

GREATER MORGANTOWN MPO

January 20, 2011

Minutes

City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Bruffy, Mike Kelly, Anthony Giambrone, Don Spencer, Perry Keller, Bill Byrne, Eldon Callen, Patricia Lewis

MEMBERS ABSENT: Asel Kennedy, Joe Statler, Joe Fisher, Janice Goodwin

MPO Director: Bill Austin

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mike Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Mr. Spencer moved that the Board adjourn into Executive Session for personnel issues. The motion was seconded by Mayor Byrne. The Board adjourned into Executive Session. Mr. Byrne moved to come out of Executive Session and return to the regular meeting agenda; Mr. Bruffy seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried.

3. ELECTION of OFFICERS: Mr. Byrne, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, (Bob Bell, Jim Gaston, Bill Byrne) presented a slate of officers for the 2011 year. All members nominated agreed to serve.

Chairman – Joe Fisher
Vice-Chairman – David Bruffy
Treasurer - Joe Statler

Mayor Byrne moved to accept the slate of officers as presented; seconded by Mr. Keller. The motion unanimously carried.

In Mr. Fisher's absence, Mr. Bruffy chaired the meeting. Mr. Bruffy thanked Mr. Kelly for his service.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Burton – Expressed his concern for pedestrians on Beechurst Avenue he supported the proposed traffic light at Beechurst and Third Avenue. Mr. Burton believes that at a minimum crosswalk is needed at Third Avenue.

Bill Rice – Questioned whether federal funding would be available for the proposed Mileground project. The proposed bike lane on the Boulevard was discussed at the CAC meeting, and he believes everyone should be on the same page with this project, i.e., when the lane will be closed for event parking.

Charles McKuen – Stated Beechurst Avenue is an important artery for traffic coming into downtown. Believes the downtown merchants are on the losing end of economic development in Morgantown. The biggest complaint from people coming into downtown to shop is the traffic problem. Government bodies are charged with making decisions that are best for the majority of its people. The installation of a traffic light for a single development is an inconvenience for travelers on Beechurst Avenue.

Barbara Watkins / Ass't Director Main Street Morgantown – Main Street Morgantown realizes the need for traffic lights and unrestricted traffic flow, but it should not be done at the expense of downtown merchants; those merchants should be considered when doing any study of traffic downtown. Asks that traffic not be cut off from downtown merchants on game day Saturdays, (don't close off Fayette Street).

5. APPROVAL of MINUTES: Mr. Byrne moved to approve the minutes of the December 2nd meeting as submitted; Seconded by Mr. Keller. The motion unanimously carried.

6. FINANCE REPORT: Mr. Austin provided the report on behalf of Mr. Kennedy. Bank balance as of January 10, 2011 is approximately \$37,000. Action on the report will be tabled until the next scheduled meeting due to Mr. Kennedy's absence.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

a. New TIP Development - In the process of developing a new TIP. Meetings have been set up with the State to ensure that the TIP is synchronized with the State TIP. The Local TIP will expire June 30, 2011. Due to the fact the TIP requires a 30 day comment period, he would like to adopt the new TIP at the March meeting. A preview draft will be sent to the Board for their review in February before adopting at the March meeting. The new TIP will also include the together a TIP priority list put together last year. The Board may wish to consider revising the list. Mr. Austin suggested that if a project is funded in the TIP, it should remain on the priority list. Old projects should be cleaned out. Mr. Bruffy suggested Mr. Austin provide the previous priority list for review.

b. Coordination of LRTP with other Municipalities – When the MPO submitted application for the Sustainable Communities Grant it was planned that the LRTP Update would be coordinated with the County and City and the other municipalities as part of a comprehensive planning effort. Since we did not receive that grant the County is only currently updating their Comprehensive Plan as it relates to West Run. The MPO is currently anticipating working on updating the LRTP in conjunction with the City of Morgantown's and Star City's work on their comprehensive plans. The MPO is proposing to put out a joint RFP and in the process of drafting language for that request. Mr. Austin will meet with the City Manager and Planning Director next week. Mr. Austin noted that the other area municipalities are welcome to join the process which should provide greater economies of scale, lowering the price for everyone. Mr. Bruffy noted that he thought that coordinating these efforts would be beneficial to the MPO and the communities participating in the project.

