

Asheville Transit Committee Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, 6 January 2015

Attending:

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

City/ART Staff: Norman Schenck, Gregg Godwin, Martha McGlohon, Gwen Wisler, Yuri Koslen, Mariate Echeverry

Community Members: Annie Avery, David Forbes, Rich Lee, Vicki Meath, Amy Cantrell, Roy Harris, Carmen Procide, Chelsey Simmons, unknown others

3:37 pm - Opening of Meeting

Julie opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Adam read the public announcement. Committee members and staff introduced themselves.

Agenda - Steve requested discussion of info sessions at Transit Center. David W. requested discussion of conflicts of interest between Chairs of Transit Committee and MMTC. Steven moved, Tom seconded to approve agenda as amended, unanimous consent.

2 December 2014 Minutes - David W. requested that minutes be amended: 1) to show his motion nominating Adam for Chair; 2) to show his motion for a ballot count after Julie's election as Chair, and 3) to delete allegedly libelous (mis)quotations attributed to him. Other TC members responded that the minutes accurately reflected his comments, even if the wording might not be exact. David W. disagreed with this view, but was unable or unwilling to provide the correct quote.

Adam moved, Steven seconded that the minutes be adopted. Dave E. moved that the first two concerns be incorporated by amendment, David W. seconded, motion passed with one abstention (Steven) and no objections. David W. moved that the entire paragraph containing quotes be stricken from the minutes. Motion died for lack of a second. David W. moved that the minutes reflect an emotional outburst from Julie when presented with evidence from the retreat minutes about the Facebook page. Motion died for lack of a second. Julie requested that the quote ("kiss his ass") be changed (to "kiss my ass") to properly capture the exact wording. Adam seconded. Motion passed, six in favor, David W. opposed, Tom abstaining. Motion to accept the minutes, as amended, passed unanimously.

3:56 pm - Public Comment I

Annie Avery requested that drivers pay more attention to locations of puddles and ice so as to allow riders to more conveniently enter and exit. She also pointed out lack of service frequency on Tunnel Road and the lack of accuracy and currency of the signs and stickers at the bus stops on the east side. Yuri is aware of missing stickers for S2, but not of others; requested that Annie provide him with any of those others that she notices.

4:02 pm - TC Experiences Riding the Bus

Tom rode next to last C trip. David W. rode the first Sunday trips, commented on the positive response along the way. Adam, Julie, and Dave E. have been out of town, not riding much, but no complaints. Calvin laughingly related that he got confused with the holiday schedule. Charlton has received much positive feedback on Sunday service. Steven has noticed problems with E1 and E1.5 getting backed up, running almost together; his experience on E2 had been fine until today (due to an unresponsive driver).

4:06 pm – New Business

Revisions to Rules of Procedure -

Proposal to add standards of conduct (for TC members and public speaking before TC), procedures for dismissal for violations. Steven moved, David W. seconded, unanimous approval to accept the revisions (with correction of minor typos).

Wheelchair safety - David W. witnessed a wheelchair-bound passenger (on E2 inbound at about 9:20am) unhooking his chair, is concerned about the safety aspects. Norman explained that the system is self-tightening, and expressed surprise that this was even possible, but did offer speculation about one possible explanation. Norman will check to see if he can find the video.

David W. raised the question of possible conflict of interest in the fact that Julie (TC chair) is married to Jim Grode (MMTC chair). Martha stated that there is no statutory conflict of interest in the relationship(s). Julie asked for feedback from other TC members, who had no objections or concerns.

Just Economics / Youth Empowered Solutions presentation re: groceries on the bus - Carmen Procide and Kelsey Simmons raised concerns about convenience and health issues surrounding carrying uninsulated groceries on the bus. Several solutions (coolers, racks, carts) were offered, along with suggestions of potential partners. They requested three actions: 1) a formalized TC decision to give the issue some priority; 2) an agreement to partner with YES / JE to move the work forward; and 3) a specific meeting to discuss a timeline and action plan for next steps. Steven suggested using the dead space behind the driver for racks. Julie raised questions about a system for insuring that carts are returned. Vicki Meath emphasized that this issue is part of JE's 19-point transit agenda, but feels a need for some direction from the city as to next steps. Dave E. moved, Calvin and Steven seconded that TC accept the JE/YES offer to partner on this issue. Calvin, Steven, Julie, and David W. volunteered to work on the specifics. Motion passed unanimously.

