

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Minutes of the Meeting of
April 24, 2006 – 4:30 p.m.
Regional Enterprise Tower – 425 Sixth Avenue, 31st Floor – Pittsburgh, PA 15219

The fifty-fifth meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission was called to order by Chairman, Bracken Burns.

Commission members present were: Tom Balya, Bracken Burns, Charlie Camp, Tom Ceraso, Daniel Cessna, Dave Coder, Robert DeLotto, Patrick Ford, James Kennedy, Dave Johnston, Ellen Kight, Larry King, Phil Light, Larry Maggi, Robbie Matesic, Kevin McCullough, Andrew Quinn, Carmen Rozzi, Daniel Santoro, James Scahill, Mark Schneider, Bernie Smith, Mark Snyder, Pam Snyder, Joe Spanik, Gealy Wallwork and Norma Wintermyer.

Commission members absent were: Glenn Anderson, Karen Bennett, Andrew Boni, Susan Borinsky, Orlando Capretto, Eric Carlson, James Cheatham, Steve Craig, Dan Donatella, Joseph Dubovi, Richard Fink, Edward Fosnaught, David Frick, John Gardner, Jim Gagliano, Joseph Hardy, Lynn Heckman, Dana Henry, Patricia Kirkpatrick, Allen Kukovich, Mark Lay, Scott Lowe, Terry McMillen, David Miller, Larry Morris, Henry Nutbrown, Bob O'Connor, Dan Onorato, William Peduto, Dennis Regan, Rodney Ruddock, Richard Shaw, Mike Silvestri, Byron Stauffer, Jr., Joe Szczur, Dennis Veraldi, Vince Vicites, Daniel Vogler, Jake Wheatley, and Angela Zimmerlink.

Others: Karen Rollins-Fitch, representing State Representative Jake Wheatley; David Ginns, Sustainable Pittsburgh; Lynn Heckman, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development; Marilyn Skolnick, Sierra Club; Jon Smith, Allegheny County Transit Council, and John Verbanac, SPC Consultant.

Staff: Jim Hassinger, Mary Brangan, Kirk Brethauer, Stan Caldwell, Chuck DiPietro, Chuck Imbrogno, Vince Massaro, Marge Nalesnick, Janel Novak, Shannon O'Connell, Lisa Kay Schweyer, Doug Smith, Kay Tomko, Debbie Tritsch, Carol Uminski, Lew Villotti, Richard Wallace and Randy Williams.

1. Action on Minutes of the March 20th Meeting

The minutes of the March 20, 2006 meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission were approved on a motion by Commissioner Ceraso which was seconded by Commissioner Balya. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

2. Public Comment

David Ginns noted that a press conference was held by Sustainable Pittsburgh and they wanted to thank Commissioner Burns for launching several initiatives that addressed the transportation funding crisis. Presently we have 300 persons signed-up for the 2006 transportation funding initiative and we are working with Allegheny Conference and SPC to address this issue.

He also wanted to compliment staff on the economic development workshops to discuss the Long Range Plan. It is a very good process and a very easy process to follow. He then invited all members to the Sustainable Pittsburgh's conference on May 19th to update their planning initiative.

3. Action on Resolution 11-06 to Proclaim Commute Info Commute Options Awareness Month May, 2006

Ms. Schweyer summarized that SPC helps people find alternatives to get to work or school other than

driving alone. Staff starts with transit; we also help match people with vanpools, carpools and bikepools. In other words, we help them get from point A to point B. This Resolution will help build awareness, educate people and change attitudes about alternative modes. We would like the proclamation to be passed to help provide and reinforce the importance of commuting options within the region. There were no negative votes.

Mr. Schneider moved:

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION to proclaim CommuteInfo Commute Options Awareness Month - May 2006

WHEREAS, approximately sixty percent of the Southwestern Pennsylvania region's 1.5 million workers travel outside their resident municipality to work; and

WHEREAS, commuting options are an integral part of the region's employers and workers life; by reducing the number of people driving to work alone benefits of less traffic congestion on area roadways and better air quality; and

WHEREAS, it is important that all commuters be aware of the various commuting options available to them; and

WHEREAS, CommuteInfo, celebrates over 25 years of promoting commuting options in the region by providing information on transit, sponsoring vanpools, helping arrange carpools and providing biking and walking resources through the program website www.commuteinfo.org or by calling toll-free 1-888-819-6110; and

WHEREAS, the month of May includes National Transportation Week, National Bike to Work Day, National Employee Health and Fitness Day, National Try Transit Week, and National Clean Air Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, encourages the citizens of this region to welcome and emphasize the value of ridesharing, and offers support by declaring May 2006 as "CommuteInfo Commute Options Awareness Month" in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Mr. Maggi seconded and the affirmative vote was unanimous.

