

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Minutes of the Meeting of
March 20, 2006 – 4:30 p.m.
Regional Enterprise Tower – 425 Sixth Avenue, 31st Floor – Pittsburgh, PA 15219

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

Commission members present were: Bracken Burns, Eric Carlson, Tom Ceraso, Daniel Cessna, Steven Craig, Robert DeLotto, James Gagliano, Jr., James Kennedy, Ellen Kight, Phil Light, Larry Maggi, Kevin McCullough, David Miller, Henry Nutbrown, Dan Onorato, William Peduto, Andrew Quinn, Daniel Santoro, James Scahill, Michael Silvestri, Bernie Smith, Mark Snyder, Joe Spanik, Anthony Spossey, Gealy Wallwork and Norma Wintermyer.

Commission members absent were: Glenn Anderson, Tom Balya, Karen Bennett, Andrew Boni, Susan Borinsky, Charles Camp, Orlando Capretto, James Cheatham, Dave Coder, Dan Donatella, Richard Fink, Edward Fosnaught, David Frick, John Gardner, Joseph Hardy, Dana Henry, Richard Hogg, C. L. Jabbour, David Johnston, Larry King, Patricia Kirkpatrick, Allen Kukovich, Mark Lay, Scott Lowe, Robbie Matesic, Terry McMillen, Larry Morris, Bob O'Connor, Carmen Rozzi, Rodney Ruddock, Richard Shaw, Pam Snyder, Byron Stauffer, Jr., Joe Szczur, Dennis Veraldi, Vince Vicites, Daniel Vogler, and Angela Zimmerlink.

Others: Karen Brean, Brean Associates, David Ginns, Sustainable Pittsburgh, Lynn Heckman, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development; Richard Marquis and Matt Smoker,, FHWA, Marilyn Skolnick, Sierra Club; Jon Smith, Allegheny County Transit Council, and John Verbanac, SPC Consultant.

Staff: Jim Hassinger, Kirk Brethauer, Stan Caldwell, Chuck DiPietro, Chuck Imbrogno, Vince Massaro, Marge Nalesnick, Shannon O'Connell, Dee Pamplin, Kay Tomko, Debbie Tritsch, Carol Uminski, Lew Villotti and Randy Williams.

1. Action on Minutes of the January 30th Meeting

The minutes of the January 30, 2006 meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission were approved on a motion by Commissioner Smith which was seconded by Commissioner Maggi. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Financial Report

Mr. Massaro presented the combined revenue and expense statement for the eight month period ending February 28, 2006. The report is for the corporation, the commission, and the operations of the Regional Enterprise Tower and includes the adopted revised budget numbers from January 2006.

Total Project Revenues recognized and recorded to date are \$4,394,975 vs. revised annual budget of \$9,980,792 or 44% of the budget utilized for the reporting period. Under current revenues there are some projects that are on hold, waiting for a revised scope-of-work to be approved. Once they get started again

the monies will be expended and be recognizable as revenue. Total carry-over project related revenues recorded to date \$277,000 vs. an annual budget of \$695,000 or 40% of those dollars being recognized and reported to date.

Total RET expenditures for revised budgeted rents of \$4,750,000, actual and recorded to date of \$2.8 million or 59.85% of the budget recognized. The RET is at 83.48% occupancy through February 28 and the leasing agent is negotiating the leasing of space with prospective tenants. By the end of June we should be about 85% occupied.

The RET Endowment budgeted drawdown of \$500,000. To date through February we have drawn down \$500,481. The \$481 is the interest on those dollars.

Total project related expenditures recorded to date are \$4.6 million vs. a revised annual budget expenditures of \$10.6 million or 43.81% of the budget utilized for the reporting period.

Expenses related to the operations of RET before depreciation and amortization expense are \$2.5 million vs. the revised annual budget of \$4,635,000 or 54% of the budget. All expenditures are recorded and recognized to date continue to be in line with the budget for the reporting period.

Mr. Miller asked in giving the revenue report did you say recognize the revenue, this isn't cash, this is revenues recognized in the work performed. We are on an accrual basis, for every dollar of spending we recognize a dollar of revenues from the supporting funding agencies.

4. Action on Resolution 8-06 to Ratify the Fax Vote to Amend 2005-2008 TIP for PennDOT's Interstate 79 Maintenance

Mr. DiPietro summarized the resolution that it reaffirms the recent TIP amendment done via fax vote. This is consistent with SPC Bylaws regarding informal action by the commissioners between meetings when an emergency comes up. The action should be reported and noted in these minutes. The request was from District 11-0 and Central Office to take this immediate action given the tight timeframe to move the project. The source of money is the obligation of surplus money through bid savings with no extra cost to the TIP. There were no negative votes.