4:30 pm – Old Business

"Super Service" pilot project - Adam has met with numerous stakeholders, found excellent support, will provide further updates at next month's TC meeting.

Expanding county service - Calvin's meeting with some stakeholders fell through. Julie requested that Gwen Wisler help facilitate this.

Increasing funding - Gwynn Simpson has left town, so task force is now Julie and Steven. Steven has found several Friends of Transit groups around the country which may provide a model. More discussion at next month's meeting. Julie commented generally on new funding options, will discuss further next month.

Marketing and Education - Charlton is researching efforts used in Greensboro, has also found names of marketing people working with the Y. Julie suggested that Charlton enlist the rest of his committee (Bruce and David W.) to help with his research. David W. pointed out an ad in the Urban News using the ART name, then stated that he is no longer involved with a Facebook page, but has handed the effort off to an un-named Asheville citizen. Yuri is aware of the ads and the Facebook pages, is still waiting for guidance from the city about any further moves.

4:40 pm – Staff Updates

Sunday Service launch - Norman reported 853 riders (unaudited), which compares favorably with the original 903 count on the first day of holiday service. Yuri stated that industry standard expectation for a route to mature is three years. Tom and Yuri also commented on the potential to utilize some downtime in E1's schedule to gain extra coverage. Steven recommended that future informational sessions be time-staggered, as most riders already seemed to be aware of the changes by the final session.

Priority setting for FY2016 budget -

Operational - Yuri circulated a paper with budget items, entitled "Transit Master Plan Implementation Alternatives" and requested TC help in prioritizing them and advocating for them at the MMTC and City levels. Yuri stated that Staff's priorities are probably the service additions to 1) S3, 2) S4, and 3) W3. Other priorities, in no particular order, are the demand extension hours and the on-schedule driver. Amy Cantrell stated that full Sunday service and demand extension hours (especially evening hours up until about 10pm) are the strongest priorities that showed up in JE's surveys. Tom believes that S3 is the highest priority, several other TC members agree. Second priority seemed to be S4, especially in the morning; Adam suggested that extension of S4 to Biltmore Village has a lot of potential. Julie commented that both S4 and W3 would logically require participation by Buncombe County and A-B Tech. Adam added that there's an economic development angle to the S4 discussion. Julie suggested extension hours as third priority, most TC members seemed to agree.

Adam moved, Tom seconded that TC express preference for (in priority order) 1) S3, 2) S4 (conditioned on extension to Biltmore Village and County participation), and 3) demand extension hours. Passed unanimously.

Capital - All four listed items are already funded.

Marketing and Fare Changes - Marketing materials and program are already funded for \$30-40K per year. STP-DA funding (\$120K) is needed for TMP updates; Adam moved, David W. seconded that TC support staff's application for STP-DA funding; passed unanimously. Staff will establish a 3-5 year plan for fare adjustments, and report back to TC next month. Staff is still working on details of additional planning position; Mariate requested TC support. Julie moved, Adam seconded that TC support the planner position and the fare adjustment plan; passed unanimously (Steven and Charlton not present at this point).

Mariate reported that study is ongoing as to allocation of 5307 funds, won't be complete until March 2015. TC needs to be aware that this can have major ramifications on ART budget.

28 Jan MMTC meeting will include (separate) presentations by Paul Black and Asheville in Motion team; both should be of interest to TC members.

Norman's replacement will be here at the end of the month; his schedule for leaving is not yet known.

5:39 pm – Public Comment Part II

Roy Harris urged TC to consider "ambassadors" outside of the TC to aid in promoting the system and helping riders find their way. He also stated his approval of the Operating priorities as expressed by the TC.

5:42 pm – Meeting Adjourned

agenda for next time - groceries, goals, Friends of Transit