

Kendall County – Boerne – Fair Oaks Transportation Committee Minutes

**19 July 2022
2:03 – 4:28 p.m.**

In Attendance:

Don Durden, Bob Manning, Northern Hendricks, Jonah Evans, Bitsy Pratt, Bobby Balli, Ben Eldredge, Bryce Boddie, John Kight, Jeff Carroll, Steve Sharma, Ranking D’Spain, and Gary Louie.

Not in Attendance:

Del Eulberg, Henry Acosta, Josh Limmer, Kim Blohm, Marcus Garcia, Rich Sena, Stephen Zoeller, Steve Sharma, and Tim Bannwolf.

Item 1: OPENING REMARKS

Don Durden calls the meeting to order. His only opening remark is that the Committee will be reviewing their schedule for wrapping up their meetings in the next 6 weeks.

Item 2: CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 21, 2022

Durden opens the floor for the consideration of the minutes from June 21, 2022. He notes that Erika Rowe (scrivener) is absent from this meeting but plans to record today’s meeting upon her return.

Gary Louie motions to approve and adopt the minutes. Bobby Balli seconds the motion for approval. There are no objections from the Committee, and the minutes are approved and adopted.

Item 3: PUBLIC COMMENT

Durden opens the floor for the first opportunity for public comment.

This item is skipped initially because of a technical difficulty with the Zoom connection and sound.

After a short time, Zoom audio is up and running, and Denise Dever is the first to make comments, as she is joining the meeting via Zoom. Dever asks about Dr. Veni's video presentation. She says there is currently a contract in process to have the information from his presentation transcribed. She also asks if there is any way to procure the PowerPoint presentation that he gave.

There is a small technical difficulty with the Zoom connection. While the Committee waits for the technical difficulty to be addressed, Durden discusses some scheduling regarding completion of the Committee meetings (see Agenda Item 4 for this discussion's transcription).

Conversation among the Committee members also ensues about keeping the information that the Committee has collected and placed on their website alive even after they adjourn for the last time. No one wants the information to get lost, but costs of keeping the domain active are a concern. Ben Eldredge notes that the video of Dr. Veni's presentation is on the Cibolo Nature Center's YouTube channel. Durden says he is unsure that the Committee has any rights to that video or presentation but that they had no objections to their request to obtain the information from him. Bryce Boddie offers to Dever in her quest to have that information obtained and recorded.

Lance Kyle is joining the meeting in person and approaches the lectern. He makes comments in support of the transcription of Dr. Veni's presentation. He says that YouTube may not be a reliable source because no one knows if they will go out of business tomorrow. He also says that over time, this type of record begins to demagnetize and fragment.

Item 4: REVIEW SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION

While waiting for the technical difficulty to be addressed regarding the Zoom link, Durden moves on to discuss the schedule for completion for the Committee meetings.

Today, he says they will hear from the Trails Subcommittee, and he hopes they will adopt their report at the meeting held on August 2, 2022. At that time, they will distribute a near-final draft of the report to the Committee

members for consideration, where they will next begin prioritizing project items into short- and long-range “buckets”. He hopes they will adopt the final report at the meeting held on August 16th. This would mean that they would be wrapping up on the August 30th meeting. A back-up meeting on September 13, 2022 is on the schedule for now if they do not get completed.

Item 5: REVIEW REPORT FROM THE PEDESTRIAN/TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE

The Subcommittee has requested that they make their presentation exactly at 3pm. Since this agenda item is reached before said time, Durden turns the Committee to the back of the minute packet to a list of projects that the Committee has agreed to carry forward in their final report (see Agenda Item 6 for this discussion’s transcription).

At 3:00 p.m., Eldredge takes the lectern to begin his presentation. He explains that the Subcommittee was made up of people who had a lot of passion for this vision for the area, but he does note that this is a *vision*, not a plan. With so much development happening and now and projected for the future, part of the Subcommittee goal was to stay ahead of it all. Members of the Subcommittee include Seth Mitchell, Brad Gessner, Craig McDonald, Jonathan Pfeiffer, and Pam Hodges (Bobby Balli and Northern Hendricks are also part of the Subcommittee as well). There are others who made up the Committee, but they are not in attendance today.

