



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

June 2, 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. Bergman, Gunn, Peterson, Prater, Rabhi, Sizemore, Dan Smith, and Turner

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Judge, Ping, and Conan Smith

OTHERS PRESENT: Verna McDaniel, County Administrator; Tony VanDerworp, Anya Dale, Economic Development and Energy; Ken Schrader, ITS; Cheryl Perry, County Administration; 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:

Washtenaw Corridor Project – *Economic Development and Energy Project Manager Anya Dale*

(Presentation on file in County Clerk's office)

The Washtenaw Corridor Project was presented by Anya Dale, Economic Development and Energy (on file in County Clerk's office). The Project Summary and Implementation Schedule are also on file in County Clerk's office.

Comm. Bergman asked what the funding source is for this project at present. Dale reported that the County has allocated about 1/3 of her time along with communities that are each allocating a staff member. She added that some small grants have come in to do some of the planning work. Comm. Bergman asked what else may be needed from the Board. Dale reported that the communities have many tools needed. She added that it is essential that someone continues staffing the project to keep the conversation moving. Dale reported that getting grants could also open up additional possibilities.

Comm. Gunn stated that Dale will be missed. She asked if the TIF capture covers just the millage of cities/townships or if it covers other jurisdictions like the County, library, and community college, and if so do those bodies have to approve the capture. Dale reported that it is each of the jurisdictions and added that she does not believe that the schools are included in this one. She added that the capture does not have to be 100%.

Tony Derezinski, Ann Arbor City Council, stated that this project is very important. He added that the City passed a resolution of intent to look at this project. He added that the City Planning Commission decided two years ago that transportation corridors were incredibly timely and important. Derezinski reported that the focus at the City retreat was a focus on regional planning. He stated that a community crawl was held at the retreat. He added that this is an exciting year of collaboration and stated that this has a great chance to succeed. Derezinski reported that this plan ties in with the AATA plan.

Brenda Stumbo, Ypsilanti Township Supervisor, stated that this is an opportunity for economic development. She added that this is an opportunity to knock down the barrier between the two sides of the County.

Stumbo stated that young people want a transit system to get back and forth. She added that the tax base is stabilizing and will not be noticed as much as the economy begins to improve. Stumbo reported that Ypsilanti Township has adopted a resolution in support of this project.

Larry Krieg, Ypsilanti Township Planning Commission, stated that he is interested in the future of the community. He added that he is concerned about keeping a community to allow his children and grandchildren to grow and prosper. Krieg stated that he is proud that this project pulls everyone up by their own bootstraps. He added that he is enthusiastic about being involved.

Comm. Rabhi stated that people of all ages want to move somewhere with a challenge to make things better. He stated young people want to improve the community that they live in and added that this is a great opportunity.

Comm. Dan Smith asked where some of the brownfields are along this corridor. Dale reported that gas stations along Washtenaw are potential brownfields. She reported *6:12:45*. Comm. Dan Smith asked if the County could be asked to join the CIA at some point. Dale stated that part of the legislation change looks at the makeup of this body. She added that the current legislation does not lay out the proper seating and added that the language would allow for a County seat. Comm. Dan Smith stated that TIF's have some benefits and added that they also have some short term downsides. Comm. Rabhi stated that he hopes to discuss TIF's at a Working Session sometime soon.

Comm. Peterson stated that the economic aspect of this project is worth discussing. He added that all involved are worthy of being commended for work on this project. Comm. Peterson asked if legislation changes are needed in order to move the project forward. Dale reported that the Authority is one of the implementation tools available. She added that legislation is being waited for at this point. Dale reported that there are other pieces of the project such as master plan updates that are being worked on in the mean time. Comm. Peterson asked how the plan is moving forward with the departure of Dale. VanDerworp stated that this move is in discussion. He reported that the EDE Department is going through reorganization. VanDerworp added that if a grant comes through than staff can be provided. He stated that meetings will take place with the partners on ways that the partners can move forward. Comm. Peterson reported that economic development cannot be buried in a human services department. Comm. Peterson stated that he would like to see an additional meeting to follow up on legislation and follow up on the plan and the operations of this project. He added that economic development is a major interest of the Board. Comm. Rabhi stated that he would like to work with VanDerworp to schedule an update on this project.

Comm. Prater asked if a timeline has been established for the master planning to be completed. Dale reported that many of the jurisdictions are currently working on the master planning. Comm. Prater asked if funding will be passed along to the County or to communities if the grant application is not approved. Dale reported that many communities have prioritized doing project such as this as they can find funding. Comm. Rabhi thanked all who attended and Anya Dale for the work she has done for the County.

