

MINUTES
Henderson County
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
February 22, 2007

The Henderson County Transportation Advisory Committee met on Thursday, February 22, 2007 at 3:00 pm in the Commissioners' Meeting Room of the County Office Building.

TAC members in attendance were Jaime Adrignola, Steve Carter, Chair Jim Crafton, Bill Crisp, Chip Gould, Vice-Chair Renee Kumor, Jon Laughter, Keith Maddox, Hunter Marks, Virgle McClure and Tedd Pearce. TAC members absent were Eddie Henderson, Terry Hicks, Lee King, Matt Matteson and Scott Scheneck.

Also in attendance were Commissioner Chuck McGrady, Planning Director Anthony Starr, Planner Autumn Radcliff and Fletcher Town Manager Mark Biberdorf.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jim Crafton called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Crafton presented the minutes of August 24, September 28, 2006 and November 9, 2006 for approval. Keith Maddox requested that his name be added to those TAC members in attendance at the 11-9-06 meeting. A motion was made to approve the minutes for 8-24-06 and 9-28-06 as presented and the 11-9-06 minutes as amended. The motion carried.

NEW MEMBERS AND VACANCIES

Chair Crafton announced three new members were appointed to the TAC. Present were Captain Steve Carter representing the Sheriff's Department and Jaime Adrignola, Mills River Town Manager as the representative of the Town of Mills River. The third member, Scott Scheneck, representing the Village of Flat Rock was absent. Chair Crafton informed the TAC there are currently two vacancies on the TAC and two applications had been received, William Foisy and Steven Orr respectively. Commissioner Chuck McGrady informed the TAC that the Commissioners would consider the applications on file or the TAC's recommendation on appointees at the Commissioners' meeting on March 12th. TAC members suggested that one vacancy be filled with a representative for alternative transportation or public transportation and the other vacancy with a school system representative. A motion was made, "I would move that we request that the Board of Commissioners appoint someone to allow the Board of Education to appoint someone to this Board and that they be a voting member". The motion received a second and passed unanimously. It also was the consensus of the TAC to support the appointment of Steve Orr to fill one of the vacancies.

STAFF REPORTS

CTP UPDATE

Anthony Starr, Planning Director, gave an update on the CTP. He informed the TAC that Dan Holt, NCDOT Engineer who was also the local coordinator and NCDOT representative on the MPO in our area and the main project manager for the CTP, had left NCDOT. NCDOT had committed to keep the CTP project moving ahead but at this point NCDOT could not provide a timeline for its completion. Commissioner Chuck McGrady explained that "there is talk at the MPO level, if the Department does not move forward that we will allocate funds to move forward with a consultant on this one. We are just tired. The understanding is that Henderson County is farther along than some of the other counties.....and so each of the municipalities including me as the county representative said we need to move forward and we're prepared to move forward if we don't get the support of the Department".

Members discussed the importance of having NCDOT staff located in Asheville rather than having staff in Raleigh to accommodate quick access to NCDOT staff who will work on the CTP. Commissioner McGrady would present that concern at the next MPO meeting and encourage the MPO to strongly approach NCDOT that Henderson County's TAC feels it is inappropriate to have somebody out of Raleigh. A motion was made, "... to pass a resolution that we would submit to the MPO and others as you deem necessary to say that we want DOT to appoint a local representative to work with us in our area as opposed to just being dealt with from strictly Raleigh. So moved. Second. So we have a motion that we have a local representative, local meaning our MPO region probably. Does anybody have any comment or thought about that? All those in favor say aye. Any opposed? None." The motion carried.

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TAC members also expressed a strong desire to have a printed copy of Henderson County's CTP so they can study it and be able to provide the citizens with information on the Plan. Much discussion among the TAC ensued. A major concern with waiting for the completed regional CTP was that data for Henderson County may become outdated. Also Henderson County had worked diligently to collect the pertinent data and waited patiently for a couple of years for their plan but still had not been provided a physical copy of it. A motion was made, "... that we make contact with the Board of Commissioners and the municipalities, the MPO, Conrad Burrell of the Transportation Board and others as appropriate that it is our desire to have a copy of our transportation plan made available to us so that we can begin to study and try to follow up doing our work and seeing some realization of what we've been doing the last several years". The motion received a second. The motion carried. One opposing vote was cast.

