

GREATER MORGANTOWN MPO

October 15, 2009

7:00 PM

City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Perry Keller, Mike Kelly, Joe Statler, Patty Lewis, Charles Bryer, David Bruffy, Bob Bell, Tom Konchesky, Don Spencer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Asel Kennedy, Joe Fisher, Bill Byrne, Janice Goodwin

MPO DIRECTOR: Bill Austin

I. CALL TO ORDER: Mike Kelly, substituting for Asel Kennedy, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Statler moved to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2009 meeting; Mr. Keller seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Bill Rice / 1225 Bakers Ridge Road. Stated that the DOH is concerned with the safety of the intersection of Easton Hill and the West Run Road. It was his understanding the DOH would be doing a study of that area and asked where the DOH was in that process. He also stated that road counters were stretched across West Run and Stewartstown Road. He feels if a study is being done, it should be the State's study, and not that of the MPO; it needs to be factual and informational.

Mr. Rice also stated he attend the recent Monongalia County Planning Commission meeting where the recent election for the Cheat Lake and Cheat Neck zoning ordinance was discussed. One member of the MCPC spoke of work that is presently being done along 857. There is concern for the ingress and egress. Mr. Rice believes the issue of ingress and egress should be determined by the State Highway Department. He stated the DOH needs to say what is acceptable for zoning and/or sub division regulations; this is not a monetary, but a policy issue.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

A. MPO Operations Status Report. Mr. Austin stated the MPO Office is working with the WVDOH on traffic counts for West Run. He is in the process of summarizing and reviewing the turning movement counts. The traffic and turning movement counts are being performed by both the DOH and MPO staff. The Direct and Volume counts are complete. Information will be collected from the development community on West Run to quantify the amount of traffic and to provide projections of what future traffic will be. This information will be provided to the DOH.

B. TAC Meeting. The MPO's October 15 agenda was reviewed at the TAC's first meeting. All members of the TAC were in attendance.

CAC Meeting. All members, but one, were in attendance. In addition, a member of the public attended. Reports of the meetings are included in the summary memo that was included in the Board's packet.

C. Mr. Austin met with representatives of Star City to discuss the comments received from the public at a recent meeting on the University/Boyer Avenue intersection improvements.

D. Attended the WV State MPO Conference in Charleston. Mr. Austin stated it was a great learning experience and received new, updated information.

E. The newly created Policy Advisory Committee will hold their first meeting November 5, 2009 at noon. Members of the committee are specified in the bylaws. Formal invitations to all members will be sent within the next few days.

F. Staff is working on a MPO personnel policy. There are only a few issues to address and additions to be made. Mr. Austin will seek a legal review of the document before bringing it to the Policy Board.

G. Staff is reviewing the prospectus and revising the work to be done in the new fiscal year. Mr. Austin plans to bring the document to the MPO for review within the next few months.

V. SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT: Mr. Bell reported an opening balance of \$70,194; a total of 15 checks were written; one deposit made, leaving an ending balance of \$63,116.80. He stated the checks written covered the MPO's share for the move into their new offices. Mr. Statler questioned the checks that were written to the Sheriff. Mr. Bell explained it was for wage reimbursement. The county pays the staff's wages and is reimbursed by the MPO.

Mr. Austin advised the State Auditor's office is presently working on the MPO's audit. The report should be ready by the next scheduled meeting.

VI. WVDOT REPORT.

A. State Report.

a. Mr. Keller advised they are presently working with the MPO on bike lanes and striping of Monongahela Blvd. The state will then determine if it is something they want to pursue.

b. The Transportation Demand Management Study will soon be going out for proposals and generalized comments.

c. One TIP Amendment as added that covers the Street Scaping Phase for High Street.
d. Working with URS to determine what is happening in Star City. Mr. Keller is trying to assist with the proper resources and getting them in touch with the right people at the

DOT. Mr. Austin stated that during the TAC meeting, the potential for a Downtown Circulation Study for Morgantown was discussed. He is working on developing a scope of work with the DOT. Mr. Keller stated they are close to having a package ready for the MPO's review. The State is first looking to start at 705 corridor to learn about how the adaptive signal system works, since this would be the first one of its kind in the State. They would like the circulation study to be performed in the Downtown area at the same time. The results from the 705 study could then be rolled into the adaptive signal system for downtown.

Mr. Statler asked Mr. Keller what was being done to correct the dangerous situation at the Easton Intersection, and if there were any plans in place to do something. Mr. Keller stated this has been an ongoing concern and as development increase in the West Run corridor, traffic is heavier. There has been talk of a 705 connector and where it may go. The state has run out of many options because the original corridor is now well over what could be paid for the right of way. The state is trying to put a road in that area somewhere, somehow. As far as the intersection, there is no specific study that the DOT is involved in. Mr. Keller stated he is unaware if the district in Morgantown is doing its own study.

Mr. Kelly asked if there was any feedback on the 705 widening. Mr. Keller stated he has not heard any specific feedback, but it seems like it should help out the area. The trade off is that the shoulders have been narrowed and that may hinder the pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Mr. Spencer asked why there was no consideration given to sufficiently widening the roads for bike and pedestrian traffic. Mr. Keller stated he was unsure if it was because of a right of way limitation or if more earth work was required to move allow for bicycles.

Mr. Spencer also questioned why there was no indication any work was going to be done on 705; and why the MPO had no input. There was no opportunity to ask if the lanes could have been made 11 feet instead of 12.

Mr. Werner of the DOH stated no one in his office had any idea of the 705 project and assumed the monies came from the stimulus project. Addressing the issue of bike and pedestrian lanes, he stated review of projects is a continuing problem and normally when projects of this type are done, bike and pedestrian lanes are provided. He assured the Board the problem is well recognized and they are doing what they can to work on it to see it doesn't happen again.

Mr. Austin advised he spoke with the district DOH and was advised there were additional stimulus monies available and the project had to be shovel ready. The MPO previously approved an \$800,000 resurfacing project. The additional funding was added to provide the additional capacity on 705. Mr. Spencer stated the Board needs to make sure the interests of bikes and pedestrians are represented. From the 2000 study, it is shown that 16% of people don't use vehicles and the either walk or bike. Because of the speed of traffic on 705, many people won't feel comfortable being that close to traffic. In the future, Mr. Spencer asked that the MPO be given a chance to review future projects.

Mr. Keller stated the State's Bicycle Project Coordinator is supposed to sign off on projects of this type as to whether bicycle/pedestrian accommodations can be made or not. If the projects are designed in the district, the plans are not always available for review. Mr. Keller was not sure where this project was designed. Mr. Werner stated MPO Expansion Projects should be coordinated through the State DOH and should be reviewed by the Bicycle Project Coordinator. He was not aware of the 705 project until he came into Morgantown for the MPO meeting and he does not believe the project came through for their review. He assured the Board everything will be done to stop this type of thing from happening in the future.

Mr. Austin advised the District Construction Engineer took part in the recent TAC meeting and he had the opportunity to look at the plans after the construction was underway. Mr. Austin also stated that the MPO committee process will help the MPO have input.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment / High Street Street-Scape. This is a continuation of the \$250,000 enhancement project. It is the 4th phase – Walnut St. to Foundry. Mr. Statler moved to approve the TIP amendment; Mr. Bruffy seconded it. The motion was unanimously approved.

B. Downtown Circulation Study Request. Mr. Austin stated this is primarily an informational topic. We may need to address the City providing a match for the performance of the study. Mr. Keller stated that it would make the most sense for a Study of downtown circulation be performed at the same time the signal system design is underway. Both studies could be done by one consultant and/or one consulting team so no information gathered would, or could, be lost. It is also important that the circulation study scope of work be written in such a way that it would provide all the information that may be needed for the design of the signal system. Mr. Keller also stated it is important that avenues will not be pursued if there is no chance of them being implemented.

When asked by Mr. Bruffy how the scope of work will be developed, Mr. Keller advised it would be important to make sure the State Traffic Operations Engineer gets the needed information from the study. If not, there is a chance the MPO will be cut out of any discussion and/or decision making. He stated the importance of running this as a split contract. Mr. Keller believes it is best the Circulation Study be controlled by the MPO.

C. Agenda Amendment. Mr. Austin stated there was an issue with the Transportation Demand Management Study. The issue needed to be voted on but it was inadvertently omitted as an agenda item. The issue was thoroughly covered in the Policy Board's Agenda cover memo but is not a formal agenda item. The study needs to begin in January 2010. Mr. Statler stated he believed the by-laws allowed for items to be brought before the Board if there was action that needed to be taken even if it was not on the agenda. Mr. Austin felt it would be acceptable to vote on the item if the Board unanimously voted to waive the rules.

Mr. Kelly was concerned with future issues if the rules were waived. Mr. Bruffy stated the Sunshine Law required three business days for reconsideration. Mr. Austin stated, if necessary, the item could be advertised.

Since all the Board was doing was asking for a request for bidding, and the public would have a chance to comment, Mr. Statler didn't feel there would be a problem. Mr. Bell also felt it could have been addressed under Old Business since the study was previously discussed. Mr. Austin advised that if the MPO approved the RFP, it would establish the Steering Committee for the Study who would determine the evaluation process for the proposals. The proposals would be released for submittals by interested consultants.

Mr. Kelly stated that since no public monies were being spent, it would be acceptable to move ahead. Mr. Bruffy then moved to waive the rules to allow adding the Transportation Demand Management Study item to the agenda. Mr. Spencer seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bruffy moved to authorize Mr. Austin to solicit proposals for the Traffic Demand Management Study. Mr. Bell seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

Mr. Keller advised the UPWP had this actual proposal in it and the public will have an opportunity to know what is going on. The scope of work and pulling a team together has not yet been approved.

Mr. Spencer questioned if this item was posted on the MPO's web site, since the summary of the project was so succinct. Mr. Austin explained that he is presently in the process of soliciting a firm to update the web. Once that is in place, everything will be posted on the website. Approximate cost will be \$1,000.

D. Small Area Plan for Star City. Mr. Konchesky advised the first public meeting for the Boyer's Avenue project received a large outcry regarding traffic problems in Star City. Many people are now cutting through neighborhood backstreets to avoid traffic at University Avenue and Patteson Drive. Traffic is worsening daily, backing up to St. Mary's Church and sometimes even as far back as Patteson Drive. He is asking for a study to be done to find out where the traffic is coming from. If the study proves to be feasible, he will take it to City Council. Mr. Austin stated the study would look at collector streets within the area to figure out circulation patterns and to determine if traffic calming measures are appropriate. The study would be performed by a consultant under the auspice of the MPO, with Mr. Austin acting as Project Manager. The DOH would be asked to release 80% of the funding and Star City would provide the remainder of the match. Once the traffic patterns are understood, monies would be requested from the State. Mr. Keller suggested the Director send a letter to the DOH asking for additional planning funds that would be matched by Star City.

Mr. Spencer moved that a request be made to the DOH to ascertain whether funds may be available for the study and for an RFP to be developed by the MPO Director to clear the way for funds and resources to be available for Star City. Mr. Bruffy seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

E. Nominating Committee for MPO Officers. Mr. Kelly asked that David Bruffy, Bob Bell and Patty Lewis serve as the Nominating Committee of the MPO. Mr. Statler seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Statler moved to adjourn at 7:45. Mr. Keller seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.