable Transportation and Access Rating System (STARS) to the Parking Lot under the LEED item.

Also under the LEED item, Mr. Lynch said to add “remodeling” to the reference of construction projects. He recalls the bus barn is in need of a new roof and this may be a project for consideration.

Discussion ensued about developing a framework and defining sustainability. The importance of developing a framework was established.

Ms. Smits said she would like to add a philosophical framework item with the subset of Environmental Management System, Triple Bottom Line (three elements of sustainability), Natural Step, Climate Action Plan.

## **5. PLAZA PROJECT UPDATE**

Mr. Otterstrom provided a verbal update of the Plaza Project to the Committee. He announced staff is in the process of hiring a Capital Projects Manager whose main function for the next few years will be the Plaza remodel. He reported that a consultant, Nelson Nygaard, determined the space to be viable pending improvements on usage of space both inside and out. One of the first tasks of the new Capital Projects Manager will be to hire a design team for Plaza planning and modifications which will include input from both the public and the CAC.

Mr. Frazier reminded the Committee this may be a controversial project.

Mrs. Jones said she disagrees with the proposed removal of the escalator. Once the access to the skywalks on the second floor is cut off this will disallow for her to utilize the Plaza and believes this to be applicable to other transit users.

Ms. Hayes stated this will have the same impact on her and she was unaware of this change.

Mr. Otterstrom explained these are simply recommendations made by the consultant that will have to be considered. He clarified there is no intent to remove access to the skywalks. There will still be access via elevators. There is still much input that will be required.

Ms. Smits reiterated that the CAC will be a sounding board for this project, however, not a decision maker.

Mr. Blaska said there was a deliberate outreach and study to determine whether the Plaza was still functional. Given all factors, it was determined that a pulse system is the most effective service architecture to operate the buses at the Plaza. The location of service was also considered between the Plaza and the Intermodal Center. Following extensive analysis, it was determined that the Plaza is the best location for a pulse system over the next ten years. These elements are the first to be changed, and now the external and internal configurations are the next to be considered. There was a strong feeling that an urban park concept did not enhance the transit operations and there is better use of the space on the second floor. A coalition of downtown neighbors to the Plaza agreed it was the right place for the Plaza, however, not the right place for an indoor urban park.

Mr. Otterstrom recapped that there will still be access to the skywalk system, however, the consultant recommended that all passenger uses be moved to the ground floor. He reminded both CAC and public input will be considered.

Mr. Horobiowski asked if there is funding.

Mr. Blaska said there is \$3M allocated to this project.

Mr. Horobiowski suggested creating a timeline to track both the Sustainability and the Plaza projects.

Mr. Lynch said it might be helpful to review previous meeting minutes as it was decided the Sustainability Project would be the primary focus of the CAC and the Plaza Project would be a secondary, intermittent item for the Committee’s review as needed by staff.

Ms. Croft thought the Plaza Project to be a good opportunity to integrate the Sustainability Project with the Plaza Project.

Many members, guests and staff agreed.

Mr. Frazier said the CAC demonstrated value to the Board during the review of the Tariff Policy and the subsequent fare increase via open dialogue in public outreach process. It will be helpful for the CAC to remain involved in the Plaza Project for this same reason.

It was clarified that both the Citizen Advisory Committee and the Operations and Customer Service Committee report directly and make recommendations to the Board.

## **6. GENERAL BUSINESS**

Ms. Smits announced that CAC member, Elaine Hoskin, has submitted her resignation due to scheduling conflicts. Ms. Smits also shared that staff has larger three-ring binder for their Sustainability notebook upon request.

Ms. Croft suggested that information packets be copied double-sided. She also asked if the CAC has ever met at the Plaza. She stated it would be easier for those who ride the bus.

Ms. Smits and Ms. Bemiller replied many, if not most CAC members currently ride the bus.

Mr. Frazier said he would prefer to keep the meetings at the Boone location, however, thought it may be helpful to have a meeting at the Plaza as input is required from the CAC on the Plaza Project.

Ms. Smits said this will be an item to add to the Parking Lot.

Mr. Blaska asked the guests if STA orientation items would be helpful. Staff will provide these items via hard copy to the Committee.

## **7. DISCUSSION OF NEW MEMBERSHIP SLATE**

Ms. Smits announced the new membership slate discussion to the Committee and guests. She said it is open for all to attend as this is a public meeting, however, if any guests wished to leave, they could do so at this time. All guests elected to leave the meeting. Mr. Blaska said there were two persons of interest that did not respond with an application: Kevin Guthrie of NAI Black, and Dr. Phillip Rudy. The Committee and staff began by reviewing each of the candidates' information. The discussion ensued and the Committee unanimously decided to nominate all of the candidates for membership to the Citizen Advisory Committee as each person brings unique perspective, background and rounds out representation of the Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA). The recommendation will be included in the March CAC packet for finalization, and the March 17, 2010 Board packet for approval.

## **8. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 10, 2010 – 5:00 p.m. (Regular Meeting) – Spokane Transit, Southside Conference Room.

## **9. ADJOURN**

With there being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Naomi Zantello  
Executive Assistant