STATUS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Anthony Starr explained that due to Henderson County being a part of the urbanized area, a significant part of funding for public transit comes directly from the federal transit administration instead of through the state. One of the things required was to have an agreement between the County and the City of Asheville as to how and what amount of funds we get. Federal government uses a formula to determine how much each region in the country gets for transit funding. Then each transit provider in that area has to determine how to split that up. So the County and City of Asheville agreed to utilize the same joint formula that the federal government uses to distribute which is based on population and other transportation density statistics. The Henderson County Board of Commissioners had already approved that agreement and the City of Asheville Council was expected to approve it within the next few days. Some new buses will be purchased.

Mr. Starr further explained that federal guidelines dictate that areas outside the urbanized area can't be served using the federal dollars. The urbanized area is a census designated area. Federal guidelines do not dictate the fare structure so Apple Country Transit fare still remains at 75 cents. Mr. Starr explained that the public transit service is anticipated to be long term. ACT currently has over 90,000 riders annually on three routes. A major future goal is to reduce the length of time between runs, which is currently one hour, to make the transit service more user- friendly and convenient.

OVERVIEW ON LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

Planner Autumn Radcliff distributed information to the TAC regarding off-street parking and land use standards as stated in the Land Development Code. The LDC proposes that facilities be designed to connect the parking and if there's opportunity to locate them adjacent to each other to utilize those parking areas. Entrances should be located as far away as possible from intersections. The LDC also provide standards for drive throughs, stacking cues, tellers banks, etc. Roads are classified as collector, thoroughfare or boulevard, expressways or local roads.

STP-DA PROJECTS

Chair Crafton gave an update on STP-DA projects or Surface Transportation Program Direct Attributable. What it really means is there is a bucket of money that can be divided up over our region. Commissioner McGrady had previously informed the TAC that the MPO was going to be considering projects and had invited each community or county to submit some particular projects they would like to see done. These have to be small projects, such as greenways, safety improvements, public transit, because there is less than 3 million dollars for the whole MPO French Broad region. At the November TAC meeting, Chair Crafton had provided a list of NC Moving Ahead Projects that the TAC agreed upon about two years ago. He reminded the TAC any project submitted requires a 20% match of the funding for the request and the entity making the request must oversee the project themselves. He invited the TAC municipality representatives to ask their councils if they had STP-DA projects they wanted to submit. Keith Maddox, the Laurel Park representative, stated that Laurel Park did not have any projects to submit. Mark Biberdorf, Fletcher Town Manager, stated that the Town had submitted two projects that went into the MPO in Asheville. One project submitted was a sidewalk project for enhancement funds along St. John's Road, between US25 and Fanning Bridge. The other project was the extension of a greenway trail that had been partially built to the Cane Creek greenway that could go into property where the former Steelcase plant was located. Mills River Town Manager Jaime Adrignola stated that Mills River had some ideas but had not yet submitted any projects. Jon Laughter, representative for the City of Hendersonville, stated that the City was considering submitting a project request to address a safety issue with the realignment of the intersection at Erkwood and Shepherd.

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It was the consensus of the TAC to send a letter to the Board of Commissioners and the school system to see if they had projects they wanted to submit. The letter to those entities would clearly state the requirements that the entity submitting the project request would be required to provide a 20% funding match and be responsible for oversight of the project. The TAC would simply be the endorser of the project. Municipality reps would bring back to the TAC at its next meeting any projects they wanted to submit for endorsement by the TAC.

Chair Crafton informed the TAC that Blue Ridge Community College passed a resolution for three potential projects for some secondary road improvements that affects the college: widen and improve the intersection of Airport Road on Spartanburg Highway; make the necessary improvements to Airport Road where it crosses Bat Fork Creek bridge where they have flooding; and widen and realign Airport Road beginning at College Drive and ending at Tracy Grove Road. It was the consensus of the TAC that Chairman Crafton would respond to BRCC's request informing them that the TAC would be pleased to endorse the request but BRCC would be responsible for the 20% match and oversight of that project.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Chair Crafton reminded the TAC that the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair had been postponed to this date due to his absence at the first of the year. Mr. Crafton opened the floor to nominations for those officers. A motion was made to have Jim Crafton remain as Chair and Renee Kumor as Vice-Chair. The motion received a second. Mr. Crafton asked Keith Maddox to moderate the proceedings until the official vote had been tallied. There were no further nominations. A motion was made to close the nominations and the motion received a second. A vote by show of hands was taken and the motion carried unanimously. Jim Crafton will serve as Chair and Renee Kumor as Vice-Chair for the upcoming year.

