

SOUTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Policy Board Meeting - Reorganization

Monday, January 22, 2007 - 11:00 A.M.
City Council Caucus Room, Vineland City Hall

The meeting was called to order at 11:03 a.m. by Executive Director Timothy Chelius, followed by the flag salute. Timothy Chelius then advised that the requirements of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act were met through Annual Notice on January 24, 2006 to The Press of Atlantic City, The Bridgeton Evening News, The Daily Journal, Today's Sunbeam, and to the Clerks of the four member counties. Also, the Notice was posted on the designated bulletin board in Vineland City Hall. Attendance of members was then taken by roll call:

ATTENDANCE:

Members:

Daniel Beyel, Cape May County
Thomas Russo, Atlantic County
Douglas Rainear, Cumberland County
Charles Sullivan, Salem County (Not Present)
Robert Levy, Atlantic City (Not Present)
Jeffrey Ridgway, Pittsgrove Township
Leonard Desiderio, Sea Isle City
Perry Barse, City of Vineland
James Lewis, NJDOT
Dr. Jerome Lutin, NJ Transit
Kathleen Aufschneider, SJTA (Representing Bart Mueller)

Also in attendance:

James Pierson, Angelini, Viniar & Freedman
John Peterson, Atlantic County
Robert Brewer, Cumberland County
Alicia Tillett, Cumberland County
Lawrence Cullari, FHWA
Dennis Merida, FHWA
James Carey, Governor's Office
John Petersack, NJDOT
Brian Wahler, NJ Turnpike Authority
Gene Wilk, NJ Turnpike Authority
Kelvin MacKavanagh, NJ Short Line RR Association
Joseph Orth, Schoor DePalma
Timothy Chelius, SJTPO
Monica LoGuidice, SJTPO
Teresa Thomas, SJTPO
Lester Varga, SJTPO

REORGANIZATION

1. Report of the Nominating Committee

Executive Director Chelius reported that the Nominating Committee recommends Freeholder Director Beyel as Chairman, Freeholder Vice Chairman Russo as Vice Chairman, and Freeholder Sullivan as Secretary/Treasurer. Mr. Chelius informed the Board that Freeholder Sullivan was hospitalized, and he asked Freeholder Director Rainer to act as Secretary/Treasurer on an as needed basis until Mr. Sullivan's return, and Mr. Rainer agreed. With no additional nominations, **On Motion** by Mayor Desiderio and seconded by Committeeman Ridgway, the report of the Nominating Committee was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

2. Election of Officers

On Motion by Mayor Desiderio and seconded by Committeeman Ridgway, the election of officers was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

3. Resolution 0701-01: Adopting Annual Notice of Schedule of Regular Meetings

On Motion by Mayor Barse and seconded by Dr. Lutin, Resolution 0701-01 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: November 27, 2006

On Motion by Mayor Desiderio and seconded by Committeeman Ridgway, the minutes of November 27, 2006 were approved by roll call vote with an abstention from Freeholder Director Rainer.

COMMUNICATIONS

Executive Director Chelius reported on the condition of Mr. Sullivan, and circulated a get well card for the Board to sign.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Vice Chairman John Peterson reported that at the January 8, 2007 meeting, TAC recommended Board approval of the scheduled action items.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Chairman Beyel thanked the Board for his reelection as Chairman as well as the reelection of the other officers and wished everyone a healthy, happy, and prosperous New Year.

Dennis Merida, NJ Division Administrator, FHWA

Mr. Merida reported that Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administers a "Dave Powell Excellence Award", which is eligible to any agency that works with FHWA. He explained that this award demonstrates a long term commitment to enhancing the partnership with FHWA while achieving quality results for the citizens of New Jersey. Also, the recipient of the award consistently goes the extra mile to enhance the partnership and create quality products. The award can be nominated by any member of FHWA staff, and is voted on by the Leadership Group, which consists of twenty members. Mr. Merida stated that this is the first year the award is being presented to someone outside of NJDOT, and that the award winner was unanimously endorsed.

Mr. Merida then presented the award to Executive Director Chelius by stating that SJTPO was selected from the nominations prepared by the office for its nationwide transportation safety planning effort while continuing coordination with the FHWA, NJDOT, and other transportation partners on key safety issues. In particular, the road safety audit and scan programs and the establishment of the South Jersey Traffic Safety Alliance are recognized as premiere examples of MPO safety actions.

Executive Director Chelius thanked Mr. Merida, stating that his support has been instrumental to SJTPO's success and that the Policy Board deserves the award for their continued support. Chairman Beyel stated that the Board gladly accepts the award and thanked Mr. Merida for FHWA's support.

