

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Minutes of the Meeting of
January 29, 2007 – 4:30 p.m.
Regional Enterprise Tower – 425 Sixth Avenue, 31st Floor – Pittsburgh, PA 15219

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

Commission members present were: Andrew Boni, Bracken Burns, Charles Camp, Tom Ceraso, Daniel Cessna, Dave Coder, Robert DeLotto, Richard Fink, Patrick Ford, Jim Gagliano, Jr., Kevin Gray, Lynn Heckman, James Kennedy, Mark Lay, Phil Light, Robbie Matesic, Kevin McCullough, David Miller, Henry Nutbrown, Dan Onorato, Jim Ritzman, Carmen Rozzi, Rodney Ruddock, Daniel Santoro, James Scahill, Mark Schneider, Michael Silvestri, Pam Snyder, Joe Spanik, Anthony Spossey, Byron Stauffer, Jr., Gealy Wallwork and Norma Wintermeyer.

Commission members absent were: Glenn Anderson, Tom Balya, Stephen Bland, Orlando Capretto, Eric Carlson, James Cheatham, Steve Craig, Dan Donatella, Joseph Dubovi III, Patricia Evanko, Edward Fosnaught, David Frick, John Gardner, Joseph Hardy, Dana Henry, David Johnston, Patricia Kirkpatrick, Allen Kukovich, Scott Lowe, Larry Maggi, Terry McMillen, Larry Morris, William Peduto, Andrew Quinn, Luke Ravenstahl, Richard Shaw, Herman Shipman, Mark Snyder, Joe Szczur, Vincent Vicites, Daniel Vogler, Jake Wheatley, and Angela Zimmerlink.

Others: Sally Haas, Pittsburgh Airport Chamber; Robert Bolich, STV Engineering; Karen Rollins-Fitch, State Rep. Jake Wheatley's office; Jon Smith, ACTC; and John Verbanac, SPC Consultant.

Staff: Jim Hassinger, Kirk Brethauer, Jamie Colecchi, Chuck DiPietro, Chuck Imbrogno, Lindsay Marquis, Vince Massaro, Marge Nalesnick, Shannon O'Connell, Dee Pamplin, Kay Tomko, Debbie Tritsch, Carol Uminski, Lew Villotti and Sara Walfoort.

1. Action on Minutes of the December 4th Meeting

The minutes of the December 4, 2006 meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission were approved on a motion by Commissioner Kennedy which was seconded by Commissioner Ceraso. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Financial Report

Mr. Massaro reported on the six month report for the Corporation and Commission and for the operation of the Regional Enterprise Tower. A revised annual budget was adopted at the

Board and Executive Committee Meeting earlier today. The revised budget does reflect a net decrease of \$551,000 which is anticipated funding that we thought would be spent this fiscal year. Port of Pittsburgh Commission funding that passes through SPC for support of their Water Transit Assessment Study will be deferred and spent in fiscal year 2007-2008. Under revenues on the financial report, the total project related revenues on the revised budget of \$8.4M, actual to date is \$3.3M for about 44% of the budget. Carry-over projects from prior years is \$1,574,274, actual to date is \$896,647 or 57% of the budget utilized. Total project revenues \$10,071,913, actual to date \$4.2M or 43% of the budget. Regional Enterprise Tower operations are \$5.2M, actual to date \$2,700,000 or 51%. Occupancy percentage is at 86%. SPC drew down \$200,000 from the Endowment on January 4, 2007, which is was placed in a reserve account for building operations, capital reserve and capital improvements to the building. Total revenues are \$15.5M, actual to date \$6,995,937 or 45%. Total project expenditures \$10,071,913, actual to date \$4.3M or 43% of the budget. SPC has a balanced budget with enough revenues to cover all project expenditures. Operating expenditures are \$4.5M budgeted and \$2.2M recognized or 49% of the budget.

Mr. Miller questioned the revenue versus expenditure balance. Mr. Massaro responded that the amortization and depreciation relating to building operations incorporates non-cash depreciation assumptions. On the revised budget for amortization it's \$1.3M and actual to date is \$650,000.

Mr. Boni moved that the Financial Report be accepted as presented and Commissioner Scahill seconded. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

4. Action on Resolution 1-07 to Approve Submission of Draft 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program to the Funding Agencies

Mr. DiPietro presented the Draft UPWP as summarized in the handout, "Program Overview." He noted the response from the November survey of SPC Commissioners priorities, overviewed the various proposed funding sources, and highlight the range of work tasks proposed by program area. To ensure all funding approvals are in place by the July 1st start of the fiscal year, we are requesting action today to submit the Draft 2007-2008 UPWP to the various funding agencies.

Mr. Spobby moved:

WHEREAS, the 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program documents all transportation and transportation-related planning activities to be undertaken within the SPC region from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program identifies planning tasks to be performed by SPC staff and the staffs of the member Counties, the City of Pittsburgh, and the Port Authority of Allegheny County using planning assistance funding from the Federal Highway Administrative, the Federal Transit Administration, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission approves submission of the 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program; and

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 Transit Administration of the U. S. Department of Transportation, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation relating to the 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program and pursuant to application requests.

Mr. Silvestri inquired about the data systems and modeling portion of the draft UPWP, essential support services to the transportation planning process. He indicated interest in a future presentation to the Commission on the new SPC transportation models. Mr. DiPietro responded that the expansion of the SPC region from 6 to 10 counties has resulted in the need for significant data system enhancements through various regional transportation surveys over the past 5 years, permitting SPC to support transportation planning activities for the expanded 10 county region. The resulting transportation modeling process that is now being enhanced will be more accurate, more complete, more flexible, and easier to use.

