

MORGANTOWN MONONGALIA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD
AUGUST 18, 2016 MINUTES

Members Present: Chairman Eldon Callen-Monongalia County, Vice Chairman Mayor Herman Reid-Star City, Brian Carr-WV DOH, Mayor Marti Shamberger-City of Morgantown, Commissioner Tom Bloom-Monongalia County, Mike Kelly-Board of Education, Dave Bruffy-Mountain Line, Councilperson Jennifer Selin-City of Morgantown, Treasurer Mayor Patricia Lewis-Granville, Randy Hudak-WVU, Councilperson Wesley Nugent-City of Morgantown, Commissioner Edward Hawkins-Monongalia County, Councilperson Janice Goodwin-City of Westover

Members Absent: Delegate Joe Statler-Blacksville

MPO Director: Bill Austin

1. Call to Order

Without a quorum present, Mayor Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Callen introduced the approval of the Minutes for the June meeting. Mayor Reid moved approval of the minutes; seconded by Mayor Shamberger. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

4. Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee Report

Bill Rice, the Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee, noted that the CAC did not have a quorum in the last meeting. The committee discussed the proposed TIP Amendments, Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update project, and the status of the I-79 access study. Mr. Rice then commended the video of University Ave Complete Street Study, which illustrates many of the projects recommended by the Study. Speaking as a member of the Morgantown Utility Board, Mr. Rice noted that the Van Voorhis drainage project was completed ahead of schedule and under the budget. He praised the close collaboration among the City, DOH, and MUB, and encouraged a continuing partnership among relevant entities to solve drainage issues across the region. Chairman Callen concurred with Mr. Rice.

b. Finance Report

Mayor Lewis presented the MPO's activities as the following:

-- Beginning balance in June \$36,739.93 with expenditures of \$44,947 and two deposits of \$28,089.30, leaving a balance of \$19,881.75 at the beginning of July.

-- Beginning balance in June \$19,881.75 with expenditures of \$44,947 and three deposits of \$59,298.81, leaving a balance of \$59,321 at the beginning of August.

Mr. Bruffy moved to accept the April and May Finance Report; seconded by Mayor Shamberger. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

c. Executive Directors Report

i. I-79 Access Study Update

Mr. Austin noted that the consultant has completed travel demand modeling update and identified 13 alternatives to address traffic congestion across the region. The consultants eliminated 4 alternatives due to obvious inefficacy. Mr. Austin then noted that the consultants and MPO staff conducted a detailed technical assessment, evaluating each viable alternative based on criteria developed by the steering committee. Mr. Austin expressed his appreciation to Mr. Bruffy for his valuable inputs to this technical assessment. Mr. Bruffy noted that the evaluation process had been very thorough. Mr. Austin then noted that the results will be reviewed by the steering committee and stakeholder's committee in September. A public meeting will be held in October.

ii. Transportation Plan Update

Mr. Austin noted that the steering committee the 2016 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update includes members from the TTAC and CAC. It also include representatives for the interest of low-income population, minority population, environmental protection, and local businesses. The MPO staff is preparing for community outreach in September and October for this project.

Mr. Austin then noted that due to a budget surplus for the project, the DOH is exploring the possibility of adding more amenities to the Van Voorhis project. Mr. Austin also noted that the DOH has completed 30% of of the design for the intersection improvement project at Greenbag Rd and WV 7. The DOH is actively seeking input from the community on the Collins Ferry/University Ave intersection project.

Mr. Austin noted that he plans to take a vacation from September 9 to 13 and to attend the 2016 WV DOH/MPO/FHWA planning conference from September 19 to 22.

Councilperson Selin asked if the chamber of commerce was invited to participate in the Transportation Plan Update process. Mr. Austin noted the chamber of commerce was invited. Selin also expressed her appreciation to the DOH on the Van Voorhis project.

5. Informational Update on University Avenue and Collins Ferry Intersection Project

Mr. Austin noted that the project at University Ave-Collins Ferry Rd intersection was originally recommended in 2013. DOH staff then presented five alternatives to improve the intersection. The Board members were informed about the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative.

6. Resolution of Support for WV Association of MPO

Mr. Austin noted that the West Virginia Association of MPO recently held a visioning session in Morgantown to determine the steps it would like to take over the next five years. In developing the Association's Action Plan, each MPO's representatives agreed that they would request a Resolution of Support for the Association from their Policy Board's. It is respectfully requested that the Board adopt the enclosed Resolution to be forwarded to the MPO Association's Chairman. Mayor Reid moved to adopt the Resolution of Support for the Association; seconded by Councilperson Selin. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

7. MPO Office Move

Chairmen Callen noted that the MPO is planning to move to the Court House on High Street. The MPO will continue to be collocated with the County's Planning office and Floodplain Administrator's office. Chairmen Callen noted that these agencies have been sharing a lot of resources for years. Commissioner Bloom moved to approve the MPO's move, seconded by Councilperson Selin. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

8. University Avenue Complete Streets Study Video

Jing Zhang, a transportation planner of the MPO, presented a video developed by the consultants of the University Ave Complete Street Study. The video illustrates many projects proposed by the study. Mr. Zhang also presented the new MPO website that is to be publicized in September. The website includes enhanced graphics and transportation planning related information that was not provided before.

9. Other Business

Commissioner Bloom asked about the role of the MPO in the Falling Run Senior Housing project. Mr. Austin noted that the project is proposing a senior housing development with an access to WV 705 at the west of the roundabout on Mileground Rd. The project manager approached the MPO for comments on this development. Mr. Austin then noted that the DOH is considering a right-in-right-out three-way intersection for the new access, which will minimize the potential interference to the traffic flow on WV 705. Mr. Austin noted that he agrees with the DOH and added that from the perspective of a transportation professional, the project will have minimal impact on WV 705 only if the left-turns are prohibited to/from the WV 705. Mr. Austin also noted that the project could provide additional connections between Stewarts Street and N. Willey Street.

Commissioner Bloom noted that this is a major development in the area and he is very concerned with the traffic burden that the development may impose on the adjacent streets, particularly when left-turns are prohibited to/from the WV 705. He suggested that this transportation problem be resolved before any decisions to be made in Charleston. He also noted that the Board should consider if this project will have a long term impact on the transportation system in the region.

Chairman Callen noted that the Board could proceed to discuss this issue unless there is any rejection.

Councilperson Selin noted that the Board should be provided with more information on this issue before any discussion. Mayor Reid and Mayor Shamberger concurred. Mr. Kelly noted that more information is needed on this issue and the Board should first decide if the issue is within the purview of the MPO.

Councilperson Selin then noted that the Board should be aware of the MPO's scope of authority when handling this issue. Mr. Bruffy noted that even if this project does not involve any federal funding, it makes no harm to discuss it and to send a letter to the DOH, stating the concerns from the MPO and suggesting that the MPO is capable of providing them with input from the community. Mr. Carr noted that discussing the traffic impact of the development will set an undesirable precedent that the MPO be directly involved with a DOH's site impact analysis of a site development for a housing project. Mr. Rice noted that if this issue moves to the next meeting, the CAC and TTAC will have the opportunity to provide their inputs. He also noted that the project is complicated as it involves several property owners.

Chairman Callen asked if there is any other business.

Mr. Carr noted that the TIP Amendment was not included in the agenda of this meeting. Mr. Austin noted that he forgot to put the TIP Amendment on the agenda. The TIP Amendment was duly advertised and it is the pleasure of the Board to decide if an approval of this amendment should be considered at this meeting. Mr. Kelly suggested to move the TIP Amendment item to the next Policy Board meeting to avoid any potential confusion.

10. Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM