

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

FREEHOLD · NEW JERSEY

PAUL KIERNAN, Jr.
Acting Chairman



EDWARD SAMPSON, PP, AICP
Director of Planning

Minutes for the Meeting of the
Monmouth County Transportation Council
Tuesday, March 8, 2016
Monmouth County Planning Board
One East Main Street
Hall of Records Annex Building, 2nd Floor
Freehold, NJ 07728

I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 PM

II. ATTENDANCE – ROLL CALL

Members Present

Long, Dina
Thomson, Edmund
Frost, Barry
Nelson, Eric
Vernick, Jeff
Hennessy, Thom
VanNortwick, Peter
Burke, Tom
Garaguso, Anthony
Grbelja, Nancy

Staff Present

Gamallo, Anthony
James Bonanno – Staff Advisor

Members Excused

Doyle, Peter
Barrett, Betsy

III. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Approval of the January 12, 2016 minutes was sought by Chairman Nelson. Mr. Hennessy motioned to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Vernick and with the exception of Ms. Grbelja, Ms. Long, Mr. Garaguso, and Mr. Thomson who abstained; the minutes were accepted by the council.

IV. PRESENTATION

NJTPA Street Smart Safety Campaign:

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

FREEHOLD · NEW JERSEY

PAUL KIERNAN, Jr.
Acting Chairman



EDWARD SAMPSON, PP, AICP
Director of Planning

Mr. Nelson introduced Dave Schmetterer and Keith Hamas from NJTPA and their presentation on the Street Smart Campaign taking place in Red Bank this upcoming summer. Keith Hamas began the presentation by introducing the background and overview of the Street Smart program. Dave Schmetterer then moved the presentation along by explaining crash statistics justifying the need for this program as well as the improvements the first round of this program has achieved. After presenting the goals and strategies of The Street Smart Program, the NJTPA staff asked for the Transportation Council's help through communication support, identifying champions or future communities, and participating in outreach. Specifically emphasized was their need of volunteers to perform outreach and influential local champions who can help make a large impact on the community involved in the program. Before leaving Schmetterer and Hamas distributed sample pamphlets that volunteers will be handing out in Red Bank as part of the Street Smart Program.

V. NEW BUSINESS

New Members:

The Transportation Council welcomed two new members; the former Mayor of Wall Township Edmund Thomson and the current Mayor of Sea Bright Dina Long.

MCTC Meeting Calendar Adjustments:

The council made several adjustments to its meeting calendar. Due to a scheduling conflict with Yom Kippur, the council discussed consolidating the October and November meeting into a single meeting to be held on October 25th. Additionally Mr. Gamallo introduced the Planning Board's plans to hold a Master Plan Workshop with the public and their desired meeting date of May 10th which conflicts with the Transportation council's schedule May meeting. The council then discussed changing the location of its scheduled May 10th meeting from the Hall of Records Annex Building to the location of the Master Plan Workshop (to be determined at a later time) so the council can take part in the workshop, experience other sections of the Master Plan and see how they relate to the County's transportation network, and interact with the public about their interpretations of the transportation portion of the Master Plan.

Mr. Thomson motioned to consolidate the October and November 2016 meetings into one to be held on October 25th and to change the meeting place of the council's scheduled May 10th to the location of the Master Plan Workshop (to be determined at a later date). Mr. Garaguso seconded the motion, which was then unanimously accepted by the council.

NJ TRANSIT Removing bus Information Signs:

Mr. Nelson and Mr. Vernick informed the council that NJ TRANSIT is presently having its maintenance staff remove rear facing electronic route number signs from approximately 150 newly purchases Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses (Vehicle Numbers 7218-7365) and 18 former NY MTA buses (Vehicle Numbers 7101-7118) assigned to Howell Garage serving Monmouth County routes and customer. Because NJ TRANSIT was actively removing these signs, the council's Executive Committee took action to contact NJ TRANSIT and inquire why the agency is spending money to remove brand new working signs that provide beneficial information to transit users. NJ TRANSIT responded that this action is consistent with a standing policy that began in 2001 to keep uniformity in their Cruiser model bus fleet. Because Cruiser model buses used on commuter routes are not equipped with this signage the decision was made to remove these signs on the newly delivered buses to keep the bus fleet consistent for maintenance purposes.