Transit Master Plan for Washtenaw County – *Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA)*

Michael Ford, Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, presented the Transit Master Plan for Washtenaw County (on file in County Clerk's office). Jesse Bernstein, Chair, AATA Board was also present.

Comm. Dan Smith thanked the AATA for their effort in this process. He stated that the County playing a catalyst fits in well with one of the themes coming out of the Board retreat. Comm. Dan Smith asked if local jurisdictions can make their own decisions on developing individual Act 7 partnerships. Ford reported that it does come down to what local communities want. He added that he is just trying to facilitate discussion.

Comm. Turner asked why the County should do the filing of the Articles of Incorporation and asked what the relationship would be going forward. Ford reported that the filing is done more easily by the County than by all of the local groups. He added that he sees the County participation over at the point of filing the Articles. Comm. Turner asked how smaller groups would affect representation on the governance board. Ford reported that he has not yet been faced with this situation.

Comm. Turner asked what happens after the 30 day opt out period if a community would like to opt out. Ford reported that there would be five year increments that would allow for an opt out once every five years.

Comm. Rabhi stated that the five year period is with an assumption that Act 196 passes a five year millage and added that it is only for the period of the millage that the jurisdictions that are a part of the authority would need to pay that millage until they could opt out. He asked what would happen to the structure if Salem Township does not participate. Ford stated that this can be addressed between communities in that area through their own Act 7 agreement.

Comm. Prater asked if Ford wants the Board to approve the structure under Act 196 rather than the AATA approving it. Ford reported that moving forward without Board of Commissioners involvement is an option. Comm. Prater asked if the County would have to accept bylaws and governance in the process of incorporating. Ford stated that the group would bring the Articles of Incorporation and added that he sees the bylaws being worked out separately. Comm. Prater asked how responsibility can be shed after these bodies are created. Ford reported that this will be a transit authority under Act 196. Comm. Prater stated that the proposed structure is for the 7 member AATA Board with districts drawn to represent 1/3 of the population with 8 people representing 2/3 of the population. Ford stated that the AATA has checked with its attorney and stated that the process has been legally sound. Comm. Prater added that he is upset by the makeup of the governance board. He stated that he is concerned that the County is taking every unit of government and putting them under the authority if they do not opt out within 30 days. Bernstein reported that the core questions have been raised. He added that he does not see this plan being set in stone. Bernstein stated that the question of how many people come from Ann Arbor is open in his mind. He added that this is being recommended as a point to begin discussion. Comm. Prater stated that the Acts of Incorporation and Bylaws questions would have to be answered before he could begin to think about supporting it. He added that he is cautious about approving anything that would put a tax levy on every resident in the County. Bernstein stated that the rural communities were responsive to aging in place services and land use. Comm. Prater asked if the funding was mentioned at those meetings. Bernstein reported that the communities asked to see the plan. Comm. Prater stated that he does not feel that the governance structure is right long term. He added that they are already in trouble if the governance structure is not right. Comm. Rabhi stated that he would like to see these materials presented to the Board of Commissioners.

Comm. Gunn asked if each jurisdiction will vote on whether they want to be taxed. Ford reported that this is correct. Comm. Gunn asked if the two mills will be retained in the City of Ann Arbor. Bernstein reported that he is open to whatever makes the most sense going forward. He added that he has heard that it needs to be equal across the board and has heard that it could be a transit-wide millage on top of the other. Comm. Gunn asked how much money Ann Arbor has put into AATA. Ford reported that \$179 million has been put into place. Comm. Gunn reported that federal money could not have been provided without this investment.

Comm. Rabhi stated that the structure should be rethought if Ann Arbor is not going to be paying those additional two mills. He added that he would like to keep those two mills in place to see the improvements that could come forward.

Comm. Peterson stated that this has been a long time coming. He added that this should have been done in good times. Comm. Peterson stated that he would like to see this informal board be brought in on an informal basis to be a part of the process. Bernstein reported that the next step is to start pulling together with representatives so that everyone can be at the table. Comm. Peterson stated that he is glad other communities are being asked to participate. Bernstein reported that the AATA will continue operating this system under the Act 55 charter and will begin to start meetings with the people mentioned and with the rest of the folks around the County.

Comm. Bergman stated that she supports what is being done and added that she wants to retain the tax in Ann Arbor.

County Administrator's Report

None

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Rabhi reported that the Recycling Authority for Washtenaw County will be discussed July 7th along with some WCHO budget issues. He added that budget related issues will be discussed at the June 16th Working Session.

Pending

None

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Bergman moved that the meeting be adjourned until June 16th, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Yousef Rabhi, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: