

GREATER MORGANTOWN MPO
March 15, 2012 Minutes City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Anthony Giambrone, Eldon Callen, Perry Keller, Joe Fisher, David Buffy, Patty Lewis, Asel Kennedy, Mike Kelly

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bill Byrne, Jim Manilla, Wes Nugent

MPO Director: Bill Austin

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson David Bruffy called the meeting to order at 7:00PM

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: Introduced Bill Rice as the new chairman of the CAC.

Bill Rice / Stated it is important to work in concert with WVU. In the past several issues, such as the traffic light at Applebee's, were not coordinated with MPO Policy Board. He requested that Policy Board make every effort to work with WVU to get their planning principles coordinated with the MPO's Plans for at least the next five years.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Kelly moved to approve the Minutes as written; seconded by Mr. Giambrone. The minutes were approved as presented.

4. FINANCE REPORT: Complete finance reports for January and February were included in the Board's monthly meeting packet. Treasurer Lewis stated January had beginning balance of \$25,927.45. One deposit made in the amount of \$14,052.48, disbursements were \$16,410.82, leaving an ending balance of \$23,569.11. February had two reimbursement deposits for the months of December and January of \$34,050.89; expenditures were \$10,457.52, leaving a balance of \$16,805.16. Mr. Callen moved to approve the Finance Report; seconded by Mr. Fisher. With no discussion the motion unanimously passed.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Mr. Austin reported:

a. Presently creating a regional vision for the Long Range Transportation Plan with Morgantown and Star City's comprehensive planning efforts. To date there have been four committee and public meetings to determine goals and objectives. Consultants have done data collection for base case scenarios; the next step is to make a determination as to where growth will occur. There will be a public meeting March 28th at 7PM at University High to seek public input on future growth. This information will serve to develop a future growth scenario to be used in the transportation model. The regional vision for where future growth will occur as well noting the strong and weak places identified by the community. The strong places such as Coopers Rock should be protected.

Austin stated public participation/information will done in a facilitated manner where the process will be explained. The public will separate out in groups where

they will be asked to put markers on maps to identify where anticipated growth may occur. Austin noted at the last two meetings had approximately 100 participants.

b. State Prioritization Process. Mr. Keller advised this process will better identify criteria to be used to help set priorities. Projects would be ranked as “good” and “not so good” taking into consideration safety, high adt areas, etc. An email was sent to ask the committee to refine the criteria. The consultant is now putting this information together; Importance will be weighted. He noted there are still some funding issues that exist.

c. Staff Training. Mr. Austin advised he has begun web training for management of federal grants; Ms. Williams recently completed a Modeling Workshop sponsored by the National Highway Institute.

d. Grumbein Island. Comments have been received from the State. They felt the costs estimates of \$9 million to \$10 million submitted by Alpha Engineering to be reasonable. The alternatives are either elevating or depressing the road. Austin recommended the Board may want to consider making this project a higher priority with this finding. Additional studies may need to be conducted to address the impact on both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Mr. Fisher stated the University supports this idea, but they would like to see more development issues that go beyond Grumbein Island. Mr. Bruffy stated this issue is already on our top three-tier project. Mr. Austin stated the issue of funding a small area traffic circulation study may be brought before the Board for consideration.

e. Annual Traffic Counts. The TAC and CAC reviewed annual traffic count program. Two additional counts were added in Star City, one on Aspen Street and one on University Avenue before Boyers Avenue to identify cut through traffic. WV Route 7 and various other spots have been added where there are also concerns. The consultants will soon be authorized to do these counts.

Mr. Kennedy asked a question concerning the recently implemented redesign on part of University Avenue. He requested that someone advise the Board on what the of that project has been. Mr. Austin stated that area has been monitored by the State. Mr. Kennedy stated we owe it to the public to advise if the change has been of any benefit to traffic operations. Mr. Austin stated ongoing counts are also being done for the signal project and the full impact won't be known until the full signal system is operational. Mr. Kennedy noted that this would be an opportune time to hear a report. We would have reports on how the system operated before the changes, how it operated after the changes with no change to the signal system and finally, after the signal system is changed.

6. TIP AMENDMENTS: Request for an Amendment of the Transportation Improvement program, as follows:

US 119/WV 705 From Stewartstown Road/WV 705 Intersection to Intersection of WV 705/US119 Widen Roadway project and construct a Roundabout at WV705/US119;

US 119/WV 705 from Stewartstown Road/WV 705 Intersection to Intersection of WV 705/US 119 Widen roadway and construct a Roundabout at WV 705/US 119. Construction may begin as early as this spring.

