

**ISLAND TRANSPORTATION & PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING  
CITY OF ANNA MARIA  
FEBRUARY 21, 2006  
3:30 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

**ROLL CALL**

Mayor Carol Whitmore (Holmes Beach), Mayor SueLynn (Anna Maria), Mayor John Chappie (Bradenton Beach), Michael Howe (Executive Director of the Sarasota / Manatee MPO)

**Also present:** Robert Herrington (MPO Planning Manager), Forrest Bogart (CAC Representative)

**Press:** Sun, Islander

Mayor SueLynn opened the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes dated October 17, 2005 were unanimously approved, the motion having been made by Bradenton Beach Mayor John Chappie and seconded by Michael Howe.

**MPO / MEMBER UPDATES**

**a. Bridge Opening / Coast Guard – (M. Howe)**

Mr. Howe noted that the request had been for thirty-minute openings, as opposed to twenty-minute intervals, with curfews. He recalled that the public comment period was open, having been published in the register, last year and that the required public meeting was being scheduled for March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2006 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Holmes Beach City Hall. The Coast Guard informed Mr. Howe that this would be an informal opportunity for the public to receive the Coast Guard's opinion, as well as that of those who originally wrote the letter.

Mike Howe noted that the Town of Longboat Key had preliminary discussions, raised by Commissioner Whatmough, at their last meeting, to put a Resolution on their upcoming agenda in support of the letter the three Island mayors had written to the Coast Guard.

Mike Howe said that he would do a generic press release and give the respective mayors copies for posting on their City Hall announcement boards.

Mayor Whitmore noted that on March 29<sup>th</sup> there would be a new mayor in place in Longboat Key.

Mr. Howe said that he got the sense, in communicating with the Coast Guard, that they were of the opinion that the 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. curfew hours were not necessary. He said it appeared they would be willing to listen to the public regarding not having the half-hour opening during the night time hours, in favor of the normal three openings per hour, on demand.

Mayor Whitmore noted that openings on demand still applied for commercial boats.

**b. Interlocal Agreement for the Redesignation of the Sarasota / Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization - Status -- (M. Howe)**

Mike Howe introduced Bob Herrington, newly promoted to the MPO Planner position, and said that Mr. Herrington would be sharing representation of the MPO on the Island with him.

Bob Herrington presented copies of the agreement now in circulation to each municipality for review and signature, and explained the purpose of having each sign fifteen copies of the signature page was so that they would all have original signed [by all cities] copies to keep on file. He noted that the FDOT and MPO legal departments, as well as Longboat Key's legal department, had reviewed the language in the agreement.

Mayor Whitmore said that the earliest she could bring this before her Commission in a month, and that the entire process could take three or four months. She agreed to try and get this done as soon as possible. Mike Howe said that the target date for implementation is July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

Mr. Herrington informed the mayors that when they are prepared to present the agreement to their Commissions, he would welcome contact from them to make himself available to attend the meetings, if desired.

Mike Howe distributed copies of the MPO calendar of meetings for 2006. He noted that recesses were planned for August and December.

Mr. Howe noted that at the last MPO Board Meeting, several letters were authorized which could be of interest to the Island mayors. He mentioned one, examining the respective boundaries of the Southwest Florida Planning Council,

the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, FDOT, and SWFWMD. Mike Howe said the Board examined the recommendations of the writers, but took the position that they would be opposed to any changes in boundaries. He said that their letter was forwarded to the Director of OCONDA, and confirmed to Mayor Whitmore that it would then go before the legislature, if any of the proposed changes were found to have merit. Mr. Howe said he had information that the changes did not have strong support. Mayor Chappie confirmed Mike Howe that representatives in Tallahassee were aware of, and understood the Island mayors' position. Mayor SueLynn asked if this was something the group could add to the Manasota Cities' agenda, and asked Mr. Howe for some bulleted talking points on the subject.

Mike Howe noted that Manatee is part of the Tampa Bay Planning Region, while Sarasota is part of the Southwest Florida Planning Region, and that the proposal was to make Manatee also come under that region.

Mr. Howe advised that the MPO Board, at its last meeting, had authorized a letter sent to Governor and all the legislative delegation for Manatee and Sarasota, written, by Chair Bussel relative to the anticipated revenue surplus of \$3.5 billion, which had been principally generated by the sales tax from the hurricane restoration. Mike Howe reported that the letter supported using a significant portion of the surplus fund for transportation. He said the Governor's budget proposes allocating approximately \$800 million to \$1 billion for transportation, which he saw as a positive indicator.