Eldredge proceeds with his presentation, beginning with bike safety. Nolan Keene is a member of the public who has been present at many Transportation Committee meetings and expressed his concern for cyclists in the area, since cyclists are typically not welcome on the road.

Eldredge displays a strava map, which shows some of the most frequent routes that cyclists take. He also discusses percentages of fatalities for pedestrians and bikers, and notes that TxDOT may not be as supportive of the modes of transportation that include biking and walking. He says that Kendall County’s infrastructure, including roads and crosswalks, are not safe enough for those people who would choose to commute without a car. Eldredge’s point in the presentation is to get the Committee to think about

means of mobility that does not involve cars, and how they can solve issues like these. Safety solutions, he says, are key.

Eldredge says the thing that the Subcommittee really focused on was a Safe-Routes-To-School concept. Unless a child lives within a 2-mile radius of their school, a bus will not service that area unless it is considered “dangerous”.

The other area of focus was micro-mobility. He begins talking about the people in the community who may not be able to afford a car, gas, or insurance. Perhaps they are on a fixed income or have a disability that doesn’t allow them to drive. No matter the circumstance, there should be safe options for people to get around by other means than just cars.

Eldredge also discusses dedicated Right-of-Way (ROW). Kendall County has the opportunity to be creative and forward-thinking about this topic, and to learn lessons that other areas learned when it was too late. People will want safe trailways dedicated to pedestrian, bike, and other means of transportation.

A speaker that came to talk with the Subcommittee, Gary Merit, says that creating trailways can be done without using eminent domain. Negotiations with conservation rights-of-way are sometimes an option. When asked how people in his community are receiving this type of work, Merit explained that many people are realizing the benefits of it, that improvements like this can enhance their quality of life and even add value to their land. Trails have a different psychology than roads, Eldredge says.

Eldredge goes on to say that if they do not plan the future for the community, developers will. Preserving the quality of life in Kendall County is such a big to so many that live in the area. He says that he began to think about how building trails would coincide with the booming development in the area. Weaving trails into neighborhoods as they are built provides safe routes for kids and safety and community cohesion is improved through waving, smiling, and nodding.

Looking at greenways and thinking about the concept of leveraging thoroughfare planning, Eldredge explains that the vision is for dedicated trail corridors on state highways for off-road trails. He even discusses a

vision for creating a network that is regional with surrounding counties. He does note that infrastructure to this degree will take lots of time and planning, and as time goes on, the vision will change and evolve.

Brad Gessner takes the floor to discuss economic benefits of trails. Gessner begins by saying he spent 40 plus years in the tourism/hospitality industry. He explains that building convention centers was a way to draw tourists in. Trails can do the same thing. In 2018, bicycle tourism was an 83-billion-dollar industry. In the same way that a convention center provides the infrastructure for conventions, trails provide the infrastructure for recreational cycling. He hopes that Kendall County will eventually adopt a hot tax plan along with its Master Plan considering the benefits that hot tax money could provide for trails in the area. Gessner gives Eldredge floor once more.

Eldredge begins speaking again, saying that when he showed these ideas to Rich Sena, he realized that this type of infrastructure is more affordable, and if the price of cars continues to be the way they are now, it may not be practical for everyone to travel and commute using cars in the future.

He then pulls up a map, reiterating that this is *only a vision*. None of the lines drawn are set in stone, and this is merely a map that is meant to give an idea of what could be. It is *not* an official map. This map shows a series of off-road trails, trails that snake along the Guadalupe River, and even trails that break off from existing roads but are *designated only* as trails. He discusses various connections that could happen around the County, and even into other surrounding counties. There is even the hope that these trail routes could connect down into San Antonio trailways. Eldredge closes his presentation with the hope that the Committee will seriously consider these ideas.

Durden thanks Eldredge and the other members of the Subcommittee who spent time putting this work together. He thinks that these are good ideas but does recognize that he is “swimming upstream”. He notes that he spent some time on the historic San Antonio Missions Trails. Much of the time, ideas like this must fight fear rather than reality. Durden also poses questions about maintenance and who would be responsible for cleaning and maintaining those trailways. Eldredge says he could see volunteers

doing it, not necessarily the state or any other entity. Lastly, Durden suggests for an area of ROW in Comfort along US-87 that would make a great designated shared-use path (it is already being used for this purpose anyhow), and he asks Eldredge to include it.