PUBLIC INPUT

Three individuals had signed up for public comments/input.

Clarence Stepp, P. O. Box 357, East Flat Rock, 693-4944—"Thank you sir for letting me speak. I've got two little issues that I'll talk about. I'll not keep you long. The first one is concerning the transportation. I'm a resident of East Flat Rock and been for years and I'm a land lord. That's one reason I'm thinking more about being landlord about this transportation. It comes as far as Ingle's now. As you know they've made 25 and 176 a business area. We would like to ask you if you could help us to get the Apple Transit on over to East Flat Rock to, ...Parkside, that's right in the center of East Flat Rock and then use the turn around there. It'd be a good pick up. It's close to the post office, pretty close to General Electric, and it's just a half mile or maybe not even that much. So if you could help us do that we would certainly appreciate it. The second thing I'd like to talk to you about, thank you for helping us get the school at Hillandale. But that road is so narrow that I'm hoping or thinking or praying they could put another lane. As you know the Sandburg Place is going to pretty soon be getting more people. We've got buses going through there, Greyhounds on this little road. Maybe they could put a third lane over on the school side just in front of the school. If there was to be a catastrophe at that school, I don't know how you'd get them out, you know if anybody was to get injured. I don't know. So I was just thinking those two things you could help us on I certainly would appreciate it. Thank you for my time".

Hannah Edwards, P. O. Box 312, East Flat Rock, 692-2873: "Mr. Chairman and Committee, I would not be so redundant but I am about the transportation. Every time I go to the post office or to town someone says do you ever go out to speak to the public or people about problems. I say sure I do considering what it is. And it's about the transportation. There are elderly in East Flat Rock who does not have the resources or they're too old to drive or what have you and I am concerned about the route that has been taken from these people to ride the bus. First I called the Chairman of the Commissioners and of course I'd like to have guidelines to go by and go through the proper channels and I was told to write Mr. Crisp who is in charge of transportation a letter concerning this and briefly this is what I said. This letter is written for the concern of the elderly and disabled people who reside in East Flat Rock. These are people who do not have any transportation or any other means of getting to and from the doctor, supermarket and what have you even if it's just once a month. They solicited me to be a part of this committee and after I sent the letter to Mr. Crisp then it was sent on to the Planning committee and they sent me a page and half and then a diagram as to where the bus is supposed to be stopping which is at Ingles. And one day I decided I would go there and just meander around and see how many people would get on this Apple Country bus. It was such a few. But I am asking if it's possible that this could be rerouted that at least it could come into where the post office or some place central in East Flat Rock. Could it not be rerouted? And then reading this letter, maybe I didn't comprehend it properly, but it seems like it'll be three or four years and most of us might not be here at that time before they get to considering rerouting. I understand it takes funds to do things so if you will consider

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this I guess your fiscal year start in July and maybe we could meet sometime in between. I won't take anymore time because I don't want this to be so redundant. Thank you".

