

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Minutes of the Meeting of
March 24, 2008 – 4:30 p.m.
31st Floor – Regional Enterprise Tower – 425 Sixth Avenue – Pittsburgh, PA 15219

The sixty-seventh meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission was called to order by Vice Chairman Charles Camp.

Commission Members present were: Tony Amadio, Tom Balya, Shirl Barnhart, Bracken Burns, Charles Camp, Eric Carlson, Tom Ceraso, Daniel Cessna, Steve Craig, Terry Daughenbaugh, James Gagliano, Kevin Gray, Lynn Heckman, David Johnston, James Kennedy, Allen Kukovich, Jack Machek, Larry Maggi, Robbie Matesic, Kevin McCullough, David Miller, Larry Morris, William Peduto, Dale Pinkerton, Bill Piper, Andrew Quinn, Carmen Rozzi, Rodney Ruddock, Daniel Santoro, James Scahill, Robert Schiffbauer, Mark Schneider, Kelly Shroads, Michael Silvestri, Joe Spanik, Gealy Wallwork, and Norma Wintermeyer.

Commission Members absent were: Stephen Bland, Dave Coder, Rick DeBlasio, Robert DeLotto, Joseph Dubovi III, Karl Eisaman, Patricia Evanko, Richard Fink, David Frick, Patrick Ford, Michael Herron, Dana Henry, Patricia Kirkpatrick, James Lokhaiser, Dan Onorato, Luke Ravenstahl, James Ritzman, Richard Shaw, Mark Snyder, Pam Snyder, Anthony Spossey, Byron Stauffer, Jr., Joe Szczur, Letitia Thompson, Vincent Vicites, Daniel Vogler, Vincent Zapotosky, Angela Zimmerlink, and Yarone Zober.

Others: Georgia Berner, Karen Rollins-Fitch representing Jake Wheatley, Jr., and John Verbanac.

Staff: Jim Hassinger, Kirk Brethauer, Jamie Colecchi, Chuck DiPietro, Linda Duffy, Chuck Imbrogno, Vince Massaro, Marge Nalesnick, Shannon O'Connell, Matt Pavlosky, Lisa Kay Schweyer, Kay Tomko, Debbie Tritsch, and Lew Villotti.

1. Action on Minutes of the January 28th Meeting

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2008 meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission by Commissioner Balya which was seconded by Commissioner Ceraso.

Mr. Schneider commented on the items that were presented to the Commission members in January. He questioned why the projects could not be separated and voted on separately. Mr. DiPietro responded that consistent with federal regulations, the air quality conformity testing was not an analysis of any one independent project. The January action was an analysis of all three in combination with all the projects in the current Plan and TIP, and as such, the action requested at the January 28th meeting could only apply to all three projects together.

Mr. Schneider asked if they could have been dealt with separately. Mr. DiPietro repeated that the projects could not have been considered individually at the January 28th meeting due to the requirements of the companion air quality conformity analysis action before the Commission in January. Mr. DiPietro added that the projects could be considered individually or in different combinations, but such change would require new air quality conformity analysis and documentation, plus a new public comment period. This would have required months before the revised request could have been brought back to the full Commission for their consideration. Tabling the action at the January 28th meeting would have directly impacted the schedule of at least the Uniontown to Brownsville Phase 2 Project.

The affirmative vote to approve the minutes was unanimous.

2. Public Comment – None

Commissioner Camp introduced new Commission Members Kelly Shroads of Beaver County and Bob Schiffbauer of Fayette County.

3. Financial Report

Mr. Massaro presented the financial report for the Corporation, the Commission, and the Operations of the Regional Enterprise Tower. This report is for the period July 1, 2007 to February 29, 2008.

Total Project Related Revenues recognized and recorded to date are \$4,602,422 vs. the annual revised budget of \$9,052,972 or 50.84 % of the budget expended for the reporting period. These items relate to the 2007-08 program year funding and to date all funded projects are proceeding as budgeted.

Total carry-over project related revenues recognized and recorded to date are \$226,064 vs. the annual revised budget of \$305,889 or 73.90% of the budget expended for the reporting period.

Revenues relating to the operations of the Regional Enterprise Tower for the reporting period total \$3,491,006 in rents vs. the annual budget of \$5,512,094 or 63.33% of the budget. Revenues for the Endowments are \$154,227 vs. the annual revised budget of \$225,000 or 68.55% for the reporting period. Total Revenues are \$8,473,718 vs. the annual revised budget of \$15,095,955 or 56.13% for the reporting period.

Total Project Related Expenditures recorded to date are \$4,648,271 vs. a revised budget of \$9,087,107 or 51.15% of the budget expended to date. All UPWP and Economic Development Planning work is proceeding as scheduled and is expected to be complet by the end of the current fiscal year.

Total Carryover Project Related Expenditures recognized and recorded to date are \$186,048 vs. the annual revised budget of \$271,754 or 68.46% of the budget expended for the reporting period.