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

FREEHOLD · NEW JERSEY

PAUL KIERNAN, Jr.
Acting Chairman



EDWARD SAMPSON, PP, AICP
Director of Planning

The council discussed a number of concerns and raises the following questions and comments regarding this seemingly unnecessary action:

- Rear route number signs help riders approaching buses from the rear to find and board their bus more quickly at busy stops and terminals serving multiple routes. Did NJ TRANSIT ask customers and rider representative groups (including the statutorily mandated NJ TRANSIT North/South Jersey Transit Advisory Councils) whether they prefer to have the signs removed? The council believes removing them reduces information availability, increases delay and makes trip quality worse for customers.
- Why did NJ TRANSIT identify removal as a priority vs. other critical maintenance and service improvement needs such as cleaning and repair, adding additional trips or expanding service hours that improve service reliability and customer satisfaction? How are decisions like this affecting customers being evaluated by NJ TRANSIT and where is transparency in this process? Is NJ TRANSIT doing enough to systematically engage rider groups and government transportation committees on an ongoing basis regarding decisions impacting customers?
- How much is this effort costing both in actual dollars and in deferred time needed for more essential vehicle repairs?
- Given that NJ TRANSIT riders just received a 9% fare increase last year why is NJ TRANSIT spending to remove signs that were just paid for in their new bus order? If the buses (and signs) are under warranty, wouldn't the signs be covered for repair if they were to break? Even after warranty, wouldn't it be possible to continue to operate these signs until they have broken and then remove them?

The council requested that staff bring these concerns to the attention of the Monmouth County Planning Board for further consideration. Mr. Gamallo added that he spoke with his supervisors about what actions could be taken on this issue. He was directed that the council may educate people on this issue and voice their opinion on the matter. It was agreed that the discussion had by the council on this issue should be recounted to The Planning Board and a recommendation be made for the Planning Board to take action.

Bylaws Review:

At the January Re-organization meeting the Transportation Council approved modifications to the structure of the council's liaison and representative programs which needed to be reflected in the council by-laws. Mr. Vernick asked staff whether the adjustments required an amendment of the council's establishing resolution or could be made at the discretion of the council. Staff advised that the council had the authority to make the changes. Mr. Bonanno provided each member with a copy of the revised by-laws to include the changes discussed in the January re-organization meeting. After quickly reviewing the changes made, Ms. Grbelja moved to accept the revised by-laws. The motion was seconded by Mr. Burke and unanimously accepted by the council.

In January the council had also decided to review section 8.4 of the Master Plan. Mr. Nelson asked if anyone had any recommendation or questions pertaining to this section. No questions or recommendation were put forward at this time.

VI. REPORT OF STAFF

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

FREEHOLD · NEW JERSEY

PAUL KIERNAN, Jr.
Acting Chairman



EDWARD SAMPSON, PP, AICP
Director of Planning

Mr. Bonanno presented council members with their new assigned liaison municipalities and representative positions. Each member was provided with a list of their assignments as well as the assignments of all other members.

Mr. Bonanno then briefed the council about the possibility of a strike by NJ TRANSIT rail workers beginning March 13th. In the event of a strike NJ TRANSIT would put into effect a contingency plan that would create several temporary park-and-rides that would be serviced by local bus operators and NJ TRANSIT. These park and rides would be located at: MetLife Stadium, PNC Bank Arts Center, Hamilton Rail Station, and Ramsey/Route 17 Rail Station.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were received from the public.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next public Monmouth County Transportation Council meeting – 7:00PM Tuesday, April 12, 2016 at the Monmouth County Department of Engineering Conference Room at 1 East Main Street, 3rd Floor, Freehold, NJ 07728

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion to adjourn the meeting by Ms. Grbelja and seconded by Mr. Thomson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30PM.