

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY APRIL 15, 2009

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

I. INTRODUCTION/ MEMBERS PRESENT

Robert Saiia, Lunenburg; Paul Hale, Hubbardston; John Oelfke, Shirley; Don Ouellette, Ashburnham; Sarah Bradbury, MassHighway District 3; Pauline Hamel, Ayer; Andrew West, Royalston; Paula Caron, Fitchburg; Rich Masse, MassHighway district 2

EX-OFFICIO

Joanne Telegen-Weinstock, EOT

ORGANIZATION

GUESTS

Peter Johnston, Ayer Planning Board

STAFF

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

II. APPROVAL OF MARCH 18, 2009 MINUTES

R. Saiia made a motion to approve the minutes of March 18, 2009. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

III. FITCHBURG COMMUTER RAIL PARKING LOTS – LICENSE PLATE SURVEY UPDATE - PRESENTATION

G. Kahale gave a presentation on the License Plate Survey Update study on the Commuter Rail parking lots, conducted by the MRPC staff, for MART. The purpose of the survey was to determine the municipality of origin of the riders parked at the following Commuter Rail stations: Fitchburg, North Leominster, Shirley, Ayer, Littleton and South Acton. The plate numbers were collected over the course of three days in February of this year. The information collected was compiled into excel spreadsheets and sent to CTPS in Boston, to determine the origin of the vehicles based on the information provided by the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Overall the survey had over 90% matched license plates from the parking lots. Some were not matched due to surveyor error, lack of renewed registration, or a new license plate. The information CTPS has is only current to November 2008.

Only the vehicles parked within the Commuter Rail parking lots were surveyed. Twenty five of the plates surveyed were from New Hampshire, and a handful of others were from other states such as Connecticut, Rhode Island, etc.

R. Saia asked over how many days the survey was conducted.

G. Kahale stated that the surveys were completed at one station per day, all between peak hours of morning travel.

P. Hamel asked how the information would be used. Especially because of the parking situation in Ayer, due to the fact the most people who use the Commuter Rail station in the town, park along the side of the streets and in neighborhoods.

G. Kahale stated that the survey could not include the cars parked outside the lots because there is no indication of the destination or reason of the cars parked on the streets.

B. Harris indicated that the survey is accurate per the data MRPC collected. The survey was strictly for the parking lot study for the Commuter Rail. The question of on street parking has to be addressed by the transit authority and their consulting firm.

S. Bradbury stated that there needs to be a definition of the data for the town of Ayer, because the majority of the Commuter Rail vehicles are not in the parking lots.

B. Harris stated that the purpose of the study is not to identify the demand for a parking lot, but to see where the people are coming from to ride the train, and where a new station would do the most good and be the most utilized.

IV. FFY2010-2013 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – PROJECT LIST UPDATE

B. Harris presented the FY2010-2013 TIP project list. The projects listed are compiled from prior TIP lists, and are broken up by the appropriate MassHighway District.

J. Oelfke asked if there are any other projects, that aren't on the list, that towns may have gotten approved for stimulus funds.

B. Harris indicated that the MJTC hasn't heard yet, and the funding is not available through the transportation/highway side and that is why they have not been incorporated into the TIP. Mr. Harris also mentioned that there may be another round of funding made available through the economic stimulus money, possibly in February 2010. If that is the case, amendments will be made around February to place additional projects on the TIP.

B. Harris stated that he will be meeting with MassHighway and other district offices, in order to begin prioritizing projects for the future lists.

V. CONTRACT STATUS REPORT

a. FTA/RTA

G. Kahale indicated that MART has asked MRPC to do an assessment study on the rail trail parking lot. MRPC has conducted traffic counts on several locations, as well as conducted a survey asking several questions of the riders. The information is being compiled at this time.

A preliminary environmental study is being completed on the rail trail area as well, and will be completed by June 2009. After the study is completed, and it has been determined that the garage can be built on that location with 350 spaces for commuter riders, as well as 50 spaces available at all times for rail trail users.

HNTB is working on the design the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Improvement project. This project has received about \$30m from the stimulus money, to add to the original \$150m allotted for this project. The \$30m will be put towards double tracking of the line as well as improving the Littleton Station.

Site plan approval has been submitted to the City of Leominster for the North Main Street MART Storage Facility, and the project will go out to bid in July.

b. MASSHIGHWAY DEPARTMENT 3C

G. Snow stated that the MRPC Traffic Count season began this week, and as of this date there are 175 counts scheduled for the summer, two interns have been hired to help the MRPC staff complete the counts.

Rob Andrews, a representative from Orange was elected as chair of the Route 2 Safety Improvement Task Force at the April 9th meeting. There was a meeting with FHWA to review the MRPC's work on UPWP.

VI. CODE OF CONDUCT

G. Eaton indicated that a Draft Code of Conduct for all MRPC staff, appointed committee/commission members and public officials who attend meetings and events held by the Planning Commission has been presented to the MRPC Board and will be distributed to all above mentioned parties for their signature.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

IX. ADJOURNMENT

D. Ouellette adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.