

Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Policy Committee Minutes
June 14, 2007, 12:30 PM

As approved at the October 4, 2007 PC Meeting

Roll Call

Lafourche Parish President, Charlotte Randolph-Present, by proxy; Pat Matherne
Terrebonne Parish President, Don Schwab-Present, by proxy; Leesa Foreman
City of Thibodaux Mayor, Charles Caillouet-Present, by proxy; Kermit Kraemer
Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Harold Lapeyre, Absent
Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Peter Rhodes-Present
Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Alvin Tillman, Absent
Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Clayton Voisin-Present, by proxy; AI Levron
LADOTD, Michael Stack-Present, by proxy; Lyle Leblanc

Others in attendance

Scott Leger, SCPDC
Kevin Belanger, SCPDC
Leo Marretta, SCPDC.
Joan Schexnayder, Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government
Perry Blanchard, Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government
Leland Robichaux SCIA
Dan Broussard, LA DOTD
Darryl Cunningham; Houma Police
Ron Shaw
Jonathan Fox; ABMB
Gaby Fernandez; ABMB
Dawn R. Sholmire; LA DOTD
Kevin Marcel; LA State Police-Troop C
David A. Bourgoeis; LSU Ag Center
L. P. Ledet; Neel-Schaffer, Inc.
Jamie Setze; FHWA
John Brocmellsick; FHWA
Michael Ferdinand, TEDA

Approval of Minutes from March 15, 2007 meeting

It was moved by Mr. Levron, seconded by Mr. Kraemer, to approve the minutes of March 15, 2007. Motion carried.

Comments from Public

Comments were made by Mr. Ronald Shaw concerning storm surge and flooding of roadways during hurricane events. He requested the consideration of the Houma Thibodaux MPO and LA DOTD in helping to promote safety in the event of flooding during an evacuation, suggesting that subsidence be factored into road design. Mr. Shaw then introduced several experts who showed the Policy Committee modeling efforts

currently underway to delineate the extent of projected flood events. They reported that more information and more modeling is required to accurately predict future scenarios. Mr. Shaw's group concluded, requesting our support in obtaining this additional information and in making the results available to the public in our area. A motion was made by Mr. Levron and second by Ms. Foreman in support of the efforts brought to light by Mr. Shaw's presentation. Motion carried.

There being no further comments from the public the next agenda item was introduced.

The floor was then opened for public input regarding the proposed 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Hearing none Mr. Belanger then requested the UPWP be put before the committee for discussion and adoption as written. Mr. Belanger stated that he did want to mention to the committee that we do plan to further identify more specifically details of tasks that are within the new UPWP. It was also mentioned at this time that copies of more detailed 2006 MPO budget line items had been made available to the committee as an addendum to the meeting handouts. A motion to adopt the 2007-2008 UPWP was made by Mr. Kraemer and second by Mr. Levron. Motion carried.

The next presentation was given by Mr. Fox of ABMB Engineers, Inc. They were hired to provide design and engineering services for ITS Phase 3, including signal design, connection of various local centers, and provide draw bridge preemption and motorist notification. Mr. Fox invited everyone to stay for the ITS Steering Committee meeting immediately following the Policy Committee meeting.

While the next agenda item was being set up Mr. Marretta updated the members on issues discussed at the March 15 meeting.

As a direct result of the discussions at the last meeting regarding improvements to Martin Luther King Blvd. Mr. Tony Tramel, Director of Traffic and Transportation of Lafayette Consolidated Government has been invited to speak about the use of Round Abouts.

Prior to passing a resolution in support of extending Valhi Blvd., the Policy Committee had asked for modeling to be done by the state funded modeling contractor to justify the proposal. Mr. Marretta reported that this modeling effort was indeed under way and that a full report should be available by the next meeting of the Policy Committee.

Mr. Belanger reported on the progress of the Prospect Street Bridge project resolution in support of the existing design and 2009 time line. He stated that the Legislative Delegation and local State Senators/Representatives are widely aware of the issues and need for more money to go into the highway fund to get the Prospect Bridge authorized before 2009. Mention was also made of the evolving concept of a Transportation Efficiency Analysis being promoted by several Louisiana MPOs. This concept is aimed at finding better and more efficient ways to use our resources to bring projects on line in a more timely fashion - particularly looking at the efficiency gained or lost by the privatization of public works projects in the last few decades.

Mr. Marretta reported that negotiations with providers who will serve our local traffic counts to the general public over the web are nearing completion.

A question was asked about Terrebonne's project to assign a functional classification to roadways in the Parish. It was stated that the LA DOTD map depicting the regional functional classification of State roadways in our area has been uploaded to our web site as requested at the last Policy Committee meeting. The MPO also did an analysis of the roadways as listed by the Parish and aligned them to the naming conventions used by LA DOTD. Pat Gordon has been contacted regarding the feasibility of the request to assign a functional classification to local roads.

A motion was made by Mr. Kraemer and second by Mr. Levron to return to the regular agenda. Motion carried.

A power point presentation was given by Tony Tramel, Director of Traffic and Transportation of Lafayette Consolidated Government, on the modern Round About. Many states have adopted the use of such Round Abouts and report that they: 1. Improve safety 40 to 60 % and 2. Improve efficiency 50 +% over signalized intersections and they look better. Mr. Tramel described the advantages of several types of Round Abouts for the Policy Committee.

Some Good Points about Round Abouts include:

1. Smaller radius is better and therefore require less land to implement than a standard signalized intersection
2. Perfect for interstate highway interchanges, much more efficient land use than diamond interchanges
3. Road speed, traffic speed is reduced crashes greatly reduced and severity of any potential crash greatly reduced
4. 100% federal funding available if tied to safety
5. Using Round Abouts verses the use of signals will increase traffic access to commercial uses and tax revenues
6. Traffic is always moving and since there is less stopping and idling pollution is reduced and this helps with road rage as well.

In Lafayette four are currently operational and there are at least fourteen newly planned locations where Round Abouts can be used. All are priority ranked because Lafayette has a procedure in place that calls for all new signal placements to be evaluated for potential round about usage. Good discussion ensued about the local use of Round Abouts. The Technical Advisory Committee will be asked to research and evaluate further, providing recommendations to the Policy Committee.

Next meeting date will be September 13, 2007. (This meeting date has subsequently been pushed back to October 4, 2007 due to scheduling conflicts on the part of some committee members.)

Under the agenda item "Other Business", Mr. L.P. Ledet; of Neel-Schaffer, Inc gave an update on the Valhi Extension project resolution stating it is subject to the modeling updates which are currently under way. Mr. Ledet states his company has a retainer contract to support the current model and to work with MPOs state wide. Mr. Dan Broussard, LA DOTD, informed the members of certain limitations to such a contract.

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Levron and second by Mr. Kraemer. Motion carried.