

Kendall County - Boerne - Fair Oaks Transportation Committee Minutes

17 December 2019
2:00 – 4:30 p.m.

The Kendall County - Boerne - Fair Oaks Transportation Committee convened in the Boerne Independent School Board administrative building's training wing.

In Attendance:

Co-chairs Don Durden and Bob Manning, as well as Ben Bunker, Ben Eldredge, Gary Louie, Kim Blohm, Bob Hartwig, John Kight, Jonah Evans, Marcus Garcia, Mark Stahl, Northern Hendricks, Rich Sena, David Anderson, Dan Banks, and scrivener Elaine Maltsberger

Not in Attendance: Bryce Boddie, Rankin D'Spain, Josh Limmer, Stephen Zoeller, and Tim Bannwolf

Item 1: Opening Comments and Introductory Business:

Sena spoke briefly with regard to a demographic presentation made the night before during a Boerne ISD school board meeting. Sena stated that a great deal of pertinent information had been shared by the demographer that would be useful to the transportation committee. "I'm sure it will be on the district website," Sena said.

Blohm proposed that committee meetings be changed to the first and third Tuesday of each month in order to avoid conflicts with City Council meetings. Louie made a motion in favor of that suggestion, with the caveat that special meetings might be added as needed. Hartwig seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Stahl is to check room availability.

Item 2: Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

Item 3: Minutes:

Banks requested that Rick Tobolka's mention of a bridge across the Balcones Creek low water crossing be added to the minutes.

Evans noted a numerical typo in the Item sequences.

Louie moved that the minutes be accepted with the suggested changes.

Banks seconded.

Minutes were unanimously approved.

Item 4: Formation of subcommittees:

With several visitors – Bitsy Pratt, Donna Taylor, Travis Sabine, Diane Kramer and Darren Ratajski – offering to serve, subcommittees were established.

Past, Present and Future Studies will be comprised of Anderson, Kight, Hartwig, Stahl, Sena, and Pratt – chaired by Banks

Public Outreach will be comprised of Blohm, Bunker, Hendricks, Boddie – chaired by Louie

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GIS will be comprised of non-committee members Taylor, Sabine, Kramer as well as Evans – chaired by Garcia

Subject Matter Experts will include Eldredge along with Evans and Blohm as resources – chaired by Bannwolf.

Manning referred to a comment made by Blohm in the second meeting, at which time she had questioned the partial mission statement phrase: “appropriate economic growth or development.” Manning stated that he didn’t know if the answer to this question required another subcommittee or was simply something that Blohm could lead “under the umbrella” of the committee initiative. “It’s not a question that I want to leave unaddressed,” Manning said, expressing his resistance to words that might seem to be “an invitation to sprawl.”

Louie suggested that Blohm and Bunker take this on within the Public Outreach committee.

Blohm stated that the public would feel better about the committee’s direction if they understood what the phrase meant.

Banks asked who would handle press releases without receiving a clear answer.

Past, Present and Future Studies

Banks - stating that he imagined the subcommittee as “a matrix that would identify projects” - requested additional objectives for the Studies subcommittee.

Durden said that he wanted the Studies group to bring recommendations to the committee about “low-hanging fruit.”

Sena said that past studies need to be updated with the purpose of “maximizing the relief of traffic for the lowest cost possible.

Evans expressed discomfort over his impression that the Studies subcommittee was being assigned a task actually intended for the greater committee.

AAMPO representative Jeanne Geiger said, “more studies may be out there than people are aware of,” adding that AAMPO would be able to provide information on biker and pedestrian transit.

Hendricks said that past thoroughfare plans don’t necessarily match the ultimate reality.

Sena said that plans can be challenged.

Blohm said that the EDC has some “amazing studies” that are available with regard to future growth and workforce.

Manning cautioned that according to its adopted calendar, the committee should be considering “low-hanging fruit” by January and looking at long-term projects by March.

Pratt questioned methodology of past studies, referring to “loose information from prior studies.”

Banks, too, said that in order to get the public on board, data from earlier studies should be validated or re-validated. “We have to convince the citizenry that we have valid data,” he said before asking about budget for study work.

Durden replied that modest amounts are available – “enough to do traffic counts.”

