



Multimodal Transportation Commission Minutes

Regular Meeting
January 27, 2016

Attending:

Commission Members: Jim Grode, Chair; Bruce Emory, Vice-Chair; Philip Lenowitz, Till Dohse, Terri March and Mary Weber, Don Kostelec, John Ridout, Kristy Carter, Rich Lee.

Commission Members Absent: Josh O'Conner.

Council Liaison: Gwen Wisler.

Staff Members: Ken Putnam, Mariate Echeverry, Jeff Moore, Barb Mee, Janet GeorgeMurr, Jackie Behoriam, McCray Coates, Walter Ear, and Chad Bandy.

Community Members: Fred Burchett, Vadilla Satvika, and Geoff Kemmish.

Called Meeting To Order: Jim Grode opened the meeting and welcomed members, staff and public.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

January 27, 2016 – Agenda: Commission member Jim Grode motioned to approve; Commission member Bruce Emory second and carried unanimously.

December 2, 2015 – Regular Meeting Minutes: Commission member Jim Grode motioned to approve, Commission member Mary Weber second.

Public Comment I: Geoff Kemmish commented on Beaucatcher Greenway, noting that it was dangerous to pursue further development for the on-road section. He expressed concern that the addition of bicycles and pedestrian access would be dangerous, and he advised against it. Commission member Mary Weber commented on this stating that a meeting regarding this issue would be held on Saturday January 30th, and Council Liaison Gwen Wisler would also follow up with legal issues and questions.

Presentations: None

Unfinished Business:

- Election of New MMTTC Officers:** Commission member Jim is rotating off as Chair in July, and as no other candidates were suggested, Commission member Bruce Emory was voted the new Chair, and Commission member Terri March the new Vice Chair. Commission member Jim Grode proposed this election; the vote was carried unanimously.
- Management Company RFP:** Mariate Echeverry stated they are currently in the final stages and will release it the first week in February. Mariate also noted that due to federal funding, the process may be stopped if there is a protest. However, they are following their anticipated timeline, and will go to council at the end of May. Council will then award the contract, and on June 30th 2016 the current Management Company leaves, and on July 1st the new Management Company begins.
- AIM update:** Mariate reported that AIM is in the final stages. The package proposes several transformative options: bicycle, transit (which suggests three sub-projects), shuttle, and complete streets. Bike/Ped Taskforce is working on terms definitions for the project, and the Consultants are finalizing the next steps and documents. The staff will present it to the public for comments and subsequently go to Council. The project will tentatively be ready in May, and they will be working with NCDOT throughout the process. Commission member Mary Weber suggested incorporating green infrastructure in the policies.
- Annual Report:** Commission member Jim Grode mentioned that he added a name to the draft. Commission member Bruce Emory motioned to approve the Annual Report; Commission member Mary Weber second and carried unanimously.
- MMTC Policy Recommendations:** Commission member Terri March stated that the Greenway, Bike/Ped, and Transit were to be reformatted in order to streamline them. Council Liaison Gwen Wisler volunteered to match Just Economics and MMTTC policy priorities.

New Business:

1. **Proposed Closure of Alley at Pine Cone and Oteen Park Place:** Chad Bandy presented on an open driveway that was petitioned to be closed. After further discussion Commission member Rich Lee motioned closing with the stipulation to consider pedestrian access. Commission member Till Dohse second and carried unanimously.
2. **New Belgium Greenway Update:** McCray Coates gave an update on the improvements at the intersections and their plans to construct a low deck parking area on the North side, adding that this is a Complete Streets project. McCray stated that they also established a wetland area, and redesigned the trailhead on the Northern side. The greenway is still under construction on the Southern side, but the project is to be completed in spring or early summer of this year. Commission member Mary Weber raised the question of river access, to which McCray stated that there was none, due to the steep incline of the land.
3. **Proposed Downtown Hotel Shuttle:** Ken Putnam reported that a resident of Asheville wanted to start a low speed vehicle shuttle within The City of Asheville. While the shuttle caters primarily to hotel guests, it will operate much like a taxi, transporting patrons in the Central Business District and surrounding areas. The franchise agreement was approved by City Council during December 2015 and the shuttle should begin service during March 2016.
4. **Comprehensive Parking Study:** The RFP was released on January 12th, proposals are due on February 12th, and the estimated completion date for the study is July 2016. The parking study looks at parking fees and strategies, and options for a Downtown Shuttle (taking into account costs, logistics, funding strategies, etc.). Ken stated that the downtown shuttle was first mentioned in the Downtown Master Plan and there was also an opportunity to explore this in the AIM plan. Ken also added that there was little opportunity for public involvement, since it primarily involves research and analyses; however they are working to get the best possible final product, and then assess the budget.
5. **Haywood Road Corridor Parking Study:** Fred Burchett presented the parking study conducted by Kimley-Horn. The study included the Haywood Rd. corridor in West Asheville- a 2 mile stretch with 3,000 parking spaces, the majority of which were on private roads. The study peaked at about 40% occupancy on public streets, and about 90% on private streets. Focus groups, public meetings, workshops, and surveys were conducted to better explore options to alleviate the parking problem on side streets. Using the survey data and parking projection, the alternatives analysis included such options as increasing the number of on-street parking spaces, increased transit usage, or free off street parking lots. It was also recommended to enforce timed and fee parking and parking permits. After some discussion amongst the Commission members, it was suggested to make agreements with local businesses to ease parking congestion. Commission member Don Kostelec raised the question of the number of rentals on Haywood, which would affect the possibility of implementing parking permits. Fred mentioned that fees after certain hours must mimic those of Downtown.
5. **Watch for Me:** Barb Mee revealed that although pedestrian crashes are very high, they are statistically small numbers to deal with. As part of the campaign string back packs and materials were distributed to pedestrians and motorists, as well as to women and children shelters. Barb also mentioned that both the Police Department and UNCA are interested in participating in future events. The Campaign After Action Report has been submitted to the State.
6. **Snow Storm plowing/clearing Practices and Policies:** Commission member Don Kostelec noted that with the recent storm the City plowing efforts seemed to be “counter-productive” regarding pedestrian access. There also seems to be problems with clearing sidewalks in front of businesses. After a discussion, Chair Bruce Emory suggested that perhaps Bike/Ped Taskforce could look at solutions to this problem.

Announcement: None

General Committee Updates:

1. **Greenway Committee** – no reports
2. **Bike/Ped Task Force:** no reports
3. **Neighborhood Advisory Committee:** no reports
4. **Transit Committee** – Mariate stated that they will raise fares by July 1st.

Staff Updates: None

Review of MMTC Goals: Jim updated MMTC goals.

Public Comment II: None

Agenda Items for Next Meeting: T.I.G.E.R project updates.

Meeting Adjourned: 5:13pm