Durden asks the Committee to consider where to put this item in the report. Someone suggests placing it with the Parks section, but Durden says it should still go with transportation, if only for funding purposes. There is fuel tax that comes along with vehicular transportation and funding for trails could be harder to come by. Eldredge responds to that and says that electric modes of transportation are becoming increasingly more relevant.

Conversation ensues, and the Committee agrees that the areas around schools are a good place to start considering some of these concepts. It is determined that one of the best ways to implement something like this would be through thoroughfare planning.

Durden's hope is that they will keep this section discrete as a chapter or an appendix in the report. The recommendation in the report for the powers-that-be would be to ask the Trails Subcommittee to do more work and research for these concepts. He asks the Committee members to consider this carefully and send any comments or concerns to Eldredge. Durden's hope is that some form of this can be adopted for the report at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Eldredge notes that he thinks it would fit best in the Policy section of the report.

Item 6: REVIEW ASSIGNMENTS FOR CROWDSOURCE PROJECTS SHEETS

Durden notes that there were a couple of projects left unspoken for. One was the Kreuzberg extension, and the other was a suggestion by Wanda McCarthy for an elevated roadway that would follow Herff Road over to IH-10. He remembers those items being rejected, but he asked Hendricks to pull those up once more just to make sure they had been addressed.

Hendricks begins with the Kreuzberg extension recommendation. Bitsy Pratt says they had put it off as not being necessary for current or projected

traffic conditions, but possible something to consider with future committees.

Durden asks if there is any objection to rejecting the Kreutzberg Road extension. John Kight objects, noting that he thinks this one would be important for safety since it would be a route for emergency dispatchers to use to get out in this part of the county.

Since there is an objection, the recommendation goes to a vote. He asks if anyone wants to make comments in favor or in objection to the project. Jonah Evans says that he does not see how this project would rise to the top in comparison to the other ideas and recommendations they have discussed.

All those in favor of the motion to reject: 9

All those in favor of the inclusion of the project: 1

Next up for discussion is Wanda McCarthy's idea for a raised roadbed to extend from Herff Road and connect to IH-10 near Christus Parkway. She further explains her idea saying that it would be a nonstop connection from Herff Road to the Frontage Road. She notes that she has been told twice that this idea goes against TxDOT's rules about having more than one access point per mile to a Frontage Road.

Balli argues that he cannot see how the topography would allow for an overpass. He also mentions that it would be very costly and would not save much time, considering there is already a route in place (Herff Road) that would take someone northbound or southbound.

Pratt asks McCarthy what her purpose was for recommending this. McCarthy goes on to explain that the purpose of this was to mitigate miles and miles of greenfield roads, and not having to cross over the Cibolo Creek. She also says the purpose was to avoid having to use eminent domain on taxpayers' property.

Boddie wants to clarify if is this a raised level road from Highway 46 to IH-10. She says yes, that is what she proposes because the City and TxDOT

would not have to purchase hardly anything since they already own the access.

Pratt says she would rather explore some of the other options that they have discussed for mitigating traffic on the Herff/Esser/River intersection.

Jeff Carroll notes a bit of TxDOT history, saying that the City and TxDOT came up with an agreement to build that part of the Frontage Road that connects to Christus Parkway. He says there was a minute order created that specifically notes the two points, Christus and Norris, would be the only public road connections to that Frontage Road.

After some discussion, Durden asks if there is anyone who objects to rejecting this project recommendation. There are no objections from the Committee members, and the recommendation is not included for the final report.

While waiting for the Trails Subcommittee presentation to start, Durden turns the Committee to the back of their minute packet for series of pages that includes a list of projects that the Committee has agreed to move forward in the final report. He discusses writing assignments that were delegated between Committee members and that those need to be completed as soon as possible.

Durden begins going down the list. He gets caught at a project where he had agreed to talk to the Vogt family about the possibility of showing a Major Thoroughfare Plan through their property: the extension of Highway 1376 down to Honeybee Lane. This was before the Committee had come up with the concept to recognize Major Thoroughfare Plans as long as they are not used to enforce eminent domain.