The Regional Enterprise Tower expenses, before depreciation and amortization expense, are \$3,393,612 vs. the revised budget of \$4,842,973 or 70.07% of the budget expended for the reporting period.

Commissioner Burns suggested that Mr. Massaro mention what percentage of the year has passed rather than the date so that those percentages of budget figures have relevance. Commissioner Burns recommended doing bar graphs or charts.

Commissioner Scahill moved to accept the financial report and Commissioner Maggi seconded. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

4. Action on Resolution 6-08 to Amend 2007-2010 Transportation Improvement Program to Advance Route 28 Etna Bridge Phase 4

Mr. DiPietro explained that the request is from PennDOT District 11-0 for a high visibility bottleneck at the Etna Interchange of Route 28 and Route 8. This will be the next stage of the work that has been underway for several years. Act 44 Program money will be used to fund this project. Almost half is Act 44 discretionary dollars, extra funds to the region. The rest is regular Act 44 funds from the District 11-0 Line Items.

Mr. DiPietro reported that it's a 5-phase project. The first 3 phases have been completed by District 11-0 staff. Phase 4 is today's request. The 5-phase project when fully completed will provide two Route 28 lanes both northbound and southbound through the interchange. It will also improve the acceleration /deceleration lanes. All decks and bridge surfaces will also be replaced. Phase 4 will be done in 2 construction seasons. This year the Route 8 southbound ramp to Route 28 northbound will be

reconstructed. Next year Route 28 northbound one lane bottleneck ramp would be widened to 2 lanes. The final Phase 5, Route 28 northbound to Route 28 North, could be advanced to construction in the spring of 2011 if the funding can be programmed on the 2009-2012 TIP Update.

The Transportation Technical Committee recommends Commission approval. There was a 30-day public comment period. A public meeting was held on March 11th. We did not receive any formal public comment – no written testimony and no e-mails. We had several phone inquiries regarding scope and scheduling.

Since this was a PennDOT request, Commissioner Camp asked District 11-0 Executive Dan Cessna to comment. Mr. Cessna added that this is a priority project for the region. Without the Secretary's contribution of discretionary spike funding, we could not advance Phase 4 at this time. Scheduling of Phase 5 in the future with other corridor improvements will require close coordination.

Commissioner Amadio moved:

WHEREAS, PENNDOT District 11-0 requests adding the Route 28 Etna Bridge Phase 4 Construction to the region's 2007-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and

WHEREAS, the sources of funds are from the Commonwealth's Act 44 Program, \$14,550,000 in FFY 2008, \$11,228,800 in FFY 2009, and \$8,897,200 in FFY 2010 for a total cost of \$34,736,000; and

WHEREAS, the increase in FFY 2008 is from 2008 Act 44 discretionary dollars and is additional funds to the region, and the 2009 and 2010 funding increase is regular Act 44 funds from the District 11-0 line item; and

WHEREAS, the project extends from the Etna/Shaler Township line to about 500 feet northwest of the Shaler/O'Hara Township line in Allegheny County and the scope of work includes bridge rehabilitation of two structures and roadway approach work including new pavement and shoulders; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment has been reviewed by the Transportation Technical Committee and recommended for approval in accordance with SPC's TIP amendment policies and public involvement process; and

WHEREAS, a 30-day public comment period was held for the proposed amendment (including a public meeting on March 11, 2008) consistent with the SPC Public Involvement Policy, and did not identify any adverse issues requiring a response by the Commission; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment maintains overall TIP fiscal balance; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment will not interfere with the implementation of any STIP project; and

WHEREAS, approval of this amendment to the 2007-2010 TIP will not alter the finding of conformity between 2007-2010 TIP and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission approves this amendment to the 2007-2010 TIP.

Mr. Silvestri expressed concern about the impact of the Governor's Accelerated Bridge Program on active highway projects in the 2009-2012 TIP Update currently underway. Mr. Piper reinforced this point and expressed particular concern over the highway projects being cut in Districts 10, 11 and particularly in District 12. Mr. Piper added that if a project is not advanced to construction within three years of the completion of its environmental document, there has to be a reevaluation of the environmental

document. Mr. Ceraso reinforced this point and expressed particular concern over the possible deferral of further active highway projects in Westmoreland County.

Mr. Miller seconded and the affirmative vote was unanimous.

5. Action on Resolution 7-08 to Proclaim CommuteInfo Commute Options Awareness Month, May, 2008

Ms. Schweyer began with a quote from *Brian O'Neill's* article in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* on March 18, 2008: "If you're among the nearly 1,000 commuters in car pools and van pools organized by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's CommuteInfo you're in on one of Pittsburgh's best-kept secrets." Ms. Schweyer provided a brief overview of the Ridesharing Program.

