



La Crosse Area Planning Committee

*Metropolitan Planning Organization
Serving the La Crosse/La Crescent Urbanized Area*

Tom Faella, Director Jackie Eastwood, Transportation Planner
La Crosse County Administrative Center
400 4th Street North ☎ Room 2300 ☎ La Crosse, WI 54601-3200
Telephone: 608.785.5977 or 608.785.6141 FAX: 608.793.6525

Minutes of LAPC Meeting, July 20, 2011

Minutes of the meeting of the La Crosse Area Planning Committee held on Wednesday, July 20, 2011 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 3220 of the La Crosse County Administrative Center, 400 4th St N, La Crosse.

Members Present: Nancy Proctor, Village of Holmen; Timothy Candahl, Town of Shelby; Roland Bogert, Town of Onalaska; Mike Giese, City of Onalaska; Tara Johnson for Steve Doyle, La Crosse County; Dennis Manthei, Village of West Salem; Mike Poellinger, City of La Crescent. **Members Absent:** Scott Johnson, Town of Campbell; Matt Harter, City of La Crosse; Linda Seidel, Town of Medary. **Others Present:** Don Smith, Paul Wydeven, John Boland, Sue Howe, Larry Kirch, Michael Erickson, Jason Gilman, Steve O'Malley, Tom Faella, and Jackie Eastwood.

Call to Order: Nancy Proctor called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Introductions were done.

1) Approval of Minutes of the June 1, 2011 LAPC Meeting:

Mike Giese motioned to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2011 meeting; Dennis Manthei seconded. All were in favor.

2) Resolution 6 – 2011 Amending the 2011-2014 TIP:

Tom Faella provided a summary of the changes to the TIP to include minor changes to timing and funding for Safe Routes to School, adding several maintenance projects for STH 16, and adding a new project on La Crosse St.

Mike Poellinger motioned to adopt Resolution 6 – 2011 Amending the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program; Timothy Candahl seconded. All were in favor.

3) Resolution 7 - 2011 Establishing a Complete Streets Policy for the LAPC:

Tom Faella stated that the TAC felt it was appropriate for the LAPC to have a general Complete Streets policy for considering all modes in transportation projects.

Mike Poellinger motioned to adopt Resolution 7 – 2011 Establishing a Complete Streets Policy for the LAPC; Tara Johnson seconded. All were in favor.

4) La Crosse County Resolution on General Supervision of the MPO Director:

Nancy Proctor began by saying that the newest members of the board were unaware that Jeff Bluske had been responsible for overseeing the MPO staff as the Director of the Planning, Zoning and Land Information Department. Some members questioned the appropriateness of Mr. Bluske as Tom Faella's supervisor and suggested that the County Administrator supervise Mr. Faella as he does the other department heads.

Mike Poellinger motioned to have the County Administrator provide general supervision of the Executive Director of the LAPC; Mike Giese seconded.

Mike Giese qualified his motion by saying that this is a challenge that faces many levels of government. He's still not comfortable that this is the best system, but that LAPC Policy Board members do not see the day to day working of the MPO staff. Mr. Faella stated that having the MPO under the Planning, Zoning and Land Information Department has worked well because staff have regular interaction and often work on overlapping activities.

With a motion on the table, all were in favor.

5) Update on Dresbach Bridge Bicycle/Pedestrian Accommodations:

Tom Faella began by saying that he has participated in a number of discussions with FHWA and the DOTs regarding bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on the Dresbach Bridge. A public hearing for the environmental analysis

(EA), which is scheduled to be available at the end of July, will occur at the end of August. One of three actions could occur: 1) the project proceeds with a finding of no significant impact (FONSI); 2) the FHWA requires a higher level environmental impact statement (EIS); or, 3) FHWA directs Mn/DOT to provide additional study regarding bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

Don Smith stated that advocates have a burden of proof to demonstrate a need for a facility; to have a viable route that connects Wisconsin and Minnesota along the I-90 corridor, including the ability to make connections with logical termini; and, to show that the EA has not adequately considered the provision of bicycle/pedestrian accommodations. Don continued by listing a number of requests of the Board:

- 1) Donate money to help pay for advocacy activities, including attorney fees;
- 2) Sanction their group to speak for the LAPC in this matter;
- 3) Consider removing the project from the TIP;
- 4) Identify experts for testimony on the EA;
- 5) Provide full dedication of the LAPC staff; and,
- 6) Provide dedication of the officials and communities for a public presence at the hearing.

Nancy Proctor disagreed with pulling staff off of current projects. Dennis Manthei agreed. Ms. Proctor continued, stating that it was not the policy of the Board to allow someone outside of the LAPC to speak for them. Don Smith responded that LAPC staff is not present at all interactions and meetings. Larry Kirch asked that LAPC staff help out during the next six weeks while they need additional resources.

Mike Giese stated that the LAPC has expressed itself as the process has unfolded. The Board recently passed a resolution and held a hearing with Mn/DOT and WisDOT present. While he endorses the facility and is sympathetic to their task, he questioned some of the statements in a position paper from the Minnesota FHWA and would like more information. All of the members present agreed.

Larry Kirch asked that the BPAC and the LAPC provide formal comment on the EA as Mn/DOT has to respond to all substantive comments.

Tara Johnson asked that the Board meet as soon as possible to discuss options for how to make formal comment, for funding an attorney, for devoting staff time to the effort, and for other actions.

Mike Giese motioned that the Board direct the Chair to call an additional meeting in August as soon as possible; Tara Johnson seconded; Mike Poellinger excused. All were in favor.

6) Amtrak Feasibility Study for Second Empire Builder Train:

Tom Faella stated that he would be participating in a study that would determine the feasibility of providing two round-trip Amtrak trains per day instead of the current one round-trip train per day. Nancy Proctor asked Mr. Faella to draft a letter of support.

7) 2011 Annual MPO / DOT / RPC Conference:

Tom Faella invited everyone to attend the annual MPO/DOT/RPC conference scheduled for August 23-25 at the Radisson. The MPOs take turns hosting the annual conferences and this year is the LAPC's year to host.

8) HUD FY2011 Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program:

Tom Faella informed everyone of a grant opportunity from HUD that promotes sustainability in communities. The grant requires applicants to be a consortium of agencies and entities. The LAPC could become a member of that consortium.

Dennis Manthei motioned to recommend that the LAPC participate as a member of the sustainable communities' consortium if/when one is created; Tara Johnson seconded; Mike Poellinger excused. All were in favor.

9) State and Federal Project Selection Process:

Paul Wydeven presented on the transportation programs WisDOT manages and on how they determine projects to program. Criteria for identifying projects include safety (5-year crash study), pavement condition, structure, and mobility. Municipalities can request a higher level project (non-maintenance) on connecting highway by writing a letter to Karen Olson at WisDOT

10) Other business; Director's report; Adjourn; Next meeting to be announced:
Policy board members will be polled as to their availability for an August meeting.

Timothy Candahl motioned to adjourn at 6:25 p.m.; Mike Giese seconded. Mike Poelinger and Dennis Manthei excused. All were in favor.