Kight recommended using school data, but also said that he wants a better handle on where the traffic is going. “The low-hanging fruit may be quick and inexpensive, but we need to lock down what we want to see in the future and protect the right-of-way,” Kight said.

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Louie said that committee recommendations shouldn't be based on cost. "That's up to the City," he said.

Durden suggested that if the subcommittee's work became too cumbersome, perhaps another subcommittee could split off.

Evans expressed his concern that in looking at past studies, new ideas might be overlooked.

Sena stated his belief in the need for a "unified product."

Durden said that the Studies subcommittee must be trusted as "responsible."

Public Outreach

The *Public Outreach* subcommittee was defined by Louie as having two "targets" – that of communicating committee discussions to the public and of gathering community input.

Manning suggested that this subcommittee look at public comments from past transportation plans.

Bunker proposed that the committee experience what the community experiences. "We should go experience what their drive is like, what their walk is like, what their biking is like," Bunker said.

Blohm said that the Chamber of Commerce could be used as a channel for community outreach.

GIS

Garcia said that the GIS subcommittee will try to compile as much information as possible, making it "viewable and understandable.

Bunker recommended using GIS to "identify potential connection points."

Sena said, "we've got to look at it holistically – bearing in mind the impact on neighboring counties."

Kight said that he envisioned the Studies and GIS subcommittees working very closely together.

Evans requested that individuals contribute different ideas "of what they are looking for." He also asked about financing for GIS software.

Geiger responded that if the subcommittee works in cooperation with AAMPO the software wouldn't be a problem.

Hendricks brought up the issue of landowner privacy. "Where is the map going to live?"

Hendricks asked, noting that many landowners would have concerns about their private information. "There's a great deal of mistrust in the community," Hendricks concluded.

Although Durden answered, "We must honor transparency," Hendricks persisted in worrying that such transparency might work against the committee.

Evans suggested that ways exist for balancing privacy and transparency, however Manning stated that such a position was troubling. "It's the (landowners') right to share or not to share and they run the risk," Manning said. "I just think we need to stay real open."

Garcia said that the GIS subcommittee would discuss the subject of where the data is to live.

Banks made some base map suggestions, stating his belief that the south-north borders of the map should extend from Ralph Fair/I-10 to north of Comfort, with west-east borders stretching across the entire county. "It should be in a pdf format so we can all use it," Banks said.

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Subject Matter

Eldredge stated that his understanding of the subcommittee's purpose is that of finding experts on "different topics" to be brought back as presenters to the greater committee.

Eldredge also asked if the subcommittee should be on the lookout for a facilitator.

Manning responded, "our window for a facilitator is starting to close." However, he added his eagerness to hear "presentations by thoughtful people to expand our own visions." "There's a lot of learning we can still do."

Although Eldredge persisted in saying that a facilitator might be helpful, Durden opined that while it may be helpful for a facilitator to be involved in a special topic, bringing in another entity or personality to facilitate the full committee "would set us back."

Item 5: Presentations Regarding Funding Windows

Durden distributed a report on funding windows.

In order to work toward recommendations that could feed a November bond election, Durden stated that project suggestions would have to be made to the City of Boerne at the end of March. At that time, "we need to have a pretty good idea of what we'd like to consider," Durden said. Developing the MPO's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) usually takes about 13 months, Durden said. He also stated that the area is only likely to get one Surface Transportation Block Grant project out of MPO funds per year.

Geiger agreed although she ventured that as many as two projects might be realistic.

The Alamo Area MPO's call for entities to submit projects for inclusion in the 2023-2026 TIP opens on 01 October 2020, with project submittals due on 01 April 2021.

Final Public Comments:

Denise Devers asked about possible funding from the Regional Rural Planning Organization. Durden responded that money from RRPO is a "possibility but a very skinny one."

Jaqueline Carlsberg stated her concerns about a cave on her property and asked to whom she should report that information, given that all past bypass routes went across her property. "I've gone to everyone I'm supposed to," Carlsberg said, before being assured by Manning that the committee would pay attention to her concerns.

Banks added that protection of the groundwater (via cave entrances) should be one of the committee's "ultimate responsibilities."

Meeting's Wrap-Up:

Durden and Manning agreed to postpone the agenda's Review and Self-Assessment item until the next meeting on 07 January.

Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Submitted on 18 December 2019 by Elaine Maltsberger with edits by Don Durden and Bob Manning.