



City of Alexandria

Transportation Commission

Regular Meeting

February 18, 2015
7:00 p.m.
Council Workroom

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Councilman Tim Lovain, Scott Anderson, Christine Michaelis, Jake Jakubek, Jerry King, Stephen Klejst, James Lewis, and Maria Wasowski

Staff Present: Karen Callaham – T&ES, Ray Hayhurst – T&ES, Sandra Marks – T&ES, Carrie Sanders – T&ES, Ramond Robinson – T&ES

Vice Chair Jerry King called the Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. January 21, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Jerry King called the meeting to order and asked if there were any edits to the January 21, 2015 minutes. Chair Macek was absent from the meeting however had submitted a request to add to Item 4 Commission Updates on the last line of paragraph three “The Commission expressed support for optimizing the productivity of the advisory committee and discussed ways of keeping the Transportation Commission engaged as the master planning process advances.” Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes which was seconded by Commissioner Jakubek, voted on and unanimously approved.

2. FY 2016-2025 CIP – Public Hearing

T&ES staff, Sandra Marks, provided an overview of the considerations for the FY 2016 – FY 2025 transportation budget, highlighting significant changes from the FY2015 – FY2024 adopted budget. She reported that factors that influenced the FY 2016 budget was lower than expected revenues, and WMATA’s capital and operating subsidies have continued to increase placing a strain on the transportation budget. Ms. Marks indicated that staff will report further changes to the budget at the Commission’s March meeting, before the City’s budget is finalized. Operating and capital changes being considered are deferring, reducing or eliminating projects, making the most of current staff positions and funding for WMATA operating costs. T&ES staff has proposed the prioritization of projects being considered for reduction or deferral. Upcoming meetings will include a proposed budget presentation by the City Manager’s office on March 3, 2015, the Transportation Commission Public Hearing on March 18, 2015, a City Council Public Hearing on March 23, 2015, the CIP work session on April 9, 2015 and the final budget adoption on May 7, 2015.

Vice Chair King opened the public hearing. Public testimony was heard by Jim Durham, Chair of the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). The Public Hearing was closed and discussion ensued among staff and Commissioners. Commissioner Anderson made a motion for staff to draft a letter to the City Manager directing the City Manager to split the list of the top six prioritized projects in half with the highest priority projects as DASH service and fleet expansion, Capital Bikeshare Expansion, and Van Dorn Metrorail Station Area Improvements and the lower priority projects as Old Cameron Run Trail, Backlick Run Multiuse Path, and Mount Vernon Avenue/Russell Road Intersections. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wasowski, voted on by the Commission and unanimously approved.

3. Updates To Receive (Consent Items)

The Commission received updates on funding of various ongoing projects, the Metroway, Complete Streets, and the Old Town Parking Study Work Group. Vice Chair King asked if there were any questions or discussion on any of the consent items. He read a note from absent Chair Macek to staff asking staffs reaction to the proposed changes to WMATA bus services through Alexandria and the effect it may have on the City and DASH ridership. The recently hired T&ES Transit Services Division Chief Ramond Robinson was introduced to the Commissioners. He responded that to maintain sustainability, WMATA is looking at restructuring off peak and weekend schedules, combine and simplify some routes, eliminate duplicate services, and services that overlap. An example is the REX service that will be terminating at Huntington Metro and not traveling to King Street Metro as it currently does. WMATA is being forthright in their discussions with staff who are asking for background information on the proposed changes. He stated none of the proposed changes are substantial enough to negatively affect Alexandria commuters. There being no additional inquiries, the Consent Items updates were accepted by the Commission.

4. Commission Updates

Vice Chair King introduced the newest Transportation Commission member, Christine Michaelis to the group.

Commissioner Jakubek expressed concern regarding a slip lane depicted on a map of the West End Transitway scope. He indicated the slip lane would allow vehicles to make a right turn from northbound Van Dorn Street to South Pickett Street. He asked if that feature could be modified as slip lanes are not favorable to pedestrians who would use that crossing when walking to the Van Dorn Metro Station. He was told that staff is aware and will be looking at the possibility of making the intersection more pedestrian friendly. Vice Chair King inquired of staff to find out what the current City policy is towards slip lanes. Ms. Marks indicated those types of policy directions will be addressed as part of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update and Complete Streets design guidelines. Councilman Lovain reported that at the last National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) meeting, a resolution was passed to authorize staff to begin the air quality analysis of project submissions for inclusion in the 2015 CLRP and the FY 2015-2020 TIP. Also approved following implementation of tolling on I-66 but prior to implementation of widening, VDOT shall evaluate and report to TPB the effectiveness of the tolling and multimodal components, and assess the continuing necessity of widening.

Commissioner Stephen Klejst reported on the DASH Pay It Forward initiative. He indicated revenues are expected to increase as the DASH fareboxes will no longer provide riders the add value option on the bus or to board with a negative balance on their SmarTrip card. He also

reported ridership has increased 6% (all routes including the trolley) and on time performance is at 93%.

5. Potomac Yard Metrorail Station EIS

T&ES staff Lee Farmer reported that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is currently under review by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and National Park Service (NPS). Once they have determined that the document is ready for public release, the document will be made available to the public online, with hard copies available for review at City public libraries and City Hall. The public comment period will last approximately two months before City Council selection of the preferred alternative scheduled for spring 2015. Citizens have been concerned with key impact areas of the project such as transportation. No impact on traffic or streets is expected as most riders will walk, bike or take Metroway to the station and there will be no parking at the station. Visual resources and wetlands would be an impact if the parkway alternative is selected. No noise and vibration for adjacent neighborhoods are expected. The findings related to the comparison of the build alternatives with the purpose and need for the project indicate all of the alternatives would serve the purpose and need which is a metro station in Potomac Yards to improve regional transit for residents and workers, and increase transit and other non-auto trips. To help the public understand details of the DEIS, there will be two open houses sponsored by the Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group (PYMIG) following release of the DEIS.

6. Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update

T&ES staff Carrie Sanders reported that staff has documented all the comments of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee during their February 4, 2015 meeting on the revised vision, goals and objectives. Staff has already addressed the majority of the comments. Kevin Posey, the Transportation Commission's representative on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee, gave additional Ad Hoc Committee input on the vision statement, goals and objectives. He stated the Committee decided to specifically call out "persons with disabilities, older adults, and children" in vision statements; recommend additional research on the Vision Zero policy; revise the safety goal to say "Eliminate pedestrian / bicycle fatalities and injuries"; consider additional Education goal performance measures; and change the engineering objective to ensure sidewalks on both sides of streets. He reported that the next Ad Hoc meeting will tentatively take place on April 16, 2015 and will focus on the draft bicycle network. Another meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 14, 2015. There may be another walking tour prior to one of the upcoming meetings and the public will be invited to participate. Ms. Sanders related that the project will be focusing on the bicycle network and pedestrian focus areas over the next several months, as well as developing project prioritization criteria, and specific strategies to implement the plan. Vice Chair King made a motion to endorse the vision, goals and objections that was seconded by Commissioner Jakubek, voted on and unanimously approved.

Mr. Posey stated he has decided to step down as the temporary Transportation Commission representative on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee now that the Commission is fully manned.

7. Other Business

Commissioner Anderson stated he would like a discussion of slip ramps added to the Commission's meeting agenda in the near future. Vice Chair King indicated he would like the

process of prioritizing long range projects on a future meeting agenda. Staff will accommodate both requests.

Commissioner Wasowski made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Jakubek. There being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.