



**ASHEVILLE TRANSIT COMMISSION  
Meeting Minutes  
First Floor Conference Room - City Hall  
March 5, 2013  
3:30 PM - 5:30 PM**

**RIDE.RELAX.CONNECT**

**Attending:**

**Commission Members:** Julie Mayfield, Dave Erb, Tom Tomlin, Bruce Emory, Itiyopiya Ewart, Kevin Jenkins, Lonnie Blair and Gordon Smith, Council Liaison.

**Staff:** Ken Putnam, Mariate Echeverry, Martha McGlohon, Norman Schenck, Yuri Koslen, Janet GeorgeMurr

**Community Members:** David Wilson, Tim Sadler

3:30 pm:

- ❑ Julie Mayfield, Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone;
- ❑ Dave read the Announcement for Public Comment
- ❑ Introductions by TC and staff

● **March 5, 2013 Agenda review and approval:** Agenda was approved unanimously.

● **February 5, 2013 Minutes review and approval:** Dave moved to approve the minutes; Bruce seconded and carried unanimously.

● **Public Comment I:** None

● **TC transit experience in riding the bus:**

- ❑ **Tom** - N2 - running on time; E1 - running 25 minutes late on a Saturday due to traffic;
- ❑ **Itiyopiya** - N3 on time. Itiyopiya and her sister with a baby arrived at ART Station at 19 minutes after the hour; the Hillcrest bus leaves at 20 after the hour; the bus driver closed the door and raised the bus and refused to open the door when it was still at the curb. Itiyopiya had to wait 40 minutes for the bus to arrive to ART Station; E1 last Friday - the bus was extremely crowded and had to wait for more than 1/2 hour for the bus; N2 - great service; on time; and driver is courteous. Norman suggested informing the bus driver that you will be transferring to another bus and to call dispatch to hold the bus. There is a 3 minute time to hold a bus. Once the bus has pulled away from the curb the driver cannot open the doors.
- ❑ **Julie** - W1 - was "delightful"
- ❑ **Dave** - N1 and N2 - generally close to on time; but couple times was late; 7am at Larchmont buses were running hot.
- ❑ **Bruce** - N1 and N2 - the UNC-A Loop there is a confusion b/c both of the buses go around the loop in the same direction. Someone standing a stop may not know whether the bus that is coming is the correct bus to catch. The head signs are not always accurate. Suggested changing the direction of the outbound bus to go around the loop in the other direction in order for the inbound passengers to have stops on one side of the street and Outbound on the other side of the street. Norman stated on the new buses if the marquee is up it should always say N1 or N2. Yuri stated that it can be changed and on the talking bus there will be exterior speakers when the bus stops as passengers are boarding to say the direction of the bus. Mariate stated that this could be looked into with UNC-A, if it is not too complicated to make the left turn when you get to top of the road.
- ❑ **Kevin** - on S4 the buses are unpredictable. In February, apparently there was a "tripper" bus was going by 5 minutes early and it was pulling away and he not could catch up to the bus. In January, W2-passed Kevin as he was waiting on the bus as he was showing his bus pass at Hilliard and South French Broad on the NW corner and a utility pole was blocking Kevin and bus driver's vision. Mariate stated that Norman is sending "trippers" out on the scheduled time.
- ❑ **Lonnie** - impressed with the new buses. He will be riding the bus more with his grandchildren.
- ❑ **Gordon** - rode a few of the Ws' this month which were running on time without difficulty.