SOUTH JERSEY TRAFFIC SAFETY ALLIANCE

Teresa Thomas handed out packets to Board members, and reviewed the activities and programs of the South Jersey Traffic Safety Alliance for the last three years, stating that the packets were also provided to all who participated in SJTPO's Federal Certification Review. Announcing the 2007 THINK SAFETY Campaign, Ms. Thomas said that Atlantic and Cape May Counties were on board and that the Committee meeting with representatives from the larger municipalities was scheduled for February 6th. She went on to review the various components, such as posters and banners and the new THINK SAFETY Officer Pilot Program for 4th and 5th graders emphasizing the importance of seat belt use, bike helmet use, and pedestrian safety.

Ms. Thomas reported that she ordered new panels for the SJTSA trailer, which publicizes pedestrian and school bus safety. She noted that the trailer was parked at the Shore Mall in Egg Harbor Township over the holiday and will now be parked in Hamilton Township near the Hess School. She noted that there is a counterfeit ID workshop scheduled for February 2nd for law enforcement, which will help identify counterfeit documents. Ms. Thomas stated that she will be teaching a defensive driving course this week and next for a total of sixty Vineland school district school bus drivers. She also stated that she has a part-time position advertised, and will hopefully have a candidate selected for the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Resolution 0701-02: Approving the FY 2007 CMAQ Project Ranking List

On Motion by Committeeman Ridgway and seconded by Mayor Desiderio, Resolution 0701-02 was opened for discussion. Executive Director Chelius explained that the FY 2007 Congestion Management Air Quality (CMAQ) list consists of projects that reduce air quality emissions. He further explained that the MPO is allotted \$1 million in local federal CMAQ funding per year. With no further comment, Resolution 0701-02 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

2. Resolution 0701-03: Approving the SJTPO FY 2008 Project Pool Ranking for STP-SJ Funded Local Leads

On Motion by Mayor Desiderio and seconded by Mayor Barse, Resolution 0701-03 was opened for discussion. Executive Director Chelius reviewed the projects on the pool list, explaining that the ranking is the first step in the yearly Transportation Improvement Program, and that the FY 2008 would start in October. There is a standard and extensive outreach program with the counties in selecting the projects, and Chelius noted that there is approximately \$9 million available in funding. With no further comment, Resolution 0701-03 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

3. Resolution 0701-04: Approving an Amendment to the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program Adding a New Task 07/411, Off Season Traffic Count Program

On Motion by Mayor Barse and seconded by Freeholder Director Rainear, Resolution 0701-04 was opened for discussion. Les Varga explained that revised traffic count data is necessary for the next SJTPO Travel Demand Model update scheduled for FY 2008. The Off Season Traffic Count Program is estimated to cost \$42,000. With no further comment, Resolution 0701-04 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

4. Resolution 0701-05: Supporting the At-Grade Alternative for the Tuckahoe Road/NJT Bridge Reconstruction Project

On Motion by Mayor Desiderio and seconded by Committeeman Ridgway, Resolution 0701-05 was opened for discussion. Executive Director Chelius explained that the project involves Tuckahoe Road over the Cape May Branch Rail Line in Atlantic County and also serves Cape May County. He added that for many years, both counties and SJTPO have advocated that bridge improvements should not include a full replacement, but rather, to save millions of dollars, it should be an at-grade alternative. NJDOT did advance the project with that alternative for some time. In addition, there are at least 19 grade crossings on the line, which none have gates, and it is primarily a line that serves the electric plant in Cape May County, with very little traffic.

Dr. Lutin stated that NJ Transit owns the line and that they are in favor of replacing the bridge with a grade crossing, however, Conrail has rights to the line, and they have the ability to veto the grade crossing. Dr. Lutin stated that he isn't sure that NJ Transit has the ability to over-ride Conrail's objections. Mr. Chelius added that this is a unique situation in SJTPO history where all the counties, NJDOT, NJ Transit all agree on the same project alternative, and staff recommends that the Policy Board express its opposition to the grade separated scheme. With no further comment, Resolution 0701-05 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

5. Resolution 0701-06: Adopting the SJTPO 2030 Demographic Forecasts of June, 2006

On Motion by Freeholder Director Rainear and seconded by Mayor Desiderio, Resolution 0701-06 was opened for discussion. Les Varga explained that as part of the FY 2006 UPWP, the SJTPO funded an analysis and report to provide population and employment forecasts for the Regional Transportation Plan Update out to the year 2035. Mr. Varga stated that the Center for Regional and Business Research at the Atlantic Cape May Community College was awarded the contract, and submitted their final version of the 2030 Demographic Forecast report. Tables from the report were included in Board packets, which Mr. Varga then reviewed.

