

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes of Public Hearing

March 15, 2007

Downers Grove Public Works Building
5101 Walnut Avenue, Downers Grove

I. OPENING OF MEETING

Chairman Gress called the Transportation Advisory Commission meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
Roll call followed:

Present: Chairman Gress
Mr. John Loper
Mr. Richard Mueller
Mr. Robert Nastal (arrives 6:37 p.m.)
Mr. Geoffrey Neustadt
Mr. Anthony Schiller
Downtown Management Repr. Ross Johnson (for ex-officio Kunze)

Absent: Chairman Kollmar
Parking & Traffic Commissioner Mark Yeksigian (ex-officio)

Staff present: Mr. David Barber, P.E., Dir. of Public Works
Ms. Kirsten Coulman, Recording Secretary
Ms. Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager

Others Present:

The chairman noted the meeting was being recorded on village-owned equipment for the purpose of transcribing the minutes.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 18, 2007 Minutes - The minutes were approved as presented, on motion by Mr. Neustadt, seconded by Mr. Schiller. Motion carried by voice vote of 5-0.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Village Manager, Ms. Cara Pavlicek, introduced herself and distributed copies of the Village's strategic plan to the commissioners. She noted the plan was a living document. The plan gave her direction as to what was expected of her and also allowed her a chance to review the goals and visions of the Village Council for the community. (Mr. Nastal arrives.) Asked if there was any specific section of the plan that related to the Transportation Advisory Commission that Ms. Pavlicek wished to discuss, she believed one of the challenges for the village council in 2007 will be to specifically identify items such as Core Services. (See page 10.) She asked members to review the plan and identify items that may be missing from the plan and communicate them to staff.

Chairman Gress raised discussion about the overlapping of the Transportation Advisory Commission and the Parking and Traffic Commission and the possible integration of the two commissions. Ms. Pavlicek agreed there was overlap between the two commissions and from staff's perspective, she would feel comfortable making the recommendation, but the Village Council directed staff to bring the matter back to the two commissions to discuss. She believes the matter should be

discussed this May. She suggested the two commissions hold a joint meeting to make one recommendation.

Mr. Barber also believed combining the two systems (parking and transportation) together made much sense. Currently he felt there was progress being made with the buses, however, this commission was basically monitoring what was occurring and determining the goals for next year. As an alternative, Ms. Pavlicek suggested forming one commission with subcommittees. She asked for commissioner comments on the matter.

In general, the commissioners agreed consolidating the two commissions made sense, especially when the village's own circulator routes begin impacting transit throughout the community. Other comments voiced included the importance of public safety, addressing transportation for the aging population, and getting the Parking and Traffic Commission or some other commission to review the planning of developments to address traffic impacts, parking, etc. from the development. Chairman Gress concurred with Mr. Johnson regarding the parking issues overlapping, pointing out this commission reviews parking from the perspective of the parking deck and analysis, while the Parking and Traffic Commission reviews parking from another perspective.

IV. MONTHLY REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2007

Mr. Barber reported ridership for the month was 148 riders and the number did not increase as he had expected for January or February 2007. The format for the parking deck use was revised slightly to provide a better indication of the parking by level. The average occupancy appears to be at 74.5%. The four-hour spaces sit empty. Mr. Barber commented the deck could become 100% occupied if more Central Business District parking spaces or daily fee parking spaces were added. However, at 85% occupancy, individuals get the sense that the deck is full. As a side note, some concrete pieces were coming apart in the pre-cast panels. Staff was working with a contractor to remedy the situation. No spaces have been lost. Regarding the PACE grant application for the buses, staff has reviewed the specs but has to meet with PACE to discuss the details. Mr. Balicki will be meeting with the PACE representatives. Additionally, Mr. Barber said he is trying to find out who at Pace staff can speak to about getting buses in advance of the ordered buses. Mr. Barber confirmed he did contact Mike Bolton, Larry Brown and Rosemary Troika (phonetic spelling) on the matter. Updates will be forthcoming. Conversation followed on the agreement for Village bus rates. Mr. Barber explained that once the village accepts federal money under the grant, the village has to provide a fifty percent reduction in the regular bus rate for seniors and those with disabilities. Mr. Barber did not see it as an issue.

Dialog followed by Mr. Barber that certain fire suppression equipment may not be necessary on the PACE buses even though PACE liked to add the equipment to its heavy-duty buses. Barber believed the extra \$5,000 to \$10,000 cost per bus was not necessary because the PACE buses ordered were not running for long hours such as heavy-duty buses. He was not sure where PACE got the requirement for the suppression system. Mr. Mueller believed the requirement was due to a bus breaking out in flames at Bennett Academy.

Mr. Jeff Waxman, a bus operator for the village, stated PACE has been installing suppression systems since 2000.

Dialog followed that there was recollection the Village Council approved a fixed amount of money and the remainder was from the grant, wherein Mr. Barber stated Council did not approve the money for buses. The assumption was that staff pursued the grant for \$448,000 and the village's

share would be approximately \$112,000. Mr. Schiller expressed concern about the extra expense for the suppression system.

Regarding the DuPage Mayors and Managers Study, staff was working on the third phase of the project which included a public information gathering phase. Surveys were being sent out to the four communities involved in the circulator route. Mr. Barber distributed surveys to the commissioners to fill out. When upcoming meetings are scheduled to discuss the input, he will most likely schedule the meetings with this commission. Mr. Barber expects the next meeting to be held in April. Per a question, an option existed to take the survey on-line.

