

Kendall County - Boerne - Fair Oaks Transportation Committee Minutes

O5 November 2019
2:00 – 4:15 p.m.

The Kendall County - Boerne - Fair Oaks Transportation Committee convened at the Boerne Independent School Board administrative building in its new and permanent location: Training Room #C135(?)

In Attendance:

Co-chairs Don Durden and Bob Manning, as well as Ben Bunker, Ben Eldredge, Bob Hartwig, Bryce Boddie, Gary Louie, John Kight, Jonah Evans, Marcus Garcia, Mark Stahl, Northern Hendricks, Rankin D'Spain, Rich Sena, Stephen, Tim Bannwolf, and scrivener Elaine Maltzberger

Not in Attendance: Dan Banks, Josh Limmer, Stephen Zoeller, and Kim Blohm

Item 1: Opening comments and Introductory Business:

Manning reminded those in attendance about the existence of the group's website www.KCBFOTC.com whereupon Durden commented that on occasion the site won't load. Hendricks responded that given the site's hosted, third-party nature, visitors may encounter temporary loading difficulty.

Item 2: Public Comments:

No one stepped forward with public comments at the scheduled time. However, several audience members contributed as the meeting proceeded; their remarks are included in the body of the minutes.

Item 3: Minutes Revisions:

Kight made the observation that last month's minutes neglected to include the word "minutes" in the heading. That change was noted.

Stahl made the motion to accept the minutes as revised, with Louie offering a second. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Item 4: GIS Presentation:

Kendall County 9-1-1 Coordinator and Geographic Information Systems Manager Mike Howle demonstrated GIS technology as applied to Kendall County maps, which presentation was used to inform committee members of the many tools and variables possible for simultaneous, at-a-glance viewing of area characteristics.

"Data has been overlaid to show the power of GIS," Howle said, showing slides across which roads, flood plains, parks, varied political/subdivision entities, hydro installations, extra-territorial jurisdictions, and parks were subsequently layered the one over the other.

Deed restriction easements of two types were shown, at which point Kight asked about transportation restrictions through conservation easements “IF we decided we needed to go through.”

An audience member spoke up to say that deed restrictions can be extremely varied and complex.

Durden reminded committee members of last month’s Travel Demand Model, featuring the San Antonio metropolitan area, and showing mapped attributes “such as population, household income, education levels, employment – and all of those things that they use to generate travel demand. So, it’s helpful for us to be able to overlay this on top of that other set of data and see whether we think they made good assumptions here or not.” “A major part of this (GIS presentation) is the traffic analysis zones (TAZ’s),” Durden said.

Jeanne Geiger, audience representative of the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization offered the information that her agency’s TDM’s are built with census data, and can be used to predict 2030, 2040, and 2050 changes.

When Durden asked Geiger if the census tracts are going to change in conjunction with the 2020 Decennial Census, Geiger said she does not anticipate any change in the census tract boundaries in Kendall County.

Kight wanted to make sure that the information was consistent with data being used by the Alamo Area Council of Governments, and Geiger assured him that it is.

Howle noted that voting and district boundaries will change in the future.

Howle presented a slide showing a “random selection of sensitive areas;’ sinkholes and caves that have been mapped.

Durden emphasized that the mapping of these karst features is by no means complete. “This is just a start,” Durden said.

When Louie asked if historical features can be added, Manning responded with a strong affirmative.

Howle went on to mention digital elevation models that essentially provide extremely detailed topographical information.

“You can do a lot with that data,” Howle stated, with Eldredge adding that perhaps such data can be used to identify potential sinkholes.

Howle identified HERE Technologies as a “new up-and-coming transportation company.” “They’re good,” Howle said.

Howle finished with a demonstration of the county’s interactive maps – found at www.co.kendall.tx.us under the heading “County Departments” – with Geiger showing AAMPO’s interactive maps as well, capable of showing traffic counts, crash data, VIA stops, flood plans, congestion management, sidewalks – “Probably 50 possible layers of information,” Geiger said.

Manning expressed his opinion that GIS information must have applicable value. “A journey from data to information that’s actionable is where the rubber’s going to meet the road,” Manning said, stating an idea for “an exclusionary map,” (i.e., a map that would show locations where we would never recommend a road be built.)

“This type of tool can be amazingly powerful but only if we can manipulate it,” Manning said before asking, “Are these tools going to be user-friendly enough?”

Evans asked for a show of hands within the committee of those who have some GIS proficiency. “We have a handful of people here who have some GIS skills,” Evans noted.

Eldredge cautioned that all should “look at one screen, so to speak. How can we all access it?”

“ArcGIS Online is just what you’re looking for. It is a very powerful tool,” Howle said, stating the “foot-in-the-door cost” to be about \$500.

Item 5 – Discussion and possible action defining a process for developing a list of near-term transportation improvements

Durden asked committee members if they felt ready to propose “smaller, short-term projects that we can do fairly easily.”

“Do y’all think we’re ready?” Durden asked.

Bannwolf answered first, responding that before moving ahead, he wished to know what projects are in “the pipeline.”

“What has already been approved?” He also said he’d like further information on the region’s aquifers, and would, as well, like to know about traffic alternative such as roundabouts. “I personally don’t think we’re ready (to proceed yet),” Bannwolf said.

“What do TxDOT and the State see as potential problems?” Anderson inquired.