Kight thinks it will probably develop, but he doesn't think Honeybee Lane is public.

Because lines on a Major Thoroughfare Plan are typically not "approved" by a property owner, and the lines are merely drawn to reserve the area for the building of roadways *only if* the property is voluntarily developed, Evans doesn't know that it is necessary to contact this one family about this matter

and treat them differently than any other property owner. The Committee agrees with this idea, and Durden no longer plans to contact the Vogt family.

Durden moves on. Eldredge had been tasked with writing a narrative for a long-range vision on several roundabouts being installed, and Durden asks him to address. Eldredge says this is a concept known as roundabout corridors, and if the ROW and easements can be figured out, this is a concept that might make a lot of sense for the area to facilitate better flowing traffic. Eldredge agrees to create a narrative for it.

Next, Durden discusses the City Park Road traffic calming recommendation, which he says he had agreed to write. Some conversation ensues regarding this item.

Marcus Garcia is not present at this meeting, but there are some excerpts that he agreed to write as well.

Durden keeps moving forward, addressing more of the pages in the back of the packet. The next page is a spread sheet with a list of projects that were rejected, and the Committee runs through some of them for why they would have been rejected.

There was a recommendation for improvements on Upper Balcones Road that was rejected for various reasons, but the Committee wants to reconsider adding it in. Carroll notes that the way the recommendation was phrased benefitted developers rather than the community. Pratt argues that there is a lot of growth projected in that area for the future. She thinks it would be wise to prioritize improvements on that road since there will be a grocery store being put in at some point. Many of the Committee members are in favor of adding it back to the list, and Durden moves it back to include it in their recommendations.

The next project up for discussion is a turn lane on John's Road into Tapatio Springs that was rejected. It stays rejected.

The last project up for discussion that was rejected is a recommendation for the Battle Intense and Keeneland intersection in Fair Oaks Ranch. Balli

notes that this was rejected because it is in Comal County's jurisdiction. It stays rejected.

With that, Durden moves on to the Trails Subcommittee presentation.

Item 7: PUBLIC COMMENT

Brian Boyder approaches the lectern first with comments to address the Committee with. He is from the Comfort area. He says that he would like to see a bond up for election regarding the Guadalupe Greenway because he would vote for it and contribute to it. He also thinks many people in the County feel the same way. He suggests that having a non-profit organization fund something like this would show a lack of leadership from the County. Other cities like Austin, San Antonio, and Kerrville have greenways and trails that were not funded by a non-profit, but with leadership from the local government entities. He asks the Committee to reconsider that.

Vialissa Gerhardt approaches the lectern next. She expresses concerns about lines being drawn on a map and she hopes that the Committee will consider the repercussions of that for property owners. She hopes that notifying property owners of any lines being drawn on maps will not be overlooked.

Maxie Zinsmeister is up next to make comments. He expresses his concern about spending taxpayer dollars on the trailway funding. He says it is a noble cause and agrees with the idea of it but hopes there will be alternatives to spending more money.

Pamela Hodges is up next making comments for the Committee. She says that the Subcommittee worked very hard to ensure that no one's property condemned or affected in a negative way. There was also consideration of the Trinity Aquifer that so many depend upon. She just asks the Committee to read the report and consider that it was well-intended.

Lance Kyle approaches the lectern with one observation: that inviting San Antonio to use the trailways in Boerne has not "worked out too well" in Boerne Lake or at Dickens on Main.

Alex Rudd is joining via Zoom and has some comments to make regarding her support for not placing lines on a map. She also asks what the voting determination was for the Kreuzberg Road extension. Durden states the outcome to reject it.

Tom Adlestein is also joining via Zoom and says he enjoyed the trails presentation. He just asks the Committee to keep an open mind to those ideas.

Eldredge speaks again saying that the goal of the Subcommittee was to think about the future of the people of Kendall County, even with the knowledge and possibility that they may never see anything like this happen in their time. He thanks everyone once more.

Bob Manning also expresses his thanks to the Subcommittee.

Evans speaks up with support for a thoroughfare plan for the County.

Eldredge closes by saying he wishes he had brought this to the Committee sooner so that they could have been embracing these concepts all along.

Item 8: ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned at 4:28 p.m.