US 119 from Airport Road to Easton Elementary School Project.

Mr. Keller stated the first part of the project to be implemented is from Stewartstown Road to just past the new elementary school, roundabout, then building down the hill to the Easton Elementary area and realigning that intersection. The final section to be constructed will be the portion of the Mileground from WV 705 to the Airport Road/Hartman Run Road intersection. Mr. Austin advised the DOH is holding training on the Highway Safety Manual in Morgantown next week. This project will be looked at in the training. Both the CAC and TTAC have reviewed this project and recommend the Policy Board accept the TIP amendments but asked that the Chairman send letter advising that approval of this amendment does not constitute any change in the Board's position on the ultimate cross section for the widening project. Keller noted the State has put a lot of thought into how this project would be phased in. Mr. Kelly asked about the impact to traffic of constructing the first phase. Mr. Keller responded that in regard to the actual construction of the Roundabout it would be constructed inside the existing Mileground/705 turn and would not require closing the intersection during its construction. This would minimize the affect on traffic.

Mr. Kennedy stated since the MPO is advisory only, he believes there is no need for any letter to be sent. Mr. Bruffy stated there is no change on the design that was originally approved.

Mr. Callen asked what would happen if the TIP Amendment is not approved. Mr. Keller advised the project is already approved but broken out differently. All that is being done is breaking the project into segments due to how monies would be authorized. The project is not changed as far as design; it is just refined as to what needs built first, what right of way dollars are needed. If it's not approved, or included in the TIP, the federal dollars couldn't be spent. The State could spend state dollars if they choose to do so, but it would still have to be included in a TIP to spend those monies. The overall concept of the project never changed. Mr. Austin stated the biggest change is increasing the funding. Mr. Austin also advised Policy Board made its recommendation for a four lane cross section, but that the State presented a different concept of a five lane cross section at a recent public meeting, although the State has not made any recommendation on the five lanes versus the four lanes. If the TIP amendment is approved, it doesn't mean the Board is endorsing the five lane cross section. However, the MPO's Committee's recommended the letter to make sure there is no confusion on this issue.

Mr. Kennedy move to approve TIP as presented; seconded by Mr. Giambrone. With no further discussion, the motion unanimously passed. No motion was made for any letter to be sent.

7. AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS: Mr. Austin stated that at the last meeting the Policy Board recommended that the By Laws Committee recommended language that would allow municipalities to appoint an ex-officio member that could provide comments but would not be able to vote on any issues in the event of not having an elected official available to attend the MPO meetings. The Committee recommended that ex-officio members would be able to serve as Chair or Co Chair, but could not serve as treasurer of the Board. An ex-officio member would have to be reappointed every two years. The new language has been reviewed by MPO's attorney and he recommended a change that would specify any alternative member would have to meet all requirements to be a member of the committee.

Mr. Austin said the Committee also suggested that municipalities be able to appoint alternates in the instance of a Board member's absence. That member would not have to be an elected official, but if they are not an elected official they would not be able to vote.

Mr. Kelly noted this situation of bylaw changes did not come as a result of Mr. Statler's resignation from the School Board. Mr. Keller moved to amend the bylaws as recommended; seconded by Mr. Fisher. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

8. STAR CITY TRAFFIC COUNT: A diagram of two days of counts was included in the monthly packet for review. These counts were directional and hourly, to determine the volume of traffic and if further study was warranted on potential cut through traffic through the Star City neighborhood shown on the map. Looking at the volume, an unusual amount of cut through traffic in the area was not seen, although there may be a speed issue. After discussion with Mayor Sharp and Councilor Giambrone, it was determined no further action in this area is warranted at this time. Star City counts were to be added to the annual traffic count program so the situation may continue to be monitored. Mr. Callen moved to accept the report; seconded by Mr. Giambrone. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

9. OTHER BUSINESS: Austin advised Senate has approved the Map 21 transportation bill that would impact the MPO's operations. It is unclear whether or not the House will adopt the same language.

Kennedy asked for a report on the new Sheetz in Star City and whether the intersection at the present Sheetz will be changed.

Kelly commented on Callen's question on not approving TIP amendment. The MPO doesn't have control over federal monies. We don't have the authority to tell the State to spend those monies somewhere else that is the State's decision.

Keller introduced Kevin Burgess and Amy Fox from the Federal Highway Administration.

10. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.