While Evans requested “some training on the different tools that are available,” Louie stated that his desire is to “have a comfort level that the community knows what’s going on.” Durden agreed with Louie’s position.

Boddie expressed his concern that growth might already be pressing in a predetermined direction.

“We need to know if there’s a plan that exists that we don’t know about,” Boddie said. “I would like to hear from the mayor of Boerne.”

Anderson expressed his hope that the county already had a traffic engineer in place to identify the major problem areas.

“Tell me there’s somebody in place – there’s got to be,” Anderson said before being informed that no such position exists in the county.

“The closest you’re going to get to this is our study from 2007,” Kight responded. “I think one of the first things you ought to do is look at that,” Kight continued before expressing his frustration with “elected officials.” “There is a thoroughfare plan for the City of Boerne, but they’re not enforcing it.” Kight said. “They’re letting some of the subdivisions kill the thoroughfare plan. So, what have we accomplished? Nothing. If can’t get the elected officials to do something, we’re wasting our time.”

Manning spoke up to counter that local elected officials had “pushed” for the transportation planning committee and had assured the committee that “no projects are in the works that would sabotage (the committee’s efforts).”

Bunker stated that the City of Boerne does have a thoroughfare plan “and it is followed when they do a development in the City of Boerne. The County doesn’t have to follow it.”

Directing the subject back to Durden's original query about whether or not to proceed with immediate projects, Eldredge implied that he wanted to know more before proceeding...particularly with regard to the committee's ultimate range of influence. "I definitely see room for more education," Eldredge said. "I'm not sure we're clear on scope here." He added that recent City-related gatherings had given him new insight with regard to this - in particular meetings regarding the Unified Development Code. "UDC is going to be looking to us," Eldredge said. "The scope is bigger than we think." Manning agreed that he too wishes for "more education," suggesting that such assistance may be best provided by innovative consulting groups like SMART Growth. "It's going to take some real political courage," Manning said with regard to decisions he sees in the committee's future.

When Anderson proposed a community forum to get complaints and concerns out in the open, Hendricks noted that other ways of obtaining community input might involve efforts such as booths at local events.

Hartwig stated that before moving ahead, the committee must be familiar with roadway options as well as city and county funding.

Durden, expressed his inability to encapsulate the preceding discussion, saying "I feel kind of like the blind man trying to eat the elephant...where do I take the first bite?"

Durden offered his opinion that learning about roadways and traffic management would prove too much for committee members before sharing his desire to "complete this assembly of resources (including four-year funded projects as well as the most recent comprehensive community plan) and then start to planning."

"I'd like to suggest that before our next meeting, some of the folks who worked on the 2007 plan make a presentation about that and what needs to be updated from it,"

Durden said.

The big problems are in the bottom one-tenth of the county," Durden continued. "We've got a whole nine-tenths of the county that's a potential problem and we need to get ahead of that." However, Durden warned, "Whatever we build, sooner or later we're going to have congestion."

Connectivity then became a subject of talk, with Manning stating his desire that a short-term recommendation be made immediately to City officials, to "quit" approving subdivisions that are "gigantic cul-de-sacs."

Hartwig, however, noted that the City's authority to self-legislate has been diminished, with power centered in Austin.

Evans then asked about the county's ability to levy impact fees against developers, whereupon Durden replied that "proportionality" rules limit the ability to apply impact fees.

Bannwolf stated his lawyerly opinion that there is a "clear distinction" between "manipulation" and "interactivity."

Louie suggested that a group of four or five people self-appoint with the objective of providing a list of relevant map layers most germane to the committee's needs. Louie's suggestion resulted in a decision for the co-chairs to email committee members with regard to the following subcommittees: 1) the GIS layers list, 2) Prior studies, 3) Outreach - including, schoolkids, as proposed by Eldredge, and 4) contact with a

development policies group – specifically SMART Growth. Members of the community at large may also be considered for committee membership and were asked to email either of the two co-chairs.

Evans proposed that the committee consider employing a GIS consultant. Geiger noted that AAMPO may be able to assist the GIS group with its efforts at little or no cost.

Audience member, Bitsy Pratt, having requested that perhaps public comments might come at the end of the meeting rather than at the beginning. She then asked, “What problem, exactly, are you going to solve? I’d like to hear you state very clearly the problem areas.”

Kight said, “It breaks down into a whole bunch of little things that we can do fairly quickly and inexpensively...but there are multiple things we need to look at.”

Speaking from the audience, Glen Hemner (?) stated that he himself, along with five or six committee members, could work more efficiently to develop a list of short term goals. “(We’ll) go off and bring you something,” Hemner said.

Tom Addlestein suggested that ideas from other cities, perhaps not considered, might be employed, such as “do we go to an all-year school cycle?”
Louie agreed that there is value to looking at other municipalities that have faced similar growth and transportation challenges.

Pratt, speaking again, asked, “Would you consider looking at Gould-Evans and RUDAT reports?”

Meeting’s Wrap-Up

Hartwig asked about the upcoming schedule in light of holidays.

Durden responded, “Ms. Blohm is not here. I’d like to defer to her,” before he and Manning then agreed to look at future holiday dates.

Adjournment.

Manning adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

Submitted on 06 November 2019 by Elaine Maltzberger with edits by Don Durden and Bob Manning.