● **New Business:**

- **Welcoming Larnel (Lonnie) Blair as New TC Member:** Julie introduced and welcomed Lonnie Blair. Mr. Blair stated that he has a small business in Asheville. He is passionate about transit; and that he sees a lot of good things happening for transit. He attended a number of CIBO meetings and there was an opening for this commission in which he applied and was appointed. Julie stated that TC now has a full great team and a lot of work to do. Julie encourages TC to review Lonnie's profile.
- **Consolidating all the transportation commissions:** Ken P. stated that the City has reorganized the three functional management teams:
  - A. Public Safety and Management Services Team - headed up Jeff Richardson;
  - B. Finance and Strategic Planning Team - headed up by Lauren Bradley; and
  - C. Public Works and Multi-Modal Transportation Team - headed up by Cathy Ball.
  1. This decision was made effective on 2/17/13. Internal staff has been working under the team concept for approx. 30 days. At the same time, Council has asked staff to evaluate the current boards and commissions to be sure that they complement the City Council's Strategic Goals. At this time, there is a recommendation that Ken would like to share with TC and is requesting feedback. Staff is recommending a creation of a Multi-Modal Transportation Commission (MMTC) which will consist of 11 members (3-Bike and Pedestrian Task Force, 3-Greenway Commission; 3-Transit Commission; 1-Planning and Zoning Commission; 1-Neighborhood Advisory Commission.) This format is not yet approved and could be subject to change. The proposal is for the current Transit Commission will be a sub-committee as well as the Greenway Commission and the Bike and Ped sub-committees. If approved, the effective date is 7/1/2013. Cathy Ball will be making a report to the Boards and Commissions Committee on March 12, 2013 and to Council sometime in April.
  2. Potential questions and feedback:
    - A.** What role would TC provide as a sub-committee? It is anticipated that the sub-committee would evaluate and make recommendations to the MMTC on their specific discipline. The sub-committee is geared to be self-supportive similar to the way Bike and Ped Task Force has worked for years. There will be a transition period of 6 months when city staff will help the sub-committees to be self-supportive. Once that happens there will also be some technical staff at the monthly meetings to be a resource assuming that the sub-committee chooses to meet once a month. The membership of a sub-committee will be similar to the Bike and Ped Task Force as it is anyone that is interested in transit, greenways, etc. The sub-committees will recommend the designated member to be on the MMTC. At that point, the designated member who would be a City resident would apply to the Boards and Commission and be interviewed.
    - B.** Bruce - asked about the term "self-supportive." Ken explained that for instance Bike and Ped Task Force is independent; where a staff member can attend; there are no by-laws; they prepare their own minutes and agenda and anyone can attend and participate.
    - C.** Julie - asked if a person would have to be on the sub-committee to be eligible to be on the MMTC? Gordon stated that this is a first draft he is getting the feedback at this time. Gordon stated that the first time in Asheville's history we have such a commitment to a multi-modal transportation network that now there is a department that is called Multi-Modal to integrate all of the various modes and in having one commission to move further and faster.
    - D.** Bruce - asked if MMTC would have a role with highways issues, i.e. Charlotte Street or I26, Ken stated that yes that the MMTC will be getting into that "arena" but at this time we do not have a separate master plan or a separate commission or committee that are meeting on a regular basis advocating these issues. For big projects, like I26 dealing with the State maintained roads we still have the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); TCC and the TAC committees.
    - E.** Bruce asked with the reorganization where does the Greenway function fit. Ken stated that Parks and Recreation is under the Team 3 the PW which includes Public Works, Transportation, P&R and Water. Gordon stated that the Greenways are looking to come out of P&R and go into the Transportation which has already happened.
    - F.** Ken encourages TC to digest this and send Julie questions or concerns about MMTC and she will forward to Ken or Mariate, but will be staying on a timeline.
    - G.** Gordon is also a member of the Boards and Commissions Committee - as the feedback comes in Gordon will be carrying that information to the Boards and Commission.

