



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

April 7, 2011

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Judge, Peterson, Ping, Prater, Rabhi, and Dan Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Bergman, Gunn, Sizemore, Conan Smith, and Turner

OTHERS PRESENT: Verna McDaniel, County Administrator; Bob Tetens, Parks and Recreation; Ken Schrader, ITS; Jason Brooks, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizen Participation

None

Discussion Items:

Discussion on Transportation

The transportation presentation was given by Terri Blackmore, Washtenaw Area Transportation Study and Michael Benham, Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (on file in County Clerk's office).

Comm. Prater asked which models were used to generate projections. Benham reported that the models that have been used are imperfect and added that they are often all that is available to obtain federal dollars. He added that one of the key elements of the plan will be flexibility to avoid being boxed in.

Comm. Judge stated that she appreciates the presentation. She stated that Washtenaw County does not need the Smart Growth plan. Comm. Judge stated that areas like Washtenaw County need to be compared. She added that everyone would be hurt if too much of a financial burden is put on the residents. Comm. Judge stated that she would like to see University of Michigan staff living in Livingston County addressed in the plan. She added that Smart Growth costs need to be discussed with the public. Benham stated that AATA is trying to frame this plan as a proposal to the public. He added that there will be an opportunity for discussion and revisions.

Comm. Rabhi stated that this is just a proposal and added that there will be an entity representing each part of the County making the decision in the end. He added that the University of Michigan needs to be at the table.

Comm. Prater stated that it was reported that the AATA chose the Smart Growth Plan over the others. Benham reported that the AATA chose the Smart Growth Plan to be a part of the overall plan. Comm. Rabhi stated that the AATA is only one entity that will be involved.

Comm. Ping asked what would happen if other parts of the County decide to levy a dedicated millage. Blackmore stated that seats would then have to be added. Comm. Ping asked what would happen if voters in communities with dedicated millages decide to vote down those millages. Blackmore stated that it would cut service and added that those communities would then lose seats.

Comm. Ping asked if meetings have taken place with everyone at this point. Blackmore stated that some local municipalities have been given presentations and added that she is working on getting out to everyone.

Comm. Judge asked if a vote needs to be taken by the Board of Commissioners before any tax can be levied. Blackmore reported that this is the case.

Comm. Prater stated that he is surprised that this has gone forward without knowledge of some members of the County Board of Commissioners. He added that the model being used by the Grand Rapids area needs to be studied.

Comm. Peterson stated that he has been briefed by some members of AATA and added that he has not yet seen the documents in front of him. He added that he would like to see one on one meetings take place with commissioners that have concerns. Comm. Peterson stated that he has been an advocate for countywide transit but added that these are tough economic times. He added that he is an advocate for the eastern part of the County. Comm. Peterson stated that he feels that these issues can be worked out. He added that this if the first progressive plan put together so swiftly. Comm. Peterson stated that barriers have been torn down. He added that the concept moving forward can still be changed. He reported that this is one of the best concept proposals that he has seen to this point. Comm. Peterson stated that he shares the concern about board membership and the amount of the levy.

Comm. Rabhi stated that this is a good conversation and added that the presenters are certainly here to take notes this evening.

Comm. Dan Smith stated that this is not a major metropolitan area. He added that society has been based on roads and cars. Comm. Dan Smith stated that he is unsure that something like this can work without some of those societal changes. He asked how widely Act 196 is used in Michigan. Blackmore reported that there are a handful of communities using it at this point. Comm. Dan Smith asked if there is a way to get another bill passed to operate under the auspices of another entity.

Comm. Prater stated that he supports local transportation when a local community chooses to have it. He added that the Ypsilanti Area and the City of Ann Arbor could get together and form an entity under Act 196.

Comm. Judge stated that she has been a part of the plan but not a part of the discussion presented in these documents. She added that she has a problem with the City of Ann Arbor having so many seats and the implementation.

Comm. Rabhi stated that he would encourage one on one commissioner meetings with WATS and the AATA.

Comm. Peterson stated that he feels AATA was trying to be as up front as possible on the potential make up of a board. He added that there should be an opportunity for WATS and the AATA to come back and present to the Board after one on one discussions take place with commissioners and local communities. He added that he would like the Chair to facilitate these meetings. Comm. Peterson stated that two meetings would be best.

Comm. Rabhi stated that transportation is an important issue for him. He added that he appreciates the fact that the presenters will be coming back with more information. Comm. Rabhi stated that he would recommend continued meetings with elected officials.

Comm. Peterson stated that any communication on this should be shared with all commissioners and added that another meeting should be scheduled soon.

County Administrator's Report

None

Items for Current/Future Discussion

None

Pending

None

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Prater moved that the meeting be adjourned until April 21st, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.
Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Yousef Rabhi, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: