

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization  
December 19, 2007**

**City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Government Building  
125 North Division Street, Salisbury, MD  
Room 301**

### **Attendees:**

#### SW/MPO officials:

Matt Creamer, Chair, Wicomico County Council Administrator  
Luther Hitchens, Vice Chair, Deputy Mayor, Delmar, MD  
John McDonnell, City Manager, City of Fruitland  
Mike Nixon, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Stevie Prettyman, Vice President, Wicomico County Council  
Barrie P. Tilghman, Mayor, City of Salisbury

#### Others:

Gary Pusey, S/W MPO staff, City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Planning  
Ian Beam, Maryland Department of Transportation

### **Introduction**

Mr. Pusey opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

### **Nominating Committee Update**

Mr. Pusey stated that the Chair and Vice Chair positions have been vacant since former Chair Marvin Long decided not to seek re-election to the Wicomico County Council and Rick Pollitt resigned the Vice Chair position when he was elected Wicomico County Executive. A Nominating Committee was established to include Mike Nixon, Barrie Tilghman and Doris Schonbrunner, and Mr. Nixon stated the Committee has recommended that the vacant Chair position be filled by Matt Creamer, and the vacant Vice Chair position be filled by Luther Hitchens.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Prettyman, seconded by Mr. McDonnell, with all members voting aye, the Council elected Mr. Creamer as Chair and Mr. Hitchens as Vice Chair.

At this point, Chairman Creamer took over the running of the meeting.

### **Minutes**

The second item of business was the minutes from the Council's July 16, 2007 meeting. Chairman Creamer asked if anyone had any additions or corrections, and there were none. Mr. McDonnell made a motion to approve the minutes, with the motion seconded

by Vice Chairman Hitchens. All Board members voted aye, with none opposed, and the motion to approve the minutes was passed.

### **FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Adoption**

Chairman Creamer asked Mr. Nixon to report on this item.

Mr. Nixon briefly explained the TIP process, and went through each of the nine total project categories and explained that these categories cover projects planned to be completed within the MPO Area during the next four fiscal years. The categories included Environmental Projects; Safety and Spot Improvements; Resurface and Rehabilitate; Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation; Urban Street Reconstruction and Revitalization; Congestion Management; Northeast Collector Trail – Phase II; Small Urban Transit System (capital assistance for Shore Transit); and Small Urban Transit System (operating and maintenance assistance for Shore Transit).

Mr. Nixon noted that the TIP was reviewed by the Technical Committee at its November meeting, and the Committee recommended approval to the Council subject to three clarifications being made.

The first concerned whether a traffic light at Route 50 Business West at the intersection of Naylor Mill Road and the proposed Westside Collector would be included in the TIP. Mr. Nixon researched this and found that current conditions did not warrant the placement of a traffic signal at this location at this time, but that conditions would be monitored and if a signal becomes necessary at some future time, the TIP can be amended.

The second issue identified by the Technical Committee concerned the bridge over Beaverdam Creek on Snow Hill Road near East Main Street. The Committee questioned whether this bridge's maintenance was scheduled for inclusion in the TIP. Mr. Nixon researched this and found that this bridge is not maintained by the State and therefore would not be included in the TIP. The bridge's maintenance is the responsibility of the City of Salisbury.

The third issue concerned the exclusion of funding for Shore Transit's permanent facility. This location of this facility has not yet been determined, although funds have been included in the TIP previously for a Feasibility and Design Study. Mr. Nixon found that funding will be provided as the site selection process continues. The Federal transit Administration requires that an Environmental Impact Analysis be conducted before Construction funds can be included in the TIP. This cannot be done prior to site selection. Once a site is selected, the TIP will be amended to include construction funds that are available but not yet programmed.

General discussion ensued about the process to be followed to ensure that locally-important projects are included in the TIP. In particular, the status of the widening of State Route 349 was discussed. It was pointed out that this project is included in the

region's Highway Needs Inventory and the MPO's Long-Range Plan, but is not yet programmed into the TIP. Mr. Nixon stated the best way to move these types of projects forward is to have a priority letter signed by local politicians and submitted to the State that identifies important road projects. This type of letter should be submitted annually. At this point, Mr. Beam left the room and telephoned his office to determine the status of Wicomico County's letter. He returned and stated that Wicomico was current, with a letter sent from County Executive Rick Pollitt to MDOT's Secretary of Transportation dated Oct. 16, 2007, and 11 projects were identified. The first project identified in the letter was the expansion of State Route 349. There was discussion as to whether the MPO should also submit a letter in support, and the consensus was that Mr. Pusey would review Mr. Pollitt's letter to determine how many of the projects were in the MPO area, and the Council would then consider sending a separate letter of support.