Lucy King, 585 Oak Grove Road, Flat Rock, 693-8901—"I'm really speaking for the East Flat Rock community development club. Maybe you might know about our projects that we've done in the past, we were instrumental in getting the park and school made into apartments for seniors and East Flat Rock community club has been very busy for many years in problems with help for the elderly and cancer projects. We've just been busy all the time but we've been working on this project for almost 2 years. The apartments have been at East Flat Rock school since 2 years ago in December, Christmas. We didn't have our grand opening until later in the spring but after that we started working on trying to get the transportation bus to come down there. And I think it's probably lack of communication, I'm not being judgmental here, and I think that we had a lack of communication because nobody ever got back with us and said and well you come in and present something and let's talk. So then of course there was many letters sent and many calls made in 2006 and actually as I say maybe it didn't get to the right party but we were never asked to come in and let's talk about this and explain the need and this type thing. I know you all are professional people and I know you want to do the right thing and you want to serve the public and you want to be a credible board and I don't think that any of this has happened as any kind of punitive measure to East Flat Rock or anything like that. I think it's just a lack of communication. What I'm asking to make a long story short is that we might be able to meet with I don't know what the committee is, I don't know who it is for this Apple Transportation transit. I don't know what the committee is but we'd like to meet with them. And I really feel like maybe you should need public input from other areas too. You may need somebody from Fletcher with an idea or it may just be public input. But I would like to sit down with you all, some of us, we can't seem to find what the guidelines are. I think we're getting mixed signals we were told. I've talked to so many people out there I don't even know but somebody will say we are not here to serve the less fortunate. That's not our goal but yet I know on your route that you're making it a point to go to areas and facilities to serve the less fortunate and if that is the goal East Flat Rock certainly would be the candidate for that because of the different reasons we'd like to sit down and talk about. It's highly populated and congested and there's a lot of needs. Well and somebody else said that's not what we do. They say our goal is now, it's an environmental subject, we are to be this environmentally positive thing to prevent traffic on the roads, well you know everything pertaining to just the environment. Well then if we were calling for the buses we thought there's a lot of stretches of miles where the buses go and that's a lot of exhaust where they're not picking up. So my request is that we sit down together and look at the routes and we need the numbers. I mean I'd be willing to get them at the end of the month. Mr. Crisp said he didn't have them compiled and you know I'd be willing to get it at the end of February and count how many is picked up at different places because you know we're all in this together. I may not ride it. I don't think the goal should be to serve the whole county; we can't serve the whole county. I think it has to be limited and I think if we had a choice, if we were going to ask the bus to come to our house we'd probably say no I'd rather you would go in this area where people need it and I don't think we ought to concentrate on serving people with four cars in the yard and our small fare but see I don't know. I want to sit down and look at the federal guidelines and the state guidelines and set our goals to serve more people with the same amount of money. I don't whether you're going to, are you going to ask for a bigger budget? See it's budget time coming up in the county commissioners. Are we seriously considering asking for more county money, I mean I don't know but probably you should be thinking about it. All the other departments have but I don't really think we need another bus and I don't think we need more money, I think we need to look at and serve more people with the same amount of money and justify where we go and to me I think we should be fiscally responsible. I know it's federal money and that's federal level and they don't consider that but they may look favorably on us if we did more with that money that we get. So I would like to make the request that we sit down, several people and whoever, it don't have to be East Flat Rock people, but all of us put our heads together or brainstorm, that we might come up with better service at the same amount of money because we really need to serve. We work with the elderly and the disadvantaged for years and years and years and I kind of know what the needs are and I know that each one of you as business people you watch your money and you justify what you spend and what you do with it and I would just like to be a part of this planning. I know that we can meet, we can talk, we got, it's quite a while to the first of July, I think we can have a really good plan and have it ready to go the first of July to serve more people. We've got a lot of ideas and I'd appreciate it if you would allow us to sit and have some input in this. I've been to the county commissioners of course and we've talked to a lot of other people and that seems to approve of that but I would like to start with you all first. Thanks again".

Planning Director Anthony Starr addressed the request to extend the existing route to East Flat Rock: "We did look at this particular request and I think it's a little over a mile one way out to the Parkside Commons outside of our existing routes. We took a look at this and I think I first became aware of it about two weeks ago and it's about 2

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miles round trip off our existing route. This map kind of illustrates that. The star is where the Parkside Commons is where I think they're interested in adding a stop and of course we wouldn't want to go straight out and straight back in. We'd want to try to loop to make it capture as many potential people as possible. The biggest concern that we have right now is our ability to make that additional route area and still maintain our current schedule and get back to the transfer station is what we talked about with Bill. It is really critical that all the buses meet back at the transfer station at the same time so the people at one route can get off the bus and get onto another route to get to a different part of the city. Looking at that other than just doing a straight spur and back and do a loop of some sort or one may require the elimination of other stops that are already existing and then second is whether or not we could still maintain our schedule and get back in time with traffic. Our additional determination told us that we weren't very sure that we could do that. So our plan was bid in I think two or three years, I don't remember, I apologize this off the top of my head, we laid a financial plan for our transit system of what projects we're going to do including purchasing buses from this kind of study and so forth. We have planned in a couple of years a complete operational analysis that we'd hire a consultant to come in and take a look at everything as far as routes, where our routes are going, where the stops are, how frequently they're going there, how we could improve that system and given our transition we put it in the 2nd or 3rd year from now so we could get some of these other issues squared away. It's just that on the surface it didn't seem as an easy fix as simply adding a stop which we've done in the past for other places where someone has requested a stop and it was along an existing route, it didn't prove to be a problem, we just added on there. But certainly if this committee is interested looking at it I suggest that the transit subcommittee maybe take a look at it from that standpoint".

