

Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Policy Committee Minutes
February 28, 2008, 12:30 PM

APPROVED AT THE MAY 15, 2008 POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Prayer Lyle LeBlanc

Pledge of Allegiance Johnny Pizzolatto

Roll Call

Leo Marretta called roll.

Lafourche Parish President, Charlotte Randolph - Present
Terrebonne Parish President, Michel Claudet – Present
City of Thibodaux Mayor, Charles Caillouet – Present, proxy Bonnie Lafont
Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Peter Lambert – Present
Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Johnny Pizzolatto - Present
Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Arlanda Williams - Present
Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Clayton Voisin – Present
LADOTD, Michael Stack – Present, proxy Lyle Leblanc
FHWA, Jamie Setze – Absent

Others in attendance were:

Kevin Belanger, SCPDC
Leo Marretta, SCPDC
Scott Leger, SCPDC
Emma Bergeron, SCPDC
Kermit Kreamer, City of Thibodaux
Dennis Hebert, LADOTD
Patrick Gordon, Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government
Mike Ferdinand, TEDA
Clay Breaud, GSE Associates
LP Ledet, Neel-Schaffer
Mark Atzenhoffer, Private Citizen
Mike Brossette, Tri-Parish Times
Todd Diaz, LPSO

Approval of Minutes from January 17, 2008 meeting

It was motioned by J. Pizzolatto to approve the minutes from the January 17, 2008 meeting, L. LeBlanc seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Chairman C. Voisin asked if there were any public comments. Mr. Mark Atzenhoffer, a former Lafourche Parish Councilman, introduced himself. At first there was opposition amongst the

people of the Bayou Blue area regarding the Bayou Gardens Extension. Mr. Atzenhoffer wanted to inform the committee that the opposition is no longer as great as before; since, the new plan extends the roadway to Hwy 182 and no longer stopping at Hwy 316. He also believes this project is much needed and will be a great benefit to both parishes. However, he made one request - if the plans foresee 4-laning the roadway in the future to please do so now and not wait.

M. Claudet thanked Mr. Atzenhoffer.

MTP Update Project

Chairman Voisin introduced Mr. L.P. Ledet of Neel-Schaffer to the forum. Mr. Ledet presented to the committee a PowerPoint presentation of the MTP 2034. He pointed out that the Transportation Study Area for the MTP that we currently operate under was based upon information from the 1990 census and assumptions about what the 2000 census would bring. The 2000 Census changed the dimensions of the urbanized area and therefore the MPO's area of responsibility. Mr. Ledet's presentation was only to inform the committee that the new MTP project is under way and he will be making periodically progress reports to the committee on how it progresses.

2007-2008 TIP

L. Marretta introduced the proposed 2007-2008 TIP to the Committee. He briefed the committee on how the proposed changes are administrative in nature and there is not a great deal the HTMPO can do to affect them at this time. It was motioned by J. Pizzolatto, seconded by C. Randolph to accept proposed changes and recommendations by the TAC. Motion carried.

2008-2009 UPWP

L. Marretta introduced the proposed 2008-2009 UPWP to the Committee. It was motioned by A. Williams, seconded by B. Lafont to accept proposed changes and recommendations by the TAC. Motion carried.

Update – Proposed Valhi Blvd Extension Project & the LA 311 Widening Project

K. Belanger updated the committee on the proposed Valhi Blvd Extension Project and the LA 311 Widening Project. He briefed the committee as to a meeting held by Terrebonne Parish President, Council, and staff with the area's State Senators and Representatives, LADOTD, HTMPO, and our MTP. One of the goals for this meeting was to consult with Representative Dove about the Valhi Extension proposal and the potential impacts on the Hwy 311 Widening Project. While a full consensus has yet to be reached, the current thinking seems to be that we should pursue both the existing hwy 311 Widening Project and the proposed project to extend Valhi Boulevard to Hwy 90.

Update – Intergovernmental Coordination on Bayou Gardens Extension Project

K. Belanger briefed the committee as to the meeting between the two parishes on the Bayou Gardens Extension Project. The consensus of the meeting was optimistic; both entities are open to discussions and working together on this project. P. Gordon suggested Lafourche put together a master thoroughfare plan. This plan would assist Terrebonne in planning future projects which would align with Lafourche Parish and help to facilitate both parishes' desires as conceivably as possible.

Update – Louisiana Transportation Efficiency Analysis

L. Marretta introduced the Louisiana Transportation Efficiency Analysis to the forum. He explained how MPO's throughout the state are joining together to fund a study analysis. K. Belanger briefed the committee on the status of the analysis. Thus far, four MPO's have joined together to fund the Louisiana Transportation Efficiency Analysis: Lafayette, Houma-Thibodaux, Lake Charles, and Alexandria. In the next two to three weeks, we are on the agenda to speak in Monroe and New Orleans. Every one is very supportive of the analysis, it's just a matter of bringing it to the officials and having them ratify it.

LDOTD District 02 “Road Show”

L. Marretta reminded the committee of the LDOTD District 02 “Road Show” which is being held March 4, 2008 at the Yenni Building in Metairie, LA. This is a great forum for which our local officials voice to be heard. M. Claudet plans to be in attendance. Chairman Voisin requested the subject of the Hurricane Evacuation Routes be brought to the table.

Other Business

At this point in the meeting there was some preliminary discussion regarding ways to include Assumption Parish in our planning efforts, especially in light of the Master Transportation Plan update and the fact that portions of the Parish are included in our MPO's Urbanized Area as defined by the 2000 US Census. It was proposed that action on this subject be referred to a future Policy Committee meeting and that a sub-committee possibly be formed to further study how to implement these changes.

A discussion of the State's “billion dollar surplus” and possible transportation related uses for the monies ensued. K. Belanger is involved in a coalition of MPOs from around the State who will lobby the State Legislature to use these funds for transportation projects. He reported on efforts to come up with equitable ways to allocate the portion of these funds that will be dedicated to transportation projects.

L. Marretta on behalf of Martha Cazaubon and her River Parish Transit Authority project read a resolution stating that “the Houma Metropolitan Planning Organization does support the efforts of the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission and other transit agencies in the Gulf Coast Region to obtain an extension the ability of the Secretary of the Department of Transportation to waive requirements regarding the local match and use of transit grant funds as provided in

Public Law 109-234 Section 7025.” Chairman Voisin entertained a motion by C. Randolph to adopt the proposed resolution, which was seconded by M. Claudet and unanimously approved. L. Marretta will forward executed copies to M. Cazaubon following the meeting.

Next Meeting Date

It was agreed upon the next meeting date of the Houma-Thibodaux Policy Committee would be held on April 17, 2008 at 12:00 PM. (This meeting has subsequently been rescheduled for May 15, 2008)

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by J. Pizzalatto, seconded by B. Lafont. Motion carried.