As to the RTA Cook-DuPage Corridor Study, there has been no activity.

Chairman Gress opened up the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Mark Thoman, 1109 61st Street, Downers Grove, verified with staff the cost of the fire suppression system was \$10,000 per bus. Mr. Barber believed it was approximately \$5,000 per bus.

V. PARKING INVENTORY MATRIX UPDATE

Mr. Barber provided an updated parking matrix for the downtown park spaces as requested by Chairman Kollmar. He explained several changes occurred in the parking allocation due to development projects. Approximately 305 public parking spaces were lost in the past few years, most occurred when the Acadia project was being constructed. The Johnson printer lot as well as the Curtiss parking lot were also the bulk of spaces lost. However, some spaces were added to private spaces and on-street parking spaces. In general, Mr. Barber stated the village lost 83 spaces downtown. Not included in the matrix were those new spaces which would be added and were privately operated and maintained under the Acadia project (Buildings 1, 2, and 3). Lastly, it was pointed out by Mr. Barber that an agreement existed whereby the village must maintain 825 parking spaces for commuter parking in downtown. Currently, the village had well over the required 825 spaces. In total, the parking matrix had a total inventory of 4,665 parking spaces.

A brief dialog followed on motorcycles parking in the parking deck spaces. Mr. Barber noted that six free motorcycle spaces were available on Forest Avenue. He has received requests for the village to locate more spaces in the downtown area for motorcycles.

VI. PROPOSED BUS STOP SIGNS

Mr. Barber presented actual bus stop signs to the commissioners, noting their enhancements included more bus route information on the sign. The signs are within the budget and will added over the summer months. Mr. Waxman asked if staff could look into moving up the time for the last two trips on the southwest route. Mr. Barber would follow-up.

Within the department, Mr. Barber conveyed staff was looking into Automated Vehicle Location ("AVL") systems for snow plows and some other trucks for tracking purposes. He said one of the discussions that took place at the Circulator Study meeting was to use an AVL system so that riders could locate a bus's location. Mr. Barber believed it was not a very costly enhancement.

COMMISSIONER NEUSTADT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED GROVE SHUTTLE BUS STOP SIGNAGE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM, AS PRESENTED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MUELLER.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 6-0.

VII. AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION ("APTA") - REPORT

Mr. Barber reported that Chairman Gress had asked to distribute information on APTA's Public Transportation Benefits for the 21st Century. He pointed out some of the interesting facts found in the material. Chairman Gress noted on page 10 of the material that public transportation enhances property values. Positive comments followed on Portland, Oregon's transportation system and Minneapolis's system. Chairman Gress also commented that he was disappointed the governor's recent budget proposal did not mention transit relative to the tax dollars being sought. Chairman Gress discussed the positive transit-oriented development for the village's downtown Main Street and the fact that many communities were moving toward the same trend. He pointed out that serious needs will have to be met, which is why the whole "Moving Beyond the Congestion" effort was being put forth by the RTA, i.e., to go to legislature to request relief to support and sustain the transit system within the region.

VIII. DISCUSSION - STATUS OF CURRENT FLEET AND DISPOSAL OF OLD BUSES

Mr. Barber conveyed that, overall, the village's bus system was moving along fine on the roads but constant maintenance takes place. Locating parts was an issue sometimes. Pace has assisted in providing some of the parts but has not billed the village for them. However, he sees running the current buses as an issue if the village does not receive the new buses. Regarding the disposal of the current buses, Mr. Barber conveyed some ideas he received from Bob _____ such as using the buses as warming facilities for activities that go on within the village or repainting them and using them as mobile facilities around the community. Mr. Barber reported that prices of \$2500 or more per bus were received when the village auctioned off some of its previous buses. However, he is finding the buses have more value due to their parts being sold.

Comments followed on whether the buses could be used as part of a police/fire command vehicle. A question was raised if the best two buses could be used for Heritage Fest. Mr. Barber explained it would depend on what the village needed in the fleet. Finding staff to run the buses during the extended hours of Heritage Fest was another concern.

Chairman Gress invited the public to comment. No comments were received.

IX. OLD BUSINESS - None

X. NEW BUSINESS

At the request of Ms. Kunze, Mr. Johnson stated she wanted to convey the concerns of those residents who were looking for parking in the deck and not understanding the signage. Mr. Johnson stated Ms. Kunze was working with Traffic Manager Fera and possibly a subcommittee to change the signage for more clarification. Mr. Barber believed there was too much signage and agreed streamlining it would be beneficial. He did notice some confusion with the Lot R parkers and four-hour parking. He recommended that commissioners drive through the parking deck, review the signage, and convey their thoughts to him.

As to enforcement of speeding within the parking deck, Mr. Barber stated the police have been visiting the deck periodically. However, some signage will be revised and will now include compact cars on the corners. Mr. Loper suggested staff installing a banner on the deck which announces free weekend parking. Staff would follow up.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

COMMISSIONER SCHILLER MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:35 P.M. COMMISSIONER NEUSTADT SECONDED THE MOTION.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
(as transcribed by tape)

/s/ Celeste K. Weilandt
Celeste K. Weilandt, Recording Secretary