

**MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2010**

D. Manugian called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

**I. INTRODUCTION/ MEMBERS PRESENT**

David Manugian, Groton; Craig Bardenheuer, Harvard; Pauline Hamel, Ayer; Laurie Scarbrough, MassDOT; Noreen Piazza, Lancaster

**EX-OFFICO**

Mohammed Khan, MART; Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT

**GUESTS**

Frank Maxant, Ayer; Peter Johnston, Ayer, Pauline Conley, Ayer; Robert Pontbriand, Ayer; Mary Hadad Arata, Nashoba Publishing; Carolyn McCreary, Ayer; David Maher, Ayer, Laura Hanes, Ayer; Harry Zane, Ayer; Connie Sullivan, Ayer

**STAFF**

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

**II. APPROVAL OF JULY 21, 2010 AND AUGUST 18, 2010 MINUTES**

Due to lack of quorum, approval of the minutes will be postponed until the October 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**III. AYER COMMUTER RAIL PARKING GARAGE – REVIEW AND DISCUSSION**

G. Kahale gave a presentation on the Ayer Commuter Rail Parking Garage project. Following the presentation, the meeting was opened up to discussion.

Carolyn McCreary indicated that a many people in Ayer are in support of this project. The town held a charette regarding the parking garage and the project received overwhelming support from the people of Ayer. Ayer is a SmartGrowth community and it's important to maintain that aspect of life in the town.

J. Cornswith stated that she has been living in Ayer,  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the station in order to utilize it for commuting. She indicated that the station should not be moved due to the controversy over this project.

Jesse Reich, candidate for State Representative stated that he feels this is a fantastic project. However what Ayer needs is voter support behind the project. Something like this will help the town economically as well as attract people into the town and spur economic development.

L. Hanes indicated that he moved to Ayer in 2000 due to the Commuter Rail. This train stop is a focal point and Ayer is slowly becoming a bedroom community for Boston.

C. Tillis stated that she moved from the city into Ayer, also because of the Commuter Rail.

Harry Zane stated that the rail is an economic asset to the community. The ridership in Ayer far surpasses that of other communities that do have parking garages. Mr. Zane indicated that he believes

Ayer has earned this garage. Ayer is one of the only station locations that is in a downtown where businesses are accessible to be people who ride the train. It is a town that has evolved from a transient military community into a bedroom community for Boston.

Ed Kelley, a business owner from Ayer stated that he circulated a petition and acquired over seventy signatures from local business owners in support of this project.

Cornelius Sullivan, a former Ayer Selectmen and resident indicated that Ayer is the quintessential SmartGrowth community and the Ayer station serves people from many surrounding towns and as far as New Hampshire. Mr. Sullivan stated that this project requires the support from agencies like MassDOT, MJTC and MART to be completed.

R. Pontbriand, the Ayer Town Administrator thanked the MJTC for its support with this project and the support letters that were sent to MassDOT. He asked the committee to send another, revised letter of support when a quorum is present. Mr. Pontbriand noted that the presentation given shows that this project has been in the works for almost fourteen years and he would like to see it come to fruition for the town.

C. McCreary showed a petition to the committee of almost one-thousand signatures in support of the parking garage project for Ayer.

P. Hamel stated that most out of town usage of the Ayer train station comes from Groton and the Groton School, and these people also need space for parking in and around the station.

M. Khan indicated that MART has been working closely with Ayer hoping to receive input as soon as possible from state agencies; the cost of the project has been brought down from \$5m to \$4m. MART requires the assistance of the MPO to persuade them to put the project on the TIP.

M. Khan indicated that MART will redesign the project and reduce the scope.

Mary Hadad Arata asked Mr. Khan if a vote would be required from the town to accept the reduction of the scope and size of the garage.

M. Khan replied that once the state offers a funding match, several different options for the garage will be brought to the Ayer Board of Selectmen for their vote. Mr. Khan also mentioned that MART will comply with any requests from MassDOT to acquire funding.

#### **IV. REGIONAL ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION – REVIEW AND POTENTIAL ADJUSTMENTS**

B. Doherty gave a presentation on the Regional Roadway Functional Classification review. Mr. Doherty indicated that local roads, connector roads and arterial roadways are included in the classification. MRPC has been reviewing traffic data and recent trends in the Montachusett Region in order to update the functional classification system. Adjustments need to be made to create a proper hierarchy of roadways in the region.

There are seven basic steps in the reclassification process:

- Conduct review of current classification, acquire a letter of support from communities to review and update the functional classification;
- Have the MPO review;

- Gather appropriate supporting data;
- Consultation with MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning to critique changes;
- Return to the MPO board for approval of potential changes;
- Receive approval from MPO;
- Send improvements to Federal Highway Administration for their final review.

B. Harris indicated that the MJTC may be asked to recommend proposed changes to the MPO, as the process works its way through.

T. Wadsworth asked about the timeline for this project.

B. Doherty indicated that this work is part of the Regional Systems Analysis. MRPC is currently in the process of waiting for feedback from communities.

N. Piazza asked if the DPW directors had been contacted regarding this project.

B. Doherty stated that MRPC has contacted all the DPW directors in the region in order to gain the towns permission to study their road classifications.

B. Harris stated that if a road's classification change, it can changes its eligibility for federal funding.

## **V. CONTRACT STATUS REPORTS**

### **a. FTA/RTA**

G. Kahale stated that the MART Advisory Board will be meeting September 21<sup>st</sup> in the MART Conference Room.

Mr. Kahale indicated that there will be a Ground Breaking Ceremony on October 18, 2010 for the Wachusett Station; Federal Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood will be attending.

M. Khan stated that MART has received information that the 2010 Census has shown that there has been a shift in population, so much so that the Boston Metro Area may be expanded to include the Boston-Providence-Worcester Metro Area. Mr. Khan stated that as a part of the larger area, MART will face major changes and shifts in funding.

### **b. MASSDOT 3C**

B. Harris stated that the Route 140 Safety Improvement Task Force will be meeting tomorrow night at the Princeton Town Hall.

Traffic count season is winding down, with 14-15 counts left this month, most of which deal with the northern portion of Route 140. Approximately 150 counts were completed this summer.

There is public input survey available for the creation of the RTP. Its available from the MRPC website, also there is a paper copy available at this meeting.

T. Wadsworth stated that tomorrow at Union Station in Worcester is a public hearing for the Draft for the State Rail Freight Plan at 4:00 p.m. Details are available on the MassDOT website as well as the draft plan.

**VI. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

D. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.