

Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Policy Committee Minutes
May 1, 2003, 3:00 PM

1. Prayer

The Prayer, Mr. Wayne Thibodaux.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Scott Leger

3. Roll Call

Mr. Scott Leger called roll.

Lafourche Parish President, Mr. Gerald Breaux-Absent

Terrebonne Parish President, Mr. Bobby Bergeron- Present, proxy Mr. Pat Gordon

City of Thibodaux Mayor, Mr. Charles Caillouet-Present, proxy Ms. Bonnie Lafont

Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Ms. Christa Duplantis-Present, proxy Mr. Alvin Tillman

Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Mr. Peter Rhodes-Present

Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Mr. Wayne Thibodaux-Present

Terrebonne Parish Council Member, Mr. Clayton Voisin-Present, proxy Mr. Jason Benoit

LADOTD, Mr. John Evanco-Absent

4. Approval of minutes from September 19, 2002 meeting

Moved, W. Thibodeaux, second, A. Tillman, no discussion, passed.

5. Public Hearing: Opportunity for Public to provide input on the 2004 UPWP

W. Thibodeaux asked how the tasks proposed in the 2004 UPWP were determined. K. Ghirardi stated that the UPWP has been a standard blueprint of operation for the last 2 years. K. Ghirardi stated that the UPWP tasks are items that the staff knows can be reasonably accomplished. He added that the UPWP covers the routine operations such as the TIP, managing transportation projects, UPWP, basic GIS and data collection and assistance to the transit system. W. Thibodeaux stated that he wanted the Policy Committee to be more recognized as a component of the Transportation Planning Process. He added that he felt the committee was not being provided the opportunity to provide adequate input into the process. P. Rhodes concurred with W. Thibodeaux's sentiments and requested that this issue be addressed. K. Ghirardi stated that very soon the committee will be asked to make long range planning decisions about which projects should be included in the Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan. B. Lafont stated that the City of Thibodaux would like to see the transit system expanded in the

Thibodaux area. K. Ghirardi stated that the newly designated urbanized area includes the Thibodaux area which should make it a lot easier to expand the urban transit system. P. Gordon stated that a regional transit authority to oversee the transit system program may be a good option to help facilitate regional transit expansion. K. Ghirardi asked the committee if another Policy Committee meeting could be held in 4 or 5 weeks to discuss in more detail some of these issues. The committee concurred. Motion to close public hearing, W. Thibodaux, second, A. Tillman, passed.

6. Approval of the Unified Planning Work Program – 2004 UPWP

Moved, W. Thibodaux, second, B. Lafont, no discussion, passed.

7. Approval of the new Study Area map for the HTMPO

K. Ghirardi stated that the LA-DOTD had asked the staff to update the HTMPO study area based on the new urbanized area as defined by the 2000 Census. K. Ghirardi stated that the reason for updating the study area was to provide consistency when defining the functional classification of roadways by the LA-DOTD in the HTMPO urban area. K. Ghirardi gave the example of an urban system bus being on and then off an urban roadway because of the way the Census defined the urban area in 2000. K. Ghirardi added that by rounding off the shape of the study area this situation would be avoided and the urban bus system would stay in compliance. K. Ghirardi explained the process that the Census used to create the urbanized area in 2000. Moved, W. Thibodaux, second, P. Gordon, passed.

8. Update of the Houma Intelligent Transportation System - HITS

K. Ghirardi stated that the HITS project has been under way for about a year and gave a brief description of the project to date. W. Thibodaux stated his concern for the importance of the ITS project and the progress that has been made so far. He stated that someone at the parish level or legislative level should be pushing to get this project coordinated with the local government plans for fiber optics. K. Ghirardi stated that he had attempted to generate interest in the coordination of fiber optic projects between the state and the parish but was unable to do so. P. Gordon asked when the final draft of the HITS project would be ready. P. Gordon suggested that a formal presentation be made to the parish council to get everyone on board with this project. K. Ghirardi stated that the policy committee could have another meeting in the near future and have the ITS consultants give a presentation. The consensus of the committee was to schedule this meeting with the ITS consultants as soon as possible.

9. Review of HTMPO Master Transportation Plan – 25 year plan

K. Ghirardi stated that staff has completed and sent all the inputs for the travel demand model such as 2000 census demographics, business employment figures and traffic counts to the consultants who are

preparing the master plan, Neel-Schaffer, Inc. K. Ghirardi stated that the consultants should be delivering a base model with a draft plan and that once this report is provided to the MPO the committee can make suggestions and recommendations on the plan. P. Gordon asked if annual reports were still being prepared by staff. K. Ghirardi stated that staff has not prepared annual reports but were in the process of preparing a map book of traffic counts. K. Ghirardi stated that the HTMPO website was not up and running yet but that when it was it would be a great resource for posting reports like the traffic count map book. P. Gordon asked about the status of the projects in the TIP. K. Ghirardi gave an update on the HTMPO road improvement projects and also informed the committee about the staff's efforts to create databases for law enforcement agencies to manage traffic citation and crash data. K. Ghirardi updated the committee on South Central Planning and Development Commission's Rational Speed Limit Grant with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). K. Ghirardi also updated the committee on the status of a traffic engineering training course.

10. Other Business

A. Tillman asked about the status of the Prospect Street Bridge. K. Ghirardi informed the committee that the project was still in the engineering phase and waiting on funding.

11. Adjournment

Moved, W. Thibodaux, second, A. Tillman, passed.