

## **Asheville Transit Committee Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, 4 March 2014**

### **Attending:**

Committee Members: Dave Erb, Calvin Allen, David Wilson, Tom Tomlin, Adam Charnack, Julie Mayfield, Steven Obremski

City/ART Staff: Mariate Echeverry, Jeff Moore, Norman Schenck

Community Members: Lyuba Zuyeva, Roy Harris, Mark Barrett, Sabrah nhaRaven

### **3:34 pm - Opening of Meeting**

Julie opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. David Wilson read the Announcement for Public Comment. Staff and Transit Committee members introduced themselves. Julie welcomed the new members (Calvin, Adam, and Steven) and mentioned the need for new member orientation.

Agenda - no changes

4 February 2014 Minutes - Julie made a minor addition. Tom moved, Calvin seconded, unanimous approval.

### **3:45 pm - Public Comment I**

Roy Harris is attempting to ride every route by this summer, listening for comments. He has heard mostly positive comments about the drivers. He has observed some difficulties arising from wheelchair boarding, would be curious to understand the protocols.

### **3:49 pm - TC Experiences Riding the Bus**

Tom rode S1 (on time), heard concern re: overloading on E1 9:00pm trip two weekends ago. Norman commented that the 35 foot bus has alleviated some of the crowding on the 8:00 and 9:00pm trips. David Wilson noticed a Tunnel Road bus with the marquee dark. Problems still exist with lack of supplies in the women's restroom at the Transit Center. Julie has been riding W1 inbound, has noticed some standees reluctant to stand in the "balcony" when necessary. System is running four S4 trippers per day (down McDowell, then back via the regular route) to address AB Tech overcrowding. Dave Erb has ridden N1 and N2; service is generally good, but N1 was very late today and driver moving uncomfortably fast. Steven rides the east side buses, has generally enjoyed good service, but has been left at the stop a few times. Adam had an excellent ride on S3 recently. Calvin rides N3 from Hillcrest on a regular basis; bus stop sign was missing from Montford Ave. / Hill St. stop, causing buses to pass it. Norman said there's a list of work orders to replace several signs.

### **3:58 pm – New Business**

Route C -

Tom raised issues of severe and continuing drop in ridership in corridor served by C since TMP implementation. January ridership fell from 3943 in 2013 to 3124 in 2014, a 21 percent reduction. Tom considers the responses to date inadequate to address fundamental problems with the route. One of the drivers, Diane Allen, has proposed a 30 minute run using Louisiana, Haywood, Clingman to get to/from Transit Center, then a southern swing to Biltmore Village, making an hour total route. Mariate concurs with Tom's assessment of the depth of the problems; staff has concluded that schedule adjustments alone can't fix them; believes that "deconstruction" along the lines of Tom's/Diane's suggestion is probably the logical solution between now and the time that RADTIP takes effect. Budget issues make it challenging, but the ongoing budget process makes this a good time to discuss the proper form and cost of the revision, to take effect by January 2015 (timeframe driven by driver assignment and physical service limitations). TC supports staff's deconstruction initiative. A committee will be formed to work on the alternative.

TC Retreat -

The Transit Committee wishes to schedule a full-day, goal-setting retreat for October. Schedule TBD soon.

French Broad River MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Citizen Advisory Committee -

FBRMPO is getting ready to update this year's LRTP. Lyuba brought applications (also available online), and requested a greater diversity of candidates. Group will probably have bi-monthly meetings, and is considering moving the meeting from Land of Sky to a more central location. Julie expects to attend the meetings in another capacity. Steve moved, Dave seconded that Julie also represent TC at the meetings. Motion passed unanimously. Mariate will send email to Paul Black notifying him of the decision.

#### **4:24 pm – Old Business**

TC Goals -

Julie described the four Committee goals, primarily for the benefit of new TC members. Calvin suggested that Best Operations (McDonald's franchisee) be approached about joining the Passport Program.

Volunteers for Goals Task Forces:

- 1) Support TMP Implementation (Julie to lead, Adam, Dave Erb, Steve, Iti)
- 2) Improve Rider Experience (Julie to ask Bruce to lead, Bruce, Julie, David Wilson)
- 3) Improve Communication with Drivers (Tom, Calvin)
- 4) Improve Communication with County Transit System (on hold, at least until retreat)

Multimodal Commission Update - MMTC will integrate all the subcommittee master plans.

Sunday Service / TMP Implementation -

Council has met and discussed continuing implementation of TMP. Citizen-Times ran an excellent article about the discussion there. Julie will update Gwen Wisler on TC's views on Route C.

Strive Not To Drive (16-23 May) -

Desire expressed at February TC meeting to have a single free fare day on a high ridership day (which argues for Monday, Wednesday, or Friday). Rider Appreciation Day to be held in conjunction with free fare day and the SNTD commuter stations day (budget was about \$500 the last time it was held). Dawa Hitch would prefer to focus on car sharing program (City now has contract with U-Haul, to be rolled out around Earth Day). Leadership Ride (now called "Community Ride") won't directly involve ART system this year. Julie requested additional ideas from TC. Tabling volunteers needed from TC. Mariate will make connections to assess the possibility of having a bus at the Downtown After Five SNTD kickoff.

TC By-Laws - nothing to report

Management Company Contract -

No decision yet on whether to release a new RFP or renew First Transit's existing contract. Mariate requests that TC put any recommendations, comments, suggestions we may have into written form. Julie will apprise Iti of the present state of the conversation, request her thoughts on how to proceed (since Iti brought up the issue). Tom stated that TC's predecessor entities would typically vote on whether or not to extend a vote of confidence when contracts were up for renewal.

#### **5:04 pm – Staff Updates**

Mariate discussed East of the Riverway Plan as it relates to ART; public meeting will be 18 March at Southside Community Center.

Nextbus equipment is being installed. Implementation is roughly 50% complete; Nextbus technicians are on site; two buses are finished each day. Designer is producing signs for stops, along with other printed material.

ISO 14000 certification RFQ is in process; certification desired by end of calendar 2014. Water Dept. is already certified, this project is for ART.

NCDOT grant will support one full-year, half-time intern. Selection process is beginning (for 1 July start date).

Gillig started construction of the final two new 30 foot diesel buses last week. Both should be on site in Asheville by end of March, will then go through commissioning process.

**5:15 pm – Public Comment Part II**

none

**5:15 pm – Agenda Items for Next TC Meeting (1 April 2014)**

TC elections (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary), Route C (with statistics), continuing issues

**5:16 pm – Meeting Adjourned**