Mr. Spossey moved:

WHEREAS, PennDOT District 11-0 requests adding the construction phase of the SR 0079 – A36 / Maintenance Preparation project (\$5.538 million federal and \$615,000 state) in FFY 2006 on the region's 2005-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and

WHEREAS, the source of funds for this added cost will be funded thru the de-obligation of surplus funds, due to bid savings and associated with the I-79 Neville Island Bridge, I-79-A27 Maintenance, Sawmill Run Boulevard, and the PA 51 Pleasant Hills projects with no extra cost to SPC's TIP;

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment was reviewed by the Transportation Technical Committee and forwarded with a recommendation for Commission approval via a vote on February 16, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment maintains overall TIP fiscal balance; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment will not interfere with the implementation of any STIP project; and

WHEREAS, approval of this amendment to the 2005-2008 TIP will not alter the finding of conformity between 2005-2008 TIP and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission approves this amendment to the 2005-2008 TIP.

Mr. DeLotto seconded and the affirmative vote was unanimous.

5. Action on Resolution 9-06 to Amend the 2005-2008 TIP for West End Bridge (South Approach Relocation)

Mr. DiPietro said that PennDOT District 11-0 requests the following amendment to the region's 2005-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

- 1.) Reduce the West End Bridge (South Approach Relocation) construction phase (\$6,044,259 State Funds) FFY 2006.

The reduction of these state funds will be used to offset much needed state matching funds for 24 other projects throughout Allegheny County, Beaver and Lawrence Counties. The reduction to the West End Bridge project will not affect the schedule of the project as the phase will be re-programmed on the 2007-2010 TIP Update.

Mr. Craig moved:

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment have been reviewed by the Transportation Technical Committee and recommended for approval in accordance with SPC's TIP amendment policies and public involvement process; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment maintains overall TIP fiscal balance; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment will not interfere with the implementation of any STIP project; and

WHEREAS, approval of this amendment to the 2005-2008 TIP will not alter the finding of conformity between 2005-2008 TIP and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission approves this amendment to the 2005-2008 TIP.

Ms. Kight seconded and the affirmative vote was unanimous.

Mr. Gagliano questioned the wording in the first paragraph that state matching funds will be used to off-set much needed state matching funds for 20 other projects throughout Allegheny County. Mr. DiPietro said that is incorrect, the wording should be a mix of projects in Allegheny, Beaver and Lawrence counties.

Mr. Cessna commented that the project is scheduled to be let in November or December of this year and it is fully funded as mentioned on the 2007 TIP.

6. Action on Resolution 10-06 to Amend the 2005-1006 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. DiPietro commented that the SPC 2005-2006 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to include two new planning projects, the first is by ACTA, the Airport Corridor Transportation Association,

and the second is the SPC Program Region. On the ACTA project the funding was rewarded by Central Office under a research program called IDEA, Innovation Deserving Expiration and Analysis for Modal Integration. They conceived this grant approved by PennDOT, FHWA to do a *Mobility Plan for the Robinson/N. Fayette Retail Area and Transportation, Land Use and Economic Development Planning for Project Region*.

Mr. Ceraso moved:

WHEREAS, the SPC 2005-2006 Unified Planning Work Program is the federally-required report that identifies transportation-related planning tasks performed between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006 in the Southwestern Pennsylvania Transportation Management Area; and

WHEREAS, in order to be eligible to receive federal funding a transportation planning project must be identified in the UPWP; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) have identified available supplemental planning funds for use in these planning studies;

The Airport Corridor Transportation Association (ACTA) will lead the *Mobility Plan* study, which will identify future transportation improvements to foster mobility and connectivity in this congested suburban retail hub. Total funding is \$150,000 (\$120,000 federal research grant from the PennDOT IDEA program, \$30,000 state match provided by PennDOT “210” funds);

Project Region Workshops. SPC will manage a series of workshops for public outreach and interagency coordination to examine issues in the integration of transportation, land use and economic development that affect the next regional plan. Total funding is \$56,020 (\$56,020 federal PL funds, local match is offset with Toll Credit funding);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission hereby amends the 2005-2006 Unified Planning Work Program to add the *Mobility Plan for the Robinson / N. Fayette Retail Area and Transportation, Land Use and Economic Development Planning for Project Region* with the requested completion date of June 30, 2007 for each project;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Director, on behalf of SPC, is hereby authorized to enter into Agreements and/or Supplements with the Federal Highway Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Airport Corridor Transportation Association related to contracting the approved projects.

Mr. Nutbrown seconded and the affirmative was unanimous.

7. Project Region Update

Mr. Villotti reported that they received funding as Mr. DiPietro stated of \$56,020 for the Project Region Economic Development Workshops for the new budget that was submitted to the state. The process is basically the process that took place at the Commissioners Retreat at Nemaquin on how the Economic Development Workshops would take place. We found that eight workshops would not cover it, so we are doing eleven workshops across the region by area. These eleven workshops cross county boundaries are held in different economic subareas of the region. We are working with open end consultant services to help us look at those locations to make sure they are both adequate and that they satisfy environmental justice concerns. We’re working with the consultant to have our meeting materials translated into appropriate languages as needed for those areas. We’re also working with your county

planning departments and economic development departments to help schedule the workshops on dates they feel are beneficial for attendance.