Ms King: "We have a lot of good ideas that we would like to present but we have to do a study first of where you are going now and this is not hard because it takes every day, if the stops that you're going to now are justified or if you're wasting gas mileage and exhaust to go there. But first of all you've got to have a goal and you've got to have a plan and then you look and see if it's feasible, if it's justifiable. You know you do that in everything you do. We have some really good ideas that would work. If you want to save money, we're Scots believe me we can show you how it can work. But that's why I said we need to sit down with the goals and the mission. I don't know what the mission statement is anymore. You know the goals, I know what it used to be and I know how everything's changed with the MPO and all this and the federal money and all this but you have dropped routes and changed routes. I know anything is better for the community. I don't think we have to wait two years to decide what is best for the community, I really don't. I don't think we need to get with federal people to say help us with this. I think it needs to start here with us. I mean call Liz and let's go. She knows my name you know what I mean. I don't know why we should do that. We're in this together and I know that we're all working for the same goals in this community to make it better to serve the people who need to be served or whatever the case may be. I don't know what your mission statement there is anymore or the goals of this plan but when we get that down and we see that, then we need to see if we're meeting that".

Mr. Crafton: "Lucy, let me do this to see if this will satisfy you. We do have a subcommittee of this body that works on transportation issues. Let me ask them to look into the matter because I think there are a couple of issues. There are the desires that you and those in your community have for something that serves you to a greater degree than the present system might. There are also issues of budget and planning and what flexibility do we have to make decisions that would change things and let us first look at that because I think we may waste some energy if we all have a grand meeting and come up with our all ideas and then we don't have the flexibility to implement any of it".

Ms. King: "I'd like to sit down with them. We can't get straight what the rules are. I'd just like to sit down with that committee and have them show me what this is our goal, this is the rules, this is the specifications because as I say I know you don't want to close out the public and the citizens so we would like to sit down with the committee and see what the goals are and the rules and the whys and why nots. We would like to see that and just sit down with them for 30 minutes. It's not the grand public meeting".

Mr. Crafton: "But first we need to examine to what degree of clarity do those rules and guidelines from the federal government or the region exist because they are some things in transition and before anybody can present anything to you and help you understand it clearer, first we need to be sure we understand it. So let us look into that and see what we can come up with and then see if there's something we can move forward with".

Ms King: "Or you can tell me how to find out myself. I've been on the internet, we've been on the internet for hours trying to find this out. I said there's got to be a better way. I know that if you're on an advisory committee, we're on

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a lot of boards, you can't advise if you don't know what the stipulations and regulations are. I know it's something you could look up wherever you look it up, whatever you go by in a week. You could just say go find this".
Mr. Starr: "The process isn't terribly complicated here and we would have to have a public hearing at some point or public meeting to get input on those changes. But beyond that provided that it's inside the urbanized area, and I assume that area is, we can serve it, it's just a matter of whether we make the local determination, whether it's fair or beneficial to eliminate the existing stops, if it's needed and then second whether there's a justification or some indication that there's a plan or enough need to warrant the route going out there. The FTA is not going to say where you can and can't have your routes".

Ms. King: "That's why I thought we could meet together and brainstorm. There's a lot of things about East Flat Rock that I'm sure you all don't know. You haven't been here long. There's a lot of things that many of you don't know because it is the most congested area in population. We do have a border, we know what East Flat Rock is if you really want to find out if it's an urban area or whatever but we would just really like to sit down with some people and talk about this. One thing that has been suggested is a lot of people out there you talk to about this an hour is not long enough. If you go to Wal-Mart and get through in an hour, you're not going to wait on a bus believe me. You could be in Wal-Mart two hours. You go to a doctor you're not going to get out in an hour and stand outside and wait for a bus. What's been suggested to us is please ask them to come to East Flat Rock and alternate the routes. If you want to go to Cracker Barrel one hour, come to East Flat Rock the next hour because I know we want to serve the most people and I just feel like you all would want to do that and I think it's maybe something you haven't thought about. Really it hadn't been presented to you but we've been thinking about this now for two years so we have a lot of suggestions. Thank you".

Mr. Crafton: "Let us get our subcommittee to look at it and we'll decide how we might be able to deal with that".

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business. A motion was made and carried to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 pm.

APPROVED BY:

ATTEST:

JIM CRAFTON, CHAIR

AVALINA B. MERRILL, SECRETARY