c, Status of Mon Blvd. Bike Lane – Mr. Austin noted that WVU has been in support of the bike lane going up the Boulevard, but they have had concerns with allowing parking on the Boulevard during special events, primarily basketball games and commencement activities. DOH has advised WVU and the City that they will work with them to determine a bike lane closure plan for special events. Mr. Austin reported that the MPO Policy Board has been in support of the bike lane but the MPO's only involvement has been to bring the parties together. Funding for the bike lane is through the City and DOH has not approved any funding for the project. A written plan including commitments to implement the procedures identified in the plan needs to be submitted to the DOH for times when the bike lane will be closed. Mr. Keller stated the DOH needs to know upfront when the lane will be closed. Mr. Austin will set up a meeting between the City and WVU. There is also a concern that the City hasn't funded the striping

project. Mr. Austin was asked by the Policy Board to facilitate a meeting between the City, WVU and DOH for the development of the bike lane closing plan.

d. Other Items - Mr. Austin has been asked by the FHWA to serve on two committees. One that will be reviewing WV MPO procurement practices and the other will be making recommendations to the State on how to implement livability strategies. He is also continuing to work with the state legislative initiative for the National Governor's Association.

8. TIP AMENDMENTS:

The State has requested the inclusion of the following four TIPS:

1. Cooper's Rock Trail Head Program Amendments;
2. Corporal Thomas Bennet Bridge Inspection;
3. Dunkard Avenue Sidewalks;
4. Mon River Trail, Trailhead Improvements

Mr. Bryne moved to approve the addition of the four TIP amendments; Mr. Kelly seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried.

9. DYNAMIC SYSTEM SIGNAL:

Dr. Andrew Nichols gave a presentation on the Dynamic Signal System as it relates to the Downtown and 705 Corridor. Stated it is a wireless detection system that can install in 5 minutes with a 10 year battery life. The time schedule, taking into consideration, weather constraints, is targeted for the end of April.

Once all their data is collected, a public meeting will be held, with a public comment period, focusing on different flow configurations.

After the presentation, Mr. Spencer asked if the downtown circulation study considered changing one way streets to two way streets. Dr. Nichols advised this was one alternative being looked at. Spencer also asked that Beechurst Avenue and Third Street be evaluated.

Mr. Bryne stated that the purpose of traffic signals is to move traffic through downtown, but the downtown merchants suffer. Asked if there was a way to direct traffic into downtown and not move them away from economic activity. Mr. Byrne asked that DOH look into what could be done by not closing Fayette Street as part of the football game exiting routine.

10. TDM VAN POOL PROJECT:

Danielle Williams, part time Van Pool Coordinator, reported that WVU, Monongalia General and WVU Hospital have committed to working with the van pool program discussed as part of the MPO's TDM initiative. She noted that VPSI has estimated that it may be possible to have as many 30 vans from the businesses along the WV 705 Corridor. She has also worked to develop a TDM Web site as part of the MPO's website and that there is more information to come.

11. MPO EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

Mr. Austin explained that with a change in employee benefits from PERS to ICMA 457, the MPO's contribution to the PERS for him will be lost. It cannot be moved or rolled over. As a

result he will be penalized for two years of contributions that can't be counted toward his retirement. Mr. Austin asked the MPO to consider a one time contribution of \$8800 to ICMA 457 Fund to make up for the loss of those funds. The contribution would be split between two years. Mr. Kelley asked if the MPO would be allowed to do that. Mr. Keller noted the DOH has already reimbursed the county for Mr. Austin's salary/benefits. He wants to make sure this can be done and no one will be penalized for it since Federal funds are involved. This issue will be put on the next meeting's agenda for further discussion and to find an appropriate way for this to be accomplished.

12. NEXT MEETING:

The MPO Policy Board will meet again on March 17, 2011.

Bill Byrne moved to adjourn at 8:15; seconded by Mr. Kelly. The motion unanimously carried.