

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY JANUARY 21, 2009

D. Ouellette called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

I. INTRODUCTION/ MEMBERS PRESENT

Don Ouellette, Ashburnham; Paul Hale, Hubbardston; David Streb, Fitchburg; Chantell Wead, Templeton; Peter Johnston, Ayer; Pauline Hamel, Ayer; Paula Caron, Fitchburg; Robert Saiia, Lunenburg; Dan Keeney, Gardner; Andrew West, Royalston; Doug Walsh, Athol

EX-OFFICIO

Joanne Telegen-Weinstock, EOT; Mohammed Khan, MART

ORGANIZATION

GUESTS

Frank Maxant, Ayer

STAFF

George Snow, Brian Doherty, Brad Harris, Stephanie Brow, Sheri Bean, George Kahale

II. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 19, 2008 MINUTES.

R. Saiia made a motion to approve the minutes as written. The minutes of November 19, 2008 were approved and passed unanimously.

III. ROUTE 140 TASK FORCE – STERLING, WESTMINSTER AND PRINCETON – DATA AND CORRIDOR PROFILE DEVELOPMENT

B. Harris stated that the Route 140 Task Force has been meeting to address issues and concerns about Route 140 for the communities of Westminster, Sterling and Princeton. Dennis Rindone, the Town Administrator of Princeton has been the head of scheduling meetings and organizing the Task Force. This Task Force is modeled after the Route 2 Safety Task Force to address issues and concerns while incorporating a lot of public involvement.

The first meeting was in September, with follow-up meetings in October and January where both MRPC and the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) were present. The RPA's put together a collection of data to highlight background information on Route 140 and show the Task Force what has been going on, as well as some of the safety issues presented on this roadway. G. Snow then presented information on the crash reports from the community records of Route 140.

B. Harris stated that MRPC will be working with CMRPC on a Corridor Profile for the Route 140 Task Force, which will focus on improving on the existing layout of the roadway. The two RPA's will be researching and preparing concise written summaries on adjacent land use and community goals where necessary and applicable; developing short term operational and physical improvements; documenting areas of concern with culverts, sight distance in some intersections and identifying potential improvements that need to be made and assessing the problem areas of the roadway. The communities will then have a series of short/long range alternatives to improve Route 140. The Corridor Profile is expected to be finished by the end of September 2009 and a finalized report to be completed for the task force, hopefully by the end of the calendar year.

IV. FINAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION – COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

B. Harris stated that at the last MPO meeting it was decided to put the MPO Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) out for public review and comment. The comment period ran December 15, 2008 through January 13, 2009. The only change made to the document was to the name of the Secretary of EOT. It was changed from Bernard Cohen, to Mr. James Aloisi. There were no comments received. The current MOU was endorsed back in September 2001. During that time frame people had raised some issues regarding the selection process for the MPO subregion representative. Particularly, the time frame it took for communities to select a representative. The working group put together a draft of the MOU which clarifies the selection process.

There was a consensus for the MJTC recommended that the MPO endorse the new Memorandum of Understanding.

V. CONTRACT STATUS REPORT

- **FTA/RTA**

G. Kahale stated that the Gardner MART Storage and Maintenance Facility Project has been completed. The Transit Authority has moved into the facility last week, and is 100% operational. MART is planning to have an open house for the facility in March 2009.

McMahon Associates of Boston is working on the scope of service for the Wachusett Commuter Rail Station Facility. MART has met with the Mayor of Fitchburg to discuss the project, as the project is approximately 4 miles away from the Fitchburg station. Currently the architects are completing the proposed design for the project, and there will be a public meeting for the surrounding communities.

MART has hired MRPC to do preliminary feasibility studies for the parking garage in Ayer. MRPC will start taking traffic counts and collecting data in the area.

Gannet Flemming has submitted the 60% design submission of the North Main Street, Leominster MART facility expansion. MRPC is currently reviewing the design.

MART and Jacobs Engineers are working on the parking expansion at North Leominster Station, to increase the parking capacity to approximately 400 vehicles.

- **MassHighway Department 3C**

B. Harris indicated that the Montachusett MPO has scheduled a meeting for February 4, 2009 at noon in the MRPC offices.

The Route 2 Safety Improvement Task Force met to discuss the progress with projects on Route 2, all planned projects are moving forward, some to be completed this coming spring. The next meeting will be held April 9th in the Irving Town Hall.

MRPC is soliciting Traffic Count Requests from our member communities for the coming count season. For any questions or comments contact Sheri Bean at sbean@mrpc.org or 978-345-7376 x315.

B. Harris mentioned that the MRPC attended a quarterly MARPA meeting the last week concerning the Accelerated Bridge Program. The State passed a bridge bond bill that allocated \$3 billion to spend over an eight year period to address structurally deficient bridges as well as preventative maintenance. These bridges will be advertised primarily over the next four years as part of the Bridge Program. A copy of the Accelerated Bridge Program Plan, by location, has been made available. It includes a list of bridges the State anticipates advertising over the next four years. MassHighway has set up a website where they will update information as needed: www.mhd.state.ma.us/acceleratedbridges.

B. Harris stated that EOT along with MassHighway worked to put together a list of potential projects that may be part of the Economic Stimulus Package, named Operation Recovery. The list of projects include the Department of Conservation (DCR) with a list of projects for \$110 million; \$188 million for projects solicited from the Regional Transit Authority across the State and MBTA's listed projects totaling \$963 million in projects from the MBTA. According to MassHighway, the estimate for Massachusetts is going to be allocated approximately \$500 million from this stimulus package. MassHighway will also need award funds for projects within 180 days of the stimulus funds being released, that being the reason for MassHighway asking for "shovel-ready" projects to move the process along more quickly.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.