4. Economic Development Workshops Status Report

Mr. Villotti brought before the Commission the Economic Development Workshop presentation which will be featured at all 11 workshops throughout the region. Dealing with economic development, transportation and general land use, the presentation discussed strategies at the State, regional and local levels that are already underway or in development to work together for the best economic results in the communities. The workshops discuss how these strategies and efforts work for our region as a whole and in the communities. SPC starts with State and regional strategies followed by a local economic development plan and then a facilitated discussion of what the participants think would be most effective, considering their own experience and judgment. The input will be considered as the next Regional Plan is developed by SPC and its partners.

Some of the important issues for each area are:

Alle-Kiski Area - Brownfield development was very important, the Alle-Kiski Bridge project, support small business and extension of sewer and water lines.

Cranberry Area – Creation and sustaining jobs, transportation access, brownfield develop (particular in Beaver Valley area), and downtown revitalization of older communities.

New Stanton Area – Promote tourism, community revitalization, preserve and promote historic areas.

Southpointe Area – Promote tourism, preserve the natural resources, look for alternative energy opportunities, and redevelopment activities.

These are the results of the first four meeting and there are seven more to go. I hope you all can come out and join us.

5. Welcome of two new members to the Commission

Commissioner Burns welcomed Pat Ford, City of Pittsburgh Planning and Department and Jake Wheatley, his representative Karen Fitch attending in his absence. Commissioner Burns noted that today he named Mr. Wheatley to the Executive Committee.

6. Update on 2006-2007 Final Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. DiPietro commented that in January 2006 the Commission approved the submission of the Work Program that starts July 1 for the funding agencies for their consideration and the request that we pursue at that time to go after the maximum Federal transit and Federal highway dollars. We also requested 45% of the supplemental money Statewide. We do have closure on the draft Work Program with PennDOT and USDOT, we received \$310,000 in Statewide discretionary money. Which 21% of the Statewide total and since the action to submit the draft, we now have a new mark from Federal Transit which is the closure on how much planning money would be available. It went up 27% to 42% increase of transit funding, which is additional \$157,000 into our Program. The final Program is now 96% of what we saw in January. We received most of what we actually submitted between those changes in funding. Next Mr. DiPietro briefly highlighted jobs that were candidates and now will close on the projects approved with the new supplemental money.

First, transportation model development supplemental transit funds; we received money for that project that will allow us to complete the growth and modeling process for the 10-county region. Next, the supplemental planning Statewide discretionary money will give us three new projects there are: 1) Project Evaluation and Coordination, 2) Rail System Capacity Study, and the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). Finally is the Supplemental Land Use Program. Two projects were funded for our region: 1) Smart Growth Partnership (Route 30 Master plan), and 2) Allegheny County Department of Emergency Services (Hazard Vulnerability Assessment).

7. Staff Report/Other Business/Announcements

Jim Hassinger commented on two items. SPC is scheduling an update briefing for new members and any existing members who are interested. Staff vacancies have been filled by Dick Wallace, Business Finance; Randy Williams, Development Specialist; and Janel Novak, GIS Specialist.

Commissioner Burns stated that under new business, Mr. King will present an update on the Governor's Transportation Funding and Reform Commission. Mr. King commented the Commission was charged with the task of investigation and identifying a full of range issues surrounding funding for

public transportation, but also highway and bridges in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Commission will and is addressing the gaps in current funding structure and the needs in public transportation. Commission will come up with strategies to address these gaps. Recently, the Commission has developed a set of principles to guide their recommendations. The overall report to this Commission is that the Reform Commission is hard at work and they are determined in their charge and soon they will be bringing forward recommendations that will make a difference. SPC needs to be in a receptive mode to accept and support these recommendations when they do come forward.

Commissioner Scahill commented that from a transportation stand point it should be noted that the Corps of Engineers reduced the hours of Upper Allegheny River and closed Lock 9. It will impact our commercial traffic and recreation traffic. I feel that SPC should look into this and report their findings of this closing.

Commissioner Burns charged SPC staff with compiling a list of implications that could come from this closure and have a response to this Commission at a later date.

Commissioner Burns stated that the next meeting will be June 26, 2006.

8. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles A. Camp
Secretary-Treasurer