Mr. Miller asked how the results and priorities from the November survey of SPC Commissioners priorities were utilized in the 2007-2008 UPWP design. Mr. DiPietro responded that summaries of the survey results were prepared and used in internal team meetings to first select and prioritize candidate projects. The survey responses were also used as individual job write-ups were developed and their associated work tasks. The results of this survey are used annually in the development of the work program to ensure and enhance the relevance of the SPC work program and work products for our regional constituency.

Commissioner Scahill seconded and the affirmative vote was unanimous.

5. Action on Resolution 2-07 to Approve a Revised Meeting Schedule through June 2007

Dr. Hassinger stated that there is an occasional need to revise and update the annual meeting schedule.

Commissioner Scahill motioned:

WHEREAS, the February 26th meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission will be canceled due to the Retreat scheduled for February 22nd and February 23rd; and

WHEREAS, the March 26th meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission will be rescheduled for March 19th due to the spring conference of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (C-CAP); and

WHEREAS, the June 18th meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission will be rescheduled for **Thursday, June 28th** due to finalizing the update of SPC's 2030 Transportation

and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania aka "Project Region" and the National Association of Regional Councils Annual Conference June 24th through June 27th; and

WHEREAS, the attached revised meeting schedule will be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation in February.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Members of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission approve the revised meeting schedule through June, 2007.

Commissioner Schneider seconded and the affirmative vote was unanimous.

6. Update on Limited English Proficiency Policy Initiative

Dr. Hassinger updated the Committee on the work being done related to the completion of a "Limited English Proficiency Self-Assessment." It is designed to reduce language barriers that can preclude meaningful access to SPC's programs, information and services. In particular, it is directed at individuals who do not speak English as their primary language or have a limited ability to read, speak, write or effectively understand English. This is part of SPC's Title VI Environmental Justice Response. The LEP assessment and activities related to it are required by federal law and Executive Orders.

7. Project Region Status Report

Mr. Villotti gave an update on Project Region. We are moving toward the adoption date at the end of June. With the last regional partners meeting on December, leading towards a Regional Town Meeting on Monday, February 12 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. This will be 11 simultaneous public meetings throughout the region connected by the internet, professionally facilitated. There will be one plenary presentation from the 31st floor of the RET on the different scenarios and development patterns. Each location discuss the pros and cons of the different scenarios. This will give them opportunity to have their thoughts transmitted back so we can project it out to the entire region live on the internet. We are also working on the capability that will allow the general people to get on line from any location. This information gathered at the meetings will be pulled back together and shared with you at the SPC Annual Policy Conference in Nemaquin.

Dr. Hassinger commented that what we have planned for February 12 is something that has not been done this way before anywhere in the country. It is a way of having a regional conversation throughout the entire region at once.

8. Staff Report/Other Business/Announcements

Reminder of meeting dates for the Project Region Public Meetings and Web Conference, February 12th, SPC's Retreat, February 22nd-23rd, and the next Commission meeting on March 19th.

Dr. Hassinger introduced a new SPC staff member Lindsay Marquis coming to us with a BA in Finance and International Business from Penn State. She is currently involved in the Leadership Development Initiative, in Leadership Lawrence County, and has been a field representative for Congresswoman Hart. She is under the tutelage of Jamie Colecchi former staffer to Congressman Doyle.

Mr. Miller commented that Project Region is a region-wide effort that can build a consensus to drive SPC and other public agencies to try and work together. As it is coming to a close it may be important to rearticulate this expectation of Project Region. Mr. Miller's concern is that we might lose an opportunity to engage in this truly innovative way of thinking regionally. By bringing this concern up from time to time we can make sure that Project Region's coordination vision is achieved.

Chairman Burns commented that Project Region is a one-time occurrence maybe happening every 5 or 10 years. There is also another movement convened in December under the auspices of the Institute of Politics looking for further definition of how that forum will continue. That forum is envisioned to be an ongoing permanent dialogue within the region to stay abreast of issues.

Mr. Onorato gave the Committee a briefing on the Port Authority situation, emphasizing that the SPC was kind enough to flex highway dollars on four occasions to keep Port Authority running for the last two years. There will be a couple of phases of this fix of the Port Authority. What has been proposed is a 25% cut in service hours and a 25% cut in costs with a projecting result of a 10% reduction in ridership. By June of 2007, 400 jobs are proposed to be eliminated. Port Authority is coming off a \$32M deficit with a projected \$80M deficit next year. If nothing is done it would balloon so high we couldn't fix it and it would probably shut down the Authority. The Governor's Transportation Committee suggested that SEPTA, the Port Authority and smaller agencies should start first in-house to advance fiscal reforms before we go to the state asking for money. There will be a plan by June of downsizing to get through this year. There is also an 18 month plan where the Port Authority have put together a review of the system overall including areas of the county that have grown but have never had service. This is to preserve transit based on current funding formula. We are preparing to live within our means. The dedicated funding from the County has to be fixed long term.

Chairman Burns stated that it was unanimously decided by the Commissioners at the IGA meeting to issue a vote of confidence to Mr. Onorato in your efforts to cut cost at the Port Authority. Chairman Burns asked if there is any thought to cutting service in outlying areas of the Port Authority where other transit operators can possibly provide some of that service? Mr. Onorato said he is a big supporter of a regional authority. Currently, other operators are not allowed to stop legally in Allegheny County to pick up riders.

Chairman Burns said another answer to that would be if the transit operators came to Mr. Onorato or to SPC with recommendations of where those Port Authority routes might be picked up by another regional transit operator. We could then jointly approach the PUC or the Legislature or, whoever would do such a thing, to get that approved.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m. on a motion by Commissioner Kennedy and seconded by Commissioner Pam Snyder.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles A. Camp
Secretary-Treasurer