- H.** Julie's primary concern is about losing bodies to focus on transit and to losing a number of people who are engaged in advocacy for transit.
- I.** Bruce is concerned about not having administrative support to the sub-committees. Bruce suggested upgrading the Bike and Ped Task Force to the same status as Transit and Greenway Commissions/subcommittee. Julie stated that the Bike and Ped Task Forces does not want to be upgraded b/c they like their freedom. Gordon understands that there are 47 boards and commissions at this point that anyway to consolidate to be help staff time will be helpful at this time. We are looking at another budget year that we are not adding any other staff, which part of the consideration.
- J.** Julie stated that the problem with "free for all sub-committee" would potentially be that people will show up one month and not come for 6 months. Julie runs an organization that is significantly depends on volunteers to take responsibility which is an inconsistent way to get work done.
- K.** Gordon stated that the sub-committees would discuss how efficiently the group would work. If they come three times that will demonstrate that they are committed. As self-supporting you are also self-determining.
- L.** Julie stated that Bike and Ped has gotten good thing accomplished and moved things forward and set their own goals.
- M.** Ken stated that the sub-committee could set their own rules for the membership within. Julie recommends some structure in place so that the if the commission is the overall body setting the MMTC directions and goals let it be understood that the sub-committees would have some responsibility to carry that out.
- N.** Mariate stated that the sub-committee would continue to receive the monthly transit reports and that is part of the technical assistance.
- O.** Julie stated that it is a good idea to bring all of the people together in one commission. Julie asked why SACEE is not on the MMTC list and they have goals related to transportation and particularly funding for transportation. Gordon stated that he has not heard SACEE indicate an interest in this and could float pass them.
- P.** Gordon stated that a P&Z member and a Neighborhood Advisory Commission member is part of the first draft and he is not sold on the need for the Neighborhood Advisory Commission member there. A P&Z member would be very helpful in seeking easements but that person may be irregular depending on what is on the agenda. In order to make the MMTC effective so that we can unify goals and get things moving, who needs to be there? Ken stated that the Neighborhood Advisory Commission is still evolving and is still trying to identify that. Ken gave an example of traffic calming in the certain neighborhoods that the Neighborhood Advisory Committee was helpful to staff on the existing traffic calming policy since they represent all of the neighborhoods in the City.
- Q.** Julie stated that if this commission is also working on highways and streets in the future come under the purview of this commission as opposed to the Neighborhood Advisory Commission. Ken stated that it is safe to say that the whole MMTC is really going to have a purview under the entire Public Works of the Multi-Modal Transportation Management Team in order to cover all of the modes.
- R.** Julie - stated that instead of having a full-time person from that commission, as well as SACEE, if those commissions end up developing goals that relate to transportation then maybe for that particular issue there could be a liaison with this commission or run through that committee first and then come to the commission or vice versa.
- S.** Itiyopiya stated that it would be good to consolidate but then Julie brought up some interesting questions that would it be distracting for some of the committees if the goals get lost in what each committee is trying to achieve; would things get pushed to the side.
- T.** Parking is part of the MMTC.
- U.** Julie stated reducing the competition for funding is very important.
- V.** Tom asked if passenger complaints still have the same channels with MMTC. Ken stated that would not change.
- W.** Julie stated that this is an advantage because the sub-committee does not have the same restrictions that TC has in terms of the number of commissioners that could meet at the same meeting, which are only 3 commissioners without a public notice.
- X.** Ken will report back at the April meeting about the conversations about the Boards and Commissions. Gordon will send to TC before the April meeting to have some lead time for TC.

- **Strive Not To Drive (SNTD):** Julie explained that SNTD is an event that is every year for one week with series of events to encourage people who normally drive to not drive by taking the transit, walk, bike or carpool. SNTD was managed by the City but it is no longer and is managed by a Steering Committee. Mariate and Yuri are members of the Steering Committee as well as Julie. There are two items to discuss:
  1. Dates are from May 13-17/13 second week in May;
  2. We have requested City Council to allow being free bus fare for the week of SNTD which has happened every year for the past two years. We have the approval of Council to have Friday of SNTD week to be fare free. The question do we ask for the whole week of SNTD to be fare free. Mariate stated that the fiscal impact is about \$10,000.00 for the 5 days.  
After a group discussion:  
Julie stated that from the consensus from TC to leave it at one day of the SNTD week. There will not be a vote since it is already in place. Since Monday is a day with less ridership to have the fare free at the first of the week.
- 2. Julie stated that the second portion of SNTD is that every year there is a something called the leadership ride which historically has been a bike ride lead by City Council and it goes around the City to different interested points mainly related to bicycle infrastructure. Last year, due to the roll-out of the new buses and routes, we added a bus element to that leadership. In the hour before the bike ride started we had one of the new buses, City Council, Mayor, Ken, Mariate and Julie and we put everyone on the new buses and drove around talked about the new routes, Transit Master Plan, round-about, sidewalks and other infrastructure and it was a great captive audience. After a group discussion: Julie stated that she liked Itiyopiya idea of having a regular rider to be on the leadership tour which could be Itiyopiya or Kevin who are regular riders.
- **TC Chair and Vice Chari term limits:** Mariate stated that the election of Chair and Vice-Chair was due on 2/7/12. Mariate suggested waiting until the Multi-Modal Transportation Commission is formed. TC agrees.
- **Review of the procedure for appealing a suspension from the bus system:** Julie stated that she was contacted by two riders that have been suspended wanting to know how they could appeal their suspension. Mariate stated that the first appeal is to Norman and if Norman denies the appeal, then it will come to Mariate and then to a committee. Norman stated that a lot of the suspensions come from the APD and not by transit. Itiyopiya suggests having literature on the buses on what is not allowed and what would lead to a suspension and the right to appeal. Martha will look into the suspension procedure.  
Norman stated that on every bus there is a large sticker that says: "No Food, No radios, No standing beyond standee line, No cell phones and signs with more detail further in the bus.  
Martha suggested making sure that the signs and stickers are consistent with all of the buses.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Transit Commission Goals:** Julie stated that in the TC packet are the goals that TC agreed at the 10/16/12 Retreat. Updates are the following:
  1. **Support the Implementation of the TMP:** adding Itiyopiya Ewart as part of the sub-committee. They met earlier to discuss approaching AB Tech on a number of issues: relieving problems on S4; participating in the PassPort Program-which Yuri has spoken with them regarding buying passes for some of the financial aid students; to set up a meeting with Ingles re: Passport Program; and the two public, private conversations on-going with Mission and MAHEC re: the Healthcare Express. Mariate and Julie met with Biltmore Park, Western Carolina, Sierra Nevada group and Mariate presented a couple of possible routes and costs associated with that which was sticker shock and will try to increase the number of people at the table to share the burden for cost of having a bus.
  2. **Improve Rider Experience:** Bruce Emory will replace Ken O'Connor on the sub-committee. As City policy, only 3 TC members could attend a meeting at one time. Even though there are four TC members on this sub-committee, there could be rotation of members.
  3. **Improve Communication with Driver:** removing Georgia Shannon and Ken O'Connor.
  4. **Improve Communication with County Transit System:** replacing Ken O'Connor with Lonnie Blair. Julie will talk with Lonnie more about City and County working together on a number of levels, i.e.