Ms. Schweyer also highlighted the Transportation 101 sessions that are underway throughout the region. Transportation 101 is a 2-3 hour session designed for human services professionals and employers who are interested in learning more about the transportation options available in their area. The approach is to train the participants so they can take the information back to their workplace and share it with co-workers, clients, employees, etc. The sessions are facilitated by the local transit operator, the local transportation management association (if there is one in the area) and CommuteInfo. Transportation 101 sessions have been held to date in Beaver, Butler, Indiana, Westmoreland, and Washington/Mid Mon Valley.

Ms. Schweyer also said outreach was available through Partner BHJ in Wheeling, Ohio and regional CareerLinks and libraries throughout the region. She highlighted the following recent CommuteInfo employer activity throughout the region: Westinghouse, Federal Executive Board, Children's Hospital, UPMC, Saks Fifth Avenue, TRACO, University of Pittsburgh, and Creekside Mushroom Mine.

Next, Ms Schweyer highlighted the success, thanks to Carmen Rozzi, over the past 3 months with employers at the Iron Mountain secure underground facility located near Boyers in Butler County. She said that Mr. Carmen Rozzi works at that facility and was and continues to be instrumental in our working with the employees at this location.

Mr. Rozzi provided additional comments on the success of the Commute Info Program at Iron Mountain in Butler County. In a short time 3 new vanpool groups were started.

In conclusion Ms. Schweyer said that in order to further promote the program, we are asking the Commission members to officially proclaim May to be CommuteInfo Commute Options Awareness Month.

Commissioner Spanik moved:

WHEREAS, approximately sixty percent of the Southwestern Pennsylvania region's 1.5 million workers travel outside their resident municipality to work; and

WHEREAS, commuting options are an integral part of the region's employers and workers life by reducing the number of people driving to work alone benefits of less traffic congestion on area roadways and better air quality; and

WHEREAS, it is important that all commuters be aware of the various commuting options available to them; and

WHEREAS, CommuteInfo, celebrates over 30 years of promoting commuting options in the region by

providing information on transit, sponsoring vanpools, helping arrange carpools and providing biking and walking resources through the program website www.commuteinfo.org or by calling toll-free 1-888-819-6110; and

WHEREAS, the month of May includes National Transportation Week, National Bike to Work Day, National Employee Health and Fitness Day, National Try Transit Week, and National Clean Air Week;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission encourages the citizens of this region to welcome and emphasize the value of ridesharing and offers support by declaring May 2008 as "CommuteInfo Commute Options Awareness Month" in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Mr. Morris seconded and the affirmative vote was unanimous.

6. Staff Report/Follow-up/Discussion from Commissioners' Policy Retreat

Dr. Hassinger reported that the staff has developed a set of questions summarizing the last day of the Commissioners' Policy Retreat. There were a couple of key questions and recommendations at the retreat. The key recommendations had to do with the establishment of the water planning district which includes all of the ten counties that SPC is responsible for and an additional area to the east. Questions about the relationship of SPC to this new entity, the staffing of it, the funds for it, how the funds will be obtained, and details about what will be necessary regarding legislation have been presented to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee has tasked the Regional Policy Advisory Committee to address the questions and make a recommendation by the end of summer.

Both the Policy and Intergovernmental chairmanships have been refreshed. Commissioner Craig is chairing the Policy Committee and Commissioners Ceraso and Scahill are Co-Chairing the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee. A meeting of the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee is scheduled on April 4th.

The staff has been doing some consultation meetings with our neighboring MPOs and local development districts. We met with the staff in Morgantown MPO and Steubenville. We have also discussed their potential participation in a multi-state visioning project that we should be able to get a briefing about ourselves soon. We're scheduled to go up this week and will meet folks in Youngstown at Eastgate Regional in Ohio. We're scheduling Wheeling and then of course the neighboring MPOs in western Pennsylvania. So we feel pretty good about our neighboring groups and their willingness to share and talk with us about their current plans and commonalities. We're getting good feedback on that already.

Speaking of good feedback something significant happened again, today. There is a feature story that highlights Project Region in the American Planning Association's magazine released today about an award recipient for excellence in public outreach this year. This is literally in the mail and will be received today by around 30,000 other professional planners around the country who have subscriptions to this magazine. Take notice that one of the photos in the national magazine article is from a meeting that took place in Greene County related to the development plan. You can see in the picture in the background the kiosk of the Project Region survey and people gathered to talk about the plan. You can be very proud of what's being read all around the country and other parts of the world about what we have done here together in southwestern Pennsylvania. And thanks again to our own staff and congratulations to all who worked to put together this plan.

7. Other Business/Announcements

Mr. Miller suggested that staff present a brief overview of the assumptions necessary up front by staff when air quality conformity testing is required. He suggested this would clarify some of the

confusion over the past two commission meetings regarding the complexity of the air quality conformity process with regards to major Plan and TIP amendments.

Next Meeting Date – April 28, 2008

8. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rodney Ruddock
Secretary-Treasurer