Mr. Lewis asked how the pinelands area and the development redevelopment plan have been addressed in the Report, and Mr. Varga explained that he could not, but that he would look into it with the Consultant. Mr. Lewis then suggested an update on his inquiries at a future Board meeting, and he emphasized the importance of the policy goals of the MPO in coordinating transportation and land use. Chairman Beyel commented that he doesn't feel that there will be much of an impact or growth factor because of the restrictions of the Pinelands. Mr. Chelius added that the forecasts are South Jersey generated projections and that they may or may not be consistent with the State estimates. With no further comment, Resolution 0701-06 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

6. Resolution 0701-07: Approving Consultant Selection for the Telephone Opinion Survey

On Motion by Committeeman Ridgway and seconded by Mayor Desiderio, Resolution 0701-07 was opened for discussion. Les Varga explained that in preparation of SJTPO's Regional Transportation Plan, a telephone opinion survey has been recommended, which can be a valuable means of obtaining information from users of the system and modes in the SJTPO region. He further explained that in order for the results of a telephone survey to be legitimate, it must be based on a statistically valid sample, and the questionnaire must be prepared in such a way that bias is minimized.

The Notice of Availability was sent to approximately 140 firms, and two proposals were received. After review, the Consultant Selection Committee recommended the firm of Widener-Burrows & Associates, Inc. (WB & A) of Crofton, Maryland in association with Tarus Market Research of Old Bridge, NJ for a total cost of \$39,867.93 and a 15.1 percent DBE/ESBE. With no further comment, Resolution 0701-07 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

7. Resolution 0701-08: Approving Consultant Selection for the FY 2007 Seat Belt Survey

On Motion by Committeeman Ridgway and seconded by Kathleen Aufschnieder, Resolution 0701-08 was opened for discussion. Teresa Thomas reported that the Notice of Availability was sent to approximately 140 firms and two proposals were received. The Consultant Selection Committee, consisting of the SJTSA Chairman and Vice Chairman, NJDOT, SJTPO, and SJTSA staff, unanimously recommended the selection of A-Tech Engineering, Inc. in association with Orth-Rodgers & Associates. The FY 2007 proposal includes observing front seat passengers along with drivers and their cell phone use. It also includes a short survey for those existing shopping centers to try and ascertain why people do and don't wear a seat belt. A-Tech Engineering conducted the FY 2006 Seat Belt Survey. The project fee is \$50,000.00 with a 51 percent DBE allocation. With no further comment, Resolution 0701-08 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Executive Director Chelius emphasized that one of SJTPO's responsibilities as regional planners in maintaining the Regional Transportation Plan is to collect data that supports the planning efforts. He noted that not many MPO's conduct seat belt surveys.

8. Resolution 0701-09: Approving Consultant Selection for the FY 2007 Off Season Traffic Count Program

On Motion by Freeholder Director Rainear and seconded by Mayor Barse, Resolution 0701-09 was opened for discussion. Les Varga explained that both the Phase II portion of the SJTPO Congestion Management System (2003), and the SJTPO Travel Demand Model Update (2005), recommend that approximately ninety traffic count locations be done twice in order to reflect seasonality. The Notice of Availability was sent to approximately 140 firms, and four proposals were received. The Consultant Selection Committee consisting of Atlantic County, Cumberland County, NJDOT and SJTPO unanimously recommended A-Tech Engineering, Inc. for a total cost of \$41,653.36 with a 100 percent DBE allocation. With no further comment, Resolution 0701-09 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

9. Resolution 0701-10: Recognizing the Services of James Rocco

On Motion by Freeholder Director Rainear and seconded by Mayor Barse, Resolution 0701-10 was opened for discussion. Executive Director Chelius explained that Mr. Rocco was with the Board for several months and thanked him for his services. With no further comment, Resolution 0701-10 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

10. Resolution 0701-11: Recognizing the Services of Frank Finnerty

On Motion by Committeeman Ridgway and seconded by Freeholder Timberman, Resolution 0701-11 was opened for discussion. Executive Director Chelius explained that Mr. Finnerty was with the Board for a year and thanked him for his services. With no further comment, Resolution 0701-11 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

NJDOT Update: James Lewis, Manager, NJDOT – Bureau of Statewide Planning

Shore Connection Projects: James Lewis summarized the attached Shore Connection Report.

Beesley's Point Bridge: James Lewis stated that he could not comment on the Beesley's Point Bridge because the issue is in litigation. Chairman Beyel commented that he is frustrated because the Board asked Mr. Lewis four months ago to pass along to his superiors that Cape May County was interested in setting up a meeting with the Commissioner, and each month there was never any response. He also stated that because the bridge has been closed for over two and a half years, Cape May County has decided to file suit.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Peterson commented that in response to the Demographic Forecast Report, Atlantic County is in compliance with the projections that were supplied, stating that they meet smart growth and cross acceptance requirements. He stated that the county worked closely with CRBR on the projections.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Approved Minutes Certified Correct:

Douglas M. Rinear for

Freeholder Director Douglas M. Rinear *for*
Charles R. Sullivan, Secretary/Treasurer