Mayor John Chappie asked how much of the surplus fund was to be put toward hurricane and disaster preparedness. Mr. Howe responded that he believed the figure would be approximately \$600 - \$700 million. He added that a considerable amount of debate continued on the subject.

Mayor Carol Whitmore confirmed that Joe McClash had been nominated, without a second, for the position of Chair of the MPO, even though Bussel was supposed to be the Chairperson, and ultimately took the position. Mr. Howe informed the group, in response to another question from Mayor Whitmore, that Commissioner Fred Tower of the City of North Port was serving as Vice-Chair of the MPO.

Mike Howe reminded those present that there had been discussion by FDOT regarding their proposal for the MPO to pass a local agency participation LAP Resolution. He distributed copies to the Island mayors, and indicated that the language says that if money allocated is not utilized and documented, then the funds can be re-allocated to another project.

Mr. Howe recalled that the MPO had sent out a request to each of the member jurisdictions to submit applications for Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) priority projects by the March 20<sup>th</sup>. He said that these were to be

coordinated and negotiated with the Charlotte County Florida MPO, as well as the Polk County TPO, and would affect regional roadways. Mike Howe confirmed with Mayor Carol Whitmore that a small part of Gulf of Mexico Drive in her city was classified as a regional roadway, but would not qualify, as it did not require a major improvement. Mr. Howe said that possibly additional trolley / transit dollars could become available for the Island, and that he would keep the group informed.

Mike Howe said that the MPO's regular priority letter would be sent out within the next couple of weeks. He reminded those present that it pertained to the \$300,000 for the Enhancement Program, and noted that Mayor Chappie had been successful in the past in procuring funds for Bradenton Beach. Mr. Howe reminded those present to fill out the form accompanying the letter they would be receiving, including enhancement or congestion management system projects they would like to submit for prioritization.

Mayor Chappie asked about the status of a possibility that Gulf Drive and the Midnight Pass Bridge could be converted to toll thoroughfares. Mr. Howe responded that prior to the Technical Advisory Meeting, the MPO had met with Longboat Key's Public Works Director and three commissioners from that city. He said that they would like to do some type of study, with the help of FDOT, to look at the origin / destination traffic patterns on the Key. Mike Howe said that progress in this direction could not be funded through FDOT, and that Longboat Key was now consulting with Cutter, a research group of the University of Southern Florida, to examine options for the study. He noted that a study of that nature would cost between \$12 – 15,000, and had yet to hear any confirmation that the city was willing to go ahead using its own funding. Mr. Howe assured Mayor Chappie that FDOT is disinclined to authorize tolls on an existing highway, noting that new highways are the primary area of focus for toll revenue.

Mayor Whitmore asked Mr. Howe and Mr. Herrington to keep the mayors apprised relative to any new developments regarding the informational signs. Mr. Herrington said it might be advantageous for the cities to obtain some verbal message signs in time for the next hurricane season. Mayor Whitmore said this needed to be addressed with Karen Windham and the County staff. She indicated that this subject would be brought up at their upcoming meeting at the beginning of the upcoming week. Mr. Howe said the subject may best be brought directly to the County Transportation Department by the Island cities, rather than through his organization. He noted that the MPO had given the jurisdiction over the funding for these signs to the counties. The MPO Executive Director indicated that signs of this nature were most useful during emergencies and evacuation situations.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None submitted.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mayor Carol Whitmore mentioned a recent traffic fatality at West Bay Cove and Manatee Avenue, and reported that the residents were having difficulty turning west out of West Bay Cove. She said that the suggested solution that Chief Romine would recommend to FDOT would be to install a delay frame at the intersection. The Mayor of Holmes Beach said that she would keep the group updated on the subject, and also confirmed to Mayor Chappie that her city was pursuing a grant to put up signs.

Mike Howe and Robert Herrington said they had each both had a meeting with Dale. Mr. Herrington suggested that the light be recycled to turn green first for the people coming out of West Bay Cove, and remain red for those northbound on East Bay. The light then would turn red for West Bay Cove and green for the East Bay traffic. He agreed with Mayor Whitmore that such lights are very effective, and suggested that she approach Larry Maurer with a recommendation, instead of directly to the FDOT. Mayor Whitmore confirmed that this was the jurisdiction of Manatee County, and Mr. Herrington noted that the Manatee County Department of Transportation had manually cycled lights throughout the county, and should be able to cycle the Manatee Beach light to coordinate with the proposed change at the West Bay Cove light.