8. Eastern Corridor Transitional Study

Karen Brean, reported that the transitional to a locally preferred alternative is an extension of the Eastern Corridor Transit Study. The ECTS is a transit investment study was based on a statement of needs. We held at least 150 meetings were held throughout the corridor of the study area during the assessment of needs. The corridor stretches from Downtown Pittsburgh to Greensburg between the two rivers. We did extensive public outreach including corridor working groups and targeted out reach meetings trying to reach people who do not turn out to public meetings about transit and transportation. There were five corridors identified as part of the study, the Allegheny Valley, the Mon Valley, the East Busway, the North Folk Southern, Route 30 and the SpineLine. Within those five corridors three modes of transportation were looked at, light rail, commuter rail and bus rapid transit. There was a long list of alternatives that was put together as part of the ECTS. It was honed down to a short list and then a final recommendation of six alternatives. The kinds of needs identified are to improve transit choices available to folks. To improve both service quality and station amenities. In general enhance transportation resources that we have; to preserve them, to protect them to use them in various ways, and at the same time deal with issues of environmental quality. A big piece is looking at transit and community planning, coordinating transit often what's called transit oriented development. We've utilized the case study for an East Liberty project that was developed in the ECTS and we're building on that study now, which is looking at the transit development Busway in East Liberty. It's kind of gratifying that something that was part of a community education process is actually being put forward in another study and being built upon. Finally, being able to link folks to community centers, being able to understand what their needs are when people utilize transit.

Looking at the five corridors discussed before that were part of the study process in the slide you notice it talks about what was part the Eastern Corridor Study like the East Busway Extension and also under the Port Authority as we look at opportunities for the East Busway and the Mon Fayette to work together to be able to coordinate. The slide shows that since the close of the Eastern Corridor Transit Study there have other initiatives that have come forward, like coordination with the Mon Fayette or work done in Oakland through the Allegheny Conference, or it might be a six point plan for transportation. What we recognize is that planning is not static, things have happened since the close of the study. We want to identify those projects even though they are not part of the Eastern Corridor Transit Study if and when it were to advance to a draft environmental impact statement, the scope would open up again and those projects could be looked at. We want to get those in the record as projects that have come forward since then. In fact, at the next advisory meeting we have invited folks to come a talk about different transportation initiatives so that the advisory committee can be informed about them.

Some study goals for the transitional analysis obviously to move toward implementation to designate local preferred alternatives. Obtain FTA approval according to processes that would include federal funding that fact would help get federal funding. Building on the work done in the Eastern Corridor Transit Study and being able to fold in a understand current efforts. Supporting studies that are going on concurrently, trying to streamline work that would be in the future, and identifying next steps for projects.

Products at the end of the study will be a set of locally preferred alternatives to be entered into the constrained long range plan. A finance strategy that which would look at a menu of funding sources, look at where funding might come from federally and what local funding would available. Also, an implementation plan, looking at design, construction, and operation really looking at what steps are necessary to put in place for these projects to go forward.

In terms of public outreach, my role in the project has been public outreach coordinator, we have finished our first round of public briefings and met with public officials and held meetings throughout the corridor. We met in Irwin, Oakmont, and Oakland. It's a challenge to try and get people together across such a big corridor. Public comment is ongoing through web site and through comment forms. The study sponsors and partners have been engaged in the process, the stakeholders and steering committee meet monthly and conversations with FTA and PennDOT continue.

The evaluation criteria that will be used to identify the locally preferred alternatives are related to ridership and access to costs. They'll look at public comment and support for certain alternatives and use of existing resources. The study team has put together a matrix for evaluation to be able to share with the advisory committee.

Finally, we will continue outreach and the coordination of outreach with another public round we have a draft list of locally preferred alternatives to present to the public. We will produce a newsletter as part of round two of the public outreach. To be able at the end of the study to help finance some strategies and fold it all into a report that talks about the alternatives and public input.

Mike Silvestri made an announcement about the Route 19 Corridor Study that on April 4, there will be a corridor study and board meeting that SPC is sponsoring along with PennDOT in North Strabane for our study that was completed. We will be using interaction clickers and all are welcome to come.

9. Staff Report/Other Business/Announcements

Jim Hassinger commented that for those who couldn't attend the Commissioners' Retreat we've included in the meeting agenda a brief summary of activity at the Retreat. Some presentations of interest included some explanation of research and activity in the Great Lakes Region that connects us to that Region and explores our relationship westward and north in addition to what we have both south and east. Also, a presentation from Joe Golden of America Speaks about their process and how they use large scale meetings to derive consensus about vision goals in contract with local communities. In terms of where the development is on Project Region that's some interest to us and how we use similar equipment or how we may consider a relationship with folks like America Speaks. There is an upcoming International City/County Management Association meeting in the region in which SPC will be involved.

14. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Camp
Secretary-Treasurer