paratransit service which is more contractual; working on more opportunities to make the systems more consistent and work better together.

Julie's vision for these committees particularly the first two that the sub-committees will meeting separate and apart from the TC and that there are already sub-goals developed for each one and that work will parallel to what is done in TC meetings. This is where TC could be more helpful to the City in advancing the Transit Master Plan (TMP) and in improving the system.

Under the Improve Communication with Drivers the recurring meeting is the 4th Thursday of every month at 4pm at Operations and that only 3 TC can attend at one time. Kevin and Tom are the standing sub-committee members. On March 28th drivers meeting, Kevin, Tom and Itiyopiya will attend.

#### **STAFF UPDATES:**

- **TMP Implementation:** - Mariate reported:

1. Budget amendment from the transit capital to purchase 1 bus went to Council on 3/12/13
2. The City just implemented the Asheville "Public Stuff." The Asheville application can be downloaded from the website to enter complaints/comments. Transit complaints will go to Yuri and Bike goes to Barb and Pedestrian goes to PW and Barb gets notified to determine who will answer the complaints and/or comments. The system will compile the information and the citizens can look at all of the complaints or requests in any area of the City. We can download in a spreadsheet and have it available to TC. In responding to the complaints and/or comments through the website; there is an automated response then you can follow the process and track the process. You can make the complaint private so that other citizens cannot see it; [ashevillenc.gov/ashevilleapp.com](http://ashevillenc.gov/ashevilleapp.com). We can obtain email addresses from the Public Stuff when there are transit complaints and add to the IRIDE account to send out notices. Public Stuff will be placed on the Transit website and the Communication Department for the City is will be being publicizing the information starting on Monday. Julie suggested putting up a notice at the ART Station over the complaint box.

- **Status on RFPs:** Mariate reported:

1. Continuing to work on the AVL bid and hopefully will be out 3/8/13;
2. The shelters are moving forward;
3. The cameras were approved by Council in the last session and preparing the requisition to process.

- **Transit Budget for FY14:** Mariate explained the FY14 of the Operating Budget spreadsheet to TC. Mariate will keep TC updated.

- **Review of ART monthly reports:** Due to time constraints, TC will review the reports on their own (Ridership, Passport, Safety and Accident Reports

1. On time performance report: Yuri explained that transit now has an on-time performance data sheet on 9 buses that automatically count on-time performance. Around 70% is good and transit has 68%. The early arrival buses can be addressed by communicating with the bus drivers to not arrive at the locations early. The ones that are running late will require a lot more work due to the scheduling. The red is poor, yellow is middle and green is good. The N3 schedule is being change. TC suggested that the buses that do not run on holiday schedules to add that information on the schedules as well as on N1 and N2 to add to N2 schedule that N1 has holiday service since it services the same passengers, also on E1.

- **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None

- **Agenda Items for next meeting:**

1. Report on the Multi-Modal Transportation Commission;
2. Update on the transit appeal process on suspensions;
3. Update on budget;
4. SNTD Update

Julie adjourned at 5:23pm