

GREATER MORGANTOWN MPO

June 16, 2010

Minutes

City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Byrne, Mike Kelly, Tom Konchesky, Asel Kennedy, Joe Fisher, David Bruffy, Perry Keller, Don Spencer, Patty Lewis, Charles Bryer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Bell, Janice Goodwin, Joe Statler

MPO DIRECTOR: Bill Austin

I. CALL TO ORDER: Mike Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

II: PUBLIC COMMENT: None

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Kennedy moved to approve the minutes of May 2010; Mr. Fisher seconded it. The motion unanimously carried.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT: Mr. Kennedy provided a summary of expenditures to date and the budget that is remaining is \$20,711.25. A completed financial update, as well as a different budget format, will be presented for the next fiscal year. Mr. Bruffy moved for approval; Mr. Byrne seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

V: DON NEHLEN DRIVE TIP AMENDMENT: Mr. Austin stated this TIP amendment was tabled at the May meeting until more information could be obtained. Mr. Charles Branch representing Mon General Health Systems will present a power point presentation to answer any questions from the Board. The properties, where the new road will be located, are owned by Mon General Health Systems.

Chuck Branch Mon General Health Systems. Presented an overview of the TIP project. It is anticipated to convert three lanes to a four lane intersection and to extend the access road to J.D. Anderson Drive. The properties, where the new road will be located, are owned by Mon General Health Systems. The project is broken down into two phases.

Phase I will be from 705 to Maple Drive. The right turn lane will be improved and the island will be changed to allow for a left hand turn. The grant for \$974,000 has been included in the Federal Budget. The total estimated cost for Phase I is \$1.2 million. The difference needed will come from Mon General's operational funds.

Phase II will tie into the North side of Maple Drive to J.D. Anderson Drive. The grant application for the \$2.5 million cost of the project has not yet been approved, but will be the first source of funding sought to implement the project; if the Federal grant falls through the second form of funding to be sought will be a TIF district; any make up funds will come from General's operational budget.

The idea is to have a walk-able campus for Mon General. There will be a posted 25 MPH speed limit, five foot sidewalks, curb and gutter, landscape buffers and guardrails. The plans will be

submitted to DOH for their review. This would be a private road. The DOH has no interest in taking over this road once it is built.

Phase I's road is 705 to Maple Drive. It will be a five lane road with a right turn onto 705. There will be three lanes out and two lanes in.

Phase II shows Maple Drive connecting to J. D. Anderson Drive.

Total costs of Phases I and II are approximately \$2.9 million; this figure does not include signal changes at 705 or any signage.

Mr. Kelly stated the sub committee's questioned Maple Drive being closed off. Mr. Branch stated that the DOH has requested that there be only right turns in and right turns out at this intersection.

Mr. Bruffy questioned how J.D.Anderson will intersect with the new road. Mr. Branch stated that J.D. Anderson will become a T intersection. What is now a left turn onto J.D. Anderson and a stop sign, will now become a T. The intention is to deter traffic from turning left.

Mr. Byrne questioned Phase I and Phase II being private roads, and if so, why is the MPO involved at all. Mr. Keller clarified that thru the Federal Highway Administration; the use of federal funds dictates that this road will likely be in the DOH's system. If the funds for Phase II cannot be obtained, and Mon General Health Systems is willing to fund the project, then it does become their road. If the TIP amendment is not approved the money may not become available for a year or more. If the TIP is not authorized by the end of this fiscal year, the ability to use the funds may be lost for a period of time. If the TIP is approved, the money cannot be spent until all the details are worked out. Mr. Keller explained that this is similar to an enhancement grant. The money cannot be spent until all other requirements have been met. The MPO is involved because federal monies are involved. Even if the TIP is approved, there is a chance the project won't happen if all state and federal requirements are not met. Mr. Bryne stated that this private endeavor will not diminish the pool for public projects.

Mr. Austin stated a meeting is being set up with the DOH to address these issues. A new traffic study is in the process of being done because the last traffic study was done in 2003. Mr. Kennedy stated that several new buildings in that area will also be built into the traffic study. The tax base for those new buildings will fund the TIF if it is needed.

Mr. Austin also advised this has also been discussed with WVU and all this information will be factored in to the Long Range Transportation Update when it is performed.

Mr. Keller stated the study will be coordinated with the new dynamic signal system study.

Mr. Spencer asked if the condition of Maple Drive could possibly be upgraded. It is too narrow for all traffic that will be traveling in that area, especially with the new Research Park. Mr. Kennedy stated there may be a possibility to negotiate with the Hospital if some of the TIF funds could be diverted to make improvements to that road. Mr. Keller advised that resurfacing of Maple Drive may be possible, but any major improvements would not be considered.

Mr. Kennedy moved to approve inclusion of Don Nehlen Drive into the TIP; Mr. Byrne seconded it. Mr. Austin then read the resolution for amendment of the TIP. The motion unanimously carried.

VI. UPWP. Mr. Austin advised a draft copy of the UPWP was submitted in March to the Board for comments. Included were an assistant for the MPO Director; planning initiatives, a traffic count program, and the study of Grumbien Island. The MPO's budget has been reorganized to accommodate the change in organizational status. Mr. Kennedy also noted that there is a 3% salary increase for the MPO staff positions. Mr. Byrne asked if there were any pressing need to adopt this budget. Mr. Austin responded that the MPO will not have an operating budget in July if the UPWP is not approved at this meeting. Mr. Byrne moved for approval; Mr. Bruffy seconded it. The motion unanimously carried.

VII. STAR CITY – BOYERS AVENUE PROJECT. Mr. Kelly asked Mr. Jim Gaston to address the Star City/Boyers Avenue Project. Mr. Gaston described the project to include the following items, old buildings on the west side of Boyer's Avenue will be removed; a right turn lane onto University Avenue, and a bus pull off are proposed thru URS's plan. He believes with the DOH's support, this is a fundable project and \$2 million could be acquired from local banks or bond placement for the project using the Towns TIFIA funding mechanism. He requested that the DOH and DOT formulate a plan for state and federal grants.

Mr. Austin stated the MPO would just be endorsing the Towns seeking funding for the project. Mr. Kennedy moved to authorize the President to sign a letter of support and encourage the State to do further studies. Mr. Byrne seconded it. The motion unanimously carried.

IV. MILEGROUND WIDENING. Mr. Austin stated that since the May MPO meeting, three additional meetings have been held regarding this issue; two of these meetings were with the property owners along the Mileground and they included the participation of Commissioners Kennedy and Bell. The first meeting included the Secretary of Transportation, and DOH Staff. The Secretary reiterated that the MPO's position on this project is very important. The DOH is having additional micro-simulation modeling performed to properly simulate both the roundabouts and five lane cross lanes options. Site visits are now being done. The DOH has a good data base for the traffic and they will utilize incorporate growth factors from the MPO's model to project future traffic.

The second meeting held was with the property owners. The meeting was frank and dealt with their concerns. All modeling results will be reviewed and the best recommendations will be made. The third meeting was held with WVU, DOH and the Board of Education.

Mr. Kennedy stated the new University High Middle School and Research Park will be included in the modeling with both the roundabouts and 5 lane cross lanes. Then the new elementary school will be included in the modeling for anticipated growth. Mr. Keller stated the time frame is approximately 4 to 6 weeks. Once all the information is obtained, it will take approximately four weeks to refine the model; another two weeks to finalize the report and another two weeks to formalize the results in a written document for review. This will be in the DOH's scheduling timeline. Construction should begin sometime next year.

Mr. Spencer requested the modeling show different times of day. Traffic from North Elementary between 3 and 4 makes a significant impact. Mr. Austin noted the modeling will be done during am and pm peak periods; it is a very intensive counting program.

Mr. Keller asked what goals and results is this Board wanting to accomplish. Is relieving congestion the top priority or is safety more of a concern. Several factors may need to be evaluated and key components will need to be identified for the Board to make an appropriate recommendation. Mr. Keller noted that both the five lane and four lane alternatives will probably show some deficiencies. Mr. Austin will be driving through the corridor with the DOH's consultant so local input will be included. Mr. Spencer stated there needs to be a balance, the TAC may be looking more at traffic flow while the CAC may look more to safety as the key component.

Mr. Kennedy believes that the business owners on the Mileground want the five lane cross lane because they felt that would better protect their businesses. They stated they would be willing to give up more of their property to accommodate the five lanes. This would also be a better option for pedestrians; the barrier would not be pedestrian friendly. Mr. Keller stated the issue with five lanes is left turns. Cars making those left turns would restrict traffic, causing the traffic behind them to slow down. Roundabouts would keep traffic flowing. As traffic free flows the market area is expanded. Mr. Spencer stated he met with two business owners on the Mileground and they stated they wanted the four lanes. The traffic simulation will be very important.

Mr. Bryer also wanted the airport expansion to be included in the modeling. Mr. Austin said he would make the consultants aware of the expansion and obtain the necessary information from the airport director.

X. TDM STUDY. Mr. Austin reported the community has responded very well to the survey. There are almost 3,000 responses to the survey performed for the Study. Meetings for public comments on TDM will be held June 22 from noon to 2 at the airport and 5:30 to 7:30 in the Mountaineer Mall Community Room; June 23 noon to 2 at Mountaineer Station and 5:30 to 7:30 at the MountainLine Office. The PRT will Provide free transportation to the Mountaineer Station meeting.

XI. Status Report on MPO Operations-Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Spencer have worked on the Executive Director's contract. It is their feeling a personnel policy needs to be developed and look into the policy for the MPO to become a free standing organization. Mr. Austin stated an attorney has looked at the MPO's bylaws and memorandum of understanding and it is his feeling the MPO can become free standing. He is further researching the issue. Mr. Kennedy asked that Mr. Kelly and Mr. Bruffy assist him and Mr. Spencer develop a job description and evaluation of the Director, a personnel policy, along with the report on the MPO's free standing status. Information will be provided to the Board at the August meeting. Mr. Byrne moved that the committee be expanded to include David Bruffy and Mike Kelly; and the committee is authorized to expend \$2,000 for attorney fees. Mr. Byrer seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Other Business-There was no other business.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be August 19 at 7 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27.