Mike Howe said that congestion management system dollars could be applied to uses such as intersection improvements, noting that Lieutenant Stevenson had been in contact with Dottie Poindexter. He said that he believed Dale was handling the funding application with Ms. Poindexter.

## **ADVISORY MEMBER REPORT**

### **a. CAC Report – Forrest Bogart**

Forrest Bogart reported that at the November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 CAC meeting, the group listened to a presentation related to a safety study on US 41, from Cortez Road south to the Sarasota County line, authorized by the MPO Board. He said the group heard the status on the study. He said that at the same meeting his group recommended the “20/30 Financially Feasible” long range transportation plan.

Mr. Bogart said that on November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005, he attended an Executive Committee meeting, where he listened to a presentation by FDOT of their tentative work programs.

The CAC Representative reported that at the January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006 meeting, the FDOT tentative work programs were addressed again. He said the problem appeared to him to be similar to the problems the MPO faced,

since there were so many things to be done and not enough money to do them with. Mr. Bogart noted that the situation was not bound to improve before people began using their personal vehicles less.

Forrest Bogart noted that the CAC Board elected their new officers at the January 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, and reported that Dale Stevenson was now the CAC Chairperson.

Mr. Bogart stated that at the February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006 meeting, the CAC recommended a 5 cent tax increase for Manatee County, and also recommended to the MPO some additions to the regional multi-modal transportation network, including some language on the evaluation criteria. He noted that some maps were received by the CAC relative to the FDOT work programs.

Forrest Bogart said that tentative future agenda items were discussed at the February meeting, such as handicapped parking issues, although, he noted that Bob Herrington had pointed out that this may be a 'rules only' issue. Mr. Bogart said there may be some sort of informational presentation on the subject at some point in the future. He said a great deal of discussion related to having someone speak to their group about the expansions that are planned in the area of USF and the airport. The CAC Representative said that in the near future there would be discussion relating to raising the toll on the Skyway Bridge.

Mr. Bogart said that he had been, and was pursuing the recruitment of a back-up person for his position, so far without results.

Mayor Carol Whitmore noted that her city supported the gas tax as a way to accomplish needed projects that are currently un-funded. Mr. Howe said FDOT would probably not consider taking this into account in its distribution of MPO dollars. He said they needed to maintain an equitable distribution plan over a ten-year period. Mr. Howe said that under the State formula, based on population and lane miles driven, Sarasota County receives 12.3%, and Manatee County receives an 11.6% share of District One funds. He said that if a municipality is not utilizing 100% of the money that was currently available through taxation, then the State would not send as much money. Forrest Bogart said that the argument he had heard was if a municipality did not maximize its local option gas tax, then it should not expect to come back to the legislature and ask for more transportation funding.

**b. TAC Report – Dottie Poindexter**

Mayor SueLynn referred to the report from Dottie Poindexter, distributed with the meeting packet.

**MEMBER COMMENTS****a. Bradenton Beach:**

Mayor John Chappie said that his city was moving ahead with the enhancements along Gulf Drive between Cortez and 27<sup>th</sup> Street North. He said that a preliminary proposal was expected within the next couple of months for Cortez Road south to 5<sup>th</sup> Street South, outlining costs, so that bids could be solicited, and that construction could be complete before the end of the current fiscal year.

**b. Anna Maria:**

Mayor SueLynn reported that her Commission had approved a \$1.5 million line of credit for funding capital improvements projects. She said the City was now in the process of having an evaluation / inventory of the City's roads made by the Public Works Director and the Capital Improvements Advisory Committee (CIAC), and that the prioritized recommendations would be brought back to the Commission.

Mayor SueLynn recommended that tabletops be installed at various points in the City of Anna Maria. She noted that crosswalks do not work as effectively, and that she would like to get funding to help the City with this pedestrian safety issue. Bob Herrington said that possibly congestion management systems funds could be made available.

**c. Holmes Beach: (Mayor Carol Whitmore)**

Nothing to report.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None offered.

**PRESS COMMENT**

None offered.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Not addressed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor SueLynn adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m.

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Mayor SueLynn – Chair

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Attest: Alice Baird – City Clerk