Upon a motion by Mr. Nixon, seconded by Ms. Prettyman, the Council unanimously approved the FY 2008-2011 TIP. The Council also instructed Mr. Pusey to review Wicomico County's priority letter to determine which projects are within the MPO Area so that the Council can consider sending a separate letter of support to MDOT's Transportation Secretary.

#### **Membership of Technical Committee – Appointment of Delaware Department of Transportation Representative**

Chairman Creamer asked Mr. Pusey to report on this item.

Mr. Pusey stated that Mr. Greg Oliver from DelDOT had raised an issue with him that the MPO's Bylaws should be amended to include DelDOT as a non-voting ex officio member of the MPO's Technical Committee. Mr. Pusey handed out an excerpt from the Bylaws and noted that the current wording is unclear, as it now states that Ex Officio members are "Federal Highway Administration," "Federal Transit Administration," "State Highway Administration" and "Maryland Transit Administration." "State Highway Administration" appears to refer to Maryland's agency and leaves out DelDOT. The Technical Committee recommended that wording be added so that "State Highway Administration" becomes "Maryland State Highway Administration" and "Delaware Department of Transportation" also be added as a new Ex Officio member.

After discussion, Mr. McDonnell made a motion to approve amending the Bylaws so that the Ex Officio membership of the Technical Committee be changed so that "State Highway Administration" becomes "Maryland State Highway Administration" and "Delaware Department of Transportation" also be added as a new Ex Officio member. Vice Chairman Hitchens seconded the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.

#### **Public Participation Plan - Discussion**

Chairman Creamer asked Mr. Pusey to report on this item.

Mr. Pusey stated that federal regulations require that MPOs prepare and adopt a Public Participation Plan. The purpose of these plans is to inform the public about transportation issues within the MPO Area and to develop methods to increase public participation in the transportation planning process. Mr. Pusey provided the Council members with a Draft Plan that has been prepared, but he stated this distribution was for informational purposes only, as the Technical Committee reviewed this same document in November and had a number of comments that needed to be addressed. These comments have not yet been addressed, so a revised Plan needs to be reviewed again by the Technical Committee, with Council review occurring sometime later.

No action was required for this item.

### **Update on Corridor Studies**

Chairman Creamer asked Mr. Pusey to report on this item.

Mr. Pusey stated that the Council has approved conducting four corridor studies. One study, the Pemberton Drive Corridor, has been completed. The second, the South Division St./College Ave./Beaglin Park Dr. Corridor is close to being completed. Staff will be meeting with the consultants shortly after the New Year to develop a schedule for the completion of the two remaining studies – the Riverside Drive Corridor and the Delmar/Bi-State Boulevard Corridor.

In response to a question from Chairman Creamer, Mr. Pusey stated that presentations would be made to both the Technical Committee and the Council for each Study. The consultant, The Traffic Group, will be making a presentation to the Technical Committee on the South Division Street Corridor within the next few months, to be followed by another presentation to the Council. Chairman Creamer asked Mr. Pusey to let the Council members know when the Technical Committee would be having its presentation, as some Council members may want to attend that presentation as well.

No action was required for this item.

### **Other Business**

Chairman Creamer asked Mr. Pusey if there was any other business to be discussed. Mr. Pusey stated that he has sent an e-mail to all Technical Committee and Council members about a training session that the MPO would like to sponsor in either late January or in February. The e-mail contains several possible dates for when this training could occur. The training would be provided by the Federal Transit Administration and would take about half a day. Mr. Pusey asked if the Council members could let him know which dates worked best for them so that a date could be selected.

There was no other business to be discussed.

### **Next Meeting Date/Adjourn**

Discussion ensued concerning the next meeting date. Chairman Creamer stated that, as has been done in the past, Mr. Pusey will contact members when a meeting needs to be scheduled and an appropriate date and time will then be determined.

A motion was made by Mayor Tilghman, seconded by Ms. Prettyman, and unanimously approved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.