



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

November 2, 2006

The meeting was called to order by Chair Solowczuk at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Administration Building, 220 North Main Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Bergman, Grewal, Gunn, Irwin, Kern, Ouimet, Prater, Sizemore, Smith and Solowczuk

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comm. Peterson

OTHERS PRESENT: Bob Guenzel, County Administrator; David Behen, Dale Vanderford, Ken Schrader, Information Technology; Verna McDaniel, Human Resources; Donna Sabourin, Community Support and Treatment Services; Scott Patton, Community Development; Gordon Burger, Budget; Patricia Denig, Jason Kaplan, Planning and Environment; Fred Veigel, David Rutledge, Steve Purri, Road Commission; Kerry Sheldon, Administration, Stephen Kirschner, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

George Shimell addressed the board on the East Delhi Bridge. He stated that this is not a high traffic road and that federal funding could be applied to the rehabilitation of this historic bridge.

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizen Participation

None.

Discussion Items

Road Commission – East Delhi Bridge Conversation

Comm. Solowczuk commented that because of the citizen interest on the East Delhi Bridge, the Board has asked the Road Commission to come and speak to the board about it.

David Rutledge addressed the board on the Road Commissions actions and reasons behind their actions on the East Delhi Bridge. He noted the options of moving the bridge, or widening it while still preserving it. He commented that the safety of the bridge could be increased by widening the deck.

David Rutledge and Steve Purri presented a PowerPoint to the commissioners. David Rutledge offered a compromised solution that would replicate and relocate the bridge.

Comm. Gunn asked why a one lane renovated bridge would have to have a traffic light. Steve Purri responded. Comm. Gunn asked why Foster Bridge does not have a traffic light, but East Delhi would have to. Steve Purri responded that it is related to the cost to meet the federal requirements. Comm. Gunn asked what would happen if this bridge became a pedestrian only path. Steve Purri responded that this would create a long dead end, trapping home owners at one end of a road.

Comm. Ouimet stated that the only time he has heard support for any option other than rehab is from the Road Commission. He asked to know what citizen input was used to come to the conclusion the solution has to be something other than rehab of the bridge. Steve Purri commented that they certainly took in citizen input, but they felt

the only way they could meet state requirements were through the options they presented. He agreed that there is compelling reasons to renovate, but the other concerns outweigh the rehab. David Rutledge added that this issue comes down to how to make policy, and whether policy should be made by the loudest voice.

Comm. Irwin stated that he was please to hear Mr. Rutledge commenting on the scenic beauty of that particular location. Comm. Irwin asked how the footings would be dealt with in the presented scenarios, and how that would impact the river. Steve Purri responded that they would not touch the bottom of the river, but the abutments would have to be taken out and concrete abutments installed. Comm. Irwin asked if heavy equipment would have to be brought in. Steve Purri responded. Comm. Solowczuk pointed out that reconstruction or rehabilitation would require the abutments to have to be replaced. Comm. Irwin asked if there is a difference in the environmental assessment between reconstruction and rehabilitation. Steve Purri stated that their environmental assessment is not completed in this regard. Comm. Irwin commented that often, citizen groups can require more extensive environmental standards to be complied with that can cause the cost of a project to be much higher than anticipated. David Rutledge stated that they have an opportunity to be sensitive to the environment and make the situation better for the next 100 years. Comm. Irwin asked about the funding of this bridge. Steve Purri responded. Comm. Irwin asked for clarification on the requirement for traffic lights. Steve Purri replied that the federal government did not require traffic lights, but did require traffic control devices. He stated that their engineers indicated traffic lights to be the best options. Comm. Irwin asked about other traffic strategies that do not involve lights. Steve Purri responded.

Comm. Bergman asked if the environmental impact study incorporated the pollution from the increased traffic. She stated that the maintenance fee is the price to be paid for the scenery. She stated that she hopes they can renovate the bridge.

Comm. Kern thanked the Road Commission for coming this evening. She asked if the bridge could be renovated to bear a full fire truck compliment. Steve Purri responded affirmatively. Comm. Kern asked whether their renovation plan meets historical renovation standards. Steve Purri replied that the historical standards have not been incorporated.

Comm. Smith stated that he is disappointed that the road commission appears to just not want to rehab the bridge. David Rutledge commented on the Road Commission's obligation to the traveling public, the broader constituency than the residential constituency. Comm. Smith stated that they are deferring to the unheard voice. He discussed preserving the character of the bridge that is the priority of the Road Commission, noting that there have been no injuries on the bridge. He stated that major issue in front of the Road Commission is one of creativity. He suggested creating partnerships to help pay for the maintenance of the bridge.

Comm. Sizemore asked if park use is down since the bridge has closed. He asked if bridge closure has affected the school buses. Steve Purri responded that the buses had to change their routes before the bridge was actually closed. Comm. Sizemore asked if the residents are working to secure funding for rehab. Steve Purri stated that the citizens have not yet, but are working on it. He added that the township is discussing creating a special assessment district as well. Comm. Sizemore asked about the historic sensitivity. David Rutledge responded that they would be sensitive to the historical and environmental context of the bridge. Comm. Sizemore suggested making it permanent pedestrian and turning over responsibility to another entity. David Rutledge assured the commission that they would do their best to resolve this situation amicably.

Comm. Ouimet commented on the safety concern over Delhi Bridge being one lane, saying that he has never seen a problem of right of way at the one lane Foster Bridge. He asked if they know of any traffic incidents at that bridge. Steve Purri responded negatively.

Comm. Smith praised the Road Commission for their cost sharing methodology generosity. Steve Purri explained their cost sharing methodology. Comm. Smith stated that he is interested in creative ways to finance this project. He asked if the road commission would consider fronting the money to Scio Township and instituting a pay back program. David Rutledge responded that this is a realm of possibility.

Comm. Solowczuk thanked David Rutledge, Steve Purri and Fred Veigel for coming the meeting.

Space Plan – Review of Options and Recommendations

Bob Guenzel presented on the space plan. Gordon Burger distributed information on Funding Sources and the bond debt service schedule.

Comm. Smith asked about the interest and principle payments. Bob responded, noting that this is dependant on the bid.

Comm. Kern asked if there was more information on the number of beds the Sequential Intercept program would free up. Donna Sabourin responded that they are gathering this information. Comm. Kern asked if there are similar other program in Michigan to gather estimates. Ms. Sabourin responded that there are none in Michigan, but others out of state that they do look at.

Comm. Smith asked for an explanation of the funding sources capital reserves. Gordon Burger explained this handout.

County Administrator Report

None.

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Solowczuk informed the board that the November 16th Working Session has been cancelled. He noted that this is his last time to Chair the Working Session and thanked the board for letting him serve in this position.

Pending

- Nov. 15 (WM) Space Plan – Funding Recommendations
- Nov. 16 Space Plan – Discussion of Recommendations
- Dec. 3 (BD) Adopt Funding Mechanism for Next Phase of Space Plan

Status of Annual Activities/Goals

No report.

Citizen Participation

Charles Neilson commented on the road commissions comments during the meeting. _He stated that the road commission simply does not want to rehab the bridge. _He informed the board that Scio Township had a meeting with the conservancy and citizen groups to discuss how to preserve the bridge that left the participants with a strong plan to accomplish this.

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None.

Adjournment

Comm. Prater seconded by Comm. Irwin moved that the meeting be adjourned at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Washtenaw County Administration Building. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Stephen Solowczuk, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register
By: Stephen Kirschner, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: