



POLICY COMMITTEE

Main Conference Room

State of Alaska DOT&PF, 2301 Peger Road

Fairbanks, Alaska

Meeting Minutes – January 15, 2014

1. Call to Order

Mayor Ward, Vice Chair, sitting in for Mayor Luke Hopkins, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee

*Mayor John Eberhart
 *Bernardo Hernandez for Mayor Luke Hopkins, Chair
 *Mayor Bryce Ward, Vice Chair
 *Steve Titus
 *Janice Golub for Guy Sattley
 *Michael Schmetzer for Perry Walley
 *Alice Edwards
 ***Donna Gardino
 +Judy Chapman
 +Joan Hardesty
 **Aaron Buckley
 **Deborah Todd
 **Kellen Spillman
 **Linda Mahlen
 Tim Woster
 Barry Hooper
 Jackson Fox
 Lance Roberts
 David Pruhs
 Guy Sattley (via telephone)
 Andrew Ooms (via telephone)
 John Ringert (via telephone)
 Joy Huntington (via telephone)
 Marni Sanford (via telephone)
 Brenda Hewitt (via telephone)

Representative Organization

Mayor, City of Fairbanks
 Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
 Mayor, City of North Pole
 Northern Region Director, DOT&PF
 FNSB Assembly Member
 City Council Member, City of Fairbanks
 DEC, Division of Air Quality
 FMATS MPO Coordinator
 DOT&PF Planning Chief
 DEC, Division of Air Quality
 FMATS Transportation Planner
 FMATS, Administrative Assistant
 FNSB Community Planning
 DOT&PF Planning
 DOT&PF Preconstruction
 DOT&PF Preconstruction
 City of Fairbanks Engineering
 Citizen
 FNSB Planning Commission
 FNSB Assembly/Citizen
 Kittelson & Associates
 Kittelson & Associates
 Planning Commission/Citizen
 Citizen
 Representative Issaacson's Chief of Staff

****FMATS Policy Committee Members, **FMATS Staff Members, *FMATS Technical Committee Members***

3. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)

Guy Sattley commented via telephone. Mr. Sattley stated that he called in as a citizen, member of the Assembly, and former member of the Planning Commission. Mr. Sattley stated that he wanted to comment on the Resolution to AS 35.30.010 and felt it was a bad idea to endorse the Resolution. Mr. Sattley cited the Illinois Street project as an example of good public involvement between the Assembly, Planning Commission and the public. Mr. Sattley stated that was the role of the Borough Planning Commission, Assembly, and the Planning Department, and the public scrutiny process. Mr. Sattley hoped to kill the Resolution and appreciated the opportunity to comment.

Joy Huntington commented via telephone as a former Chair of the Planning Commission for the last year stating that it had been a very positive experience. Ms. Huntington stated that she wanted to speak from the perspective of having been on the Planning Commission for the last four years. Ms. Huntington stated that she had the utmost respect for Representative Isaacson and the DOT&PF. Ms. Huntington stated that she had seen them do really great work on projects that made huge improvements for the community. Ms. Huntington stated she wanted to speak on behalf of the public process after having seen how important that step was for hearing what the community felt about projects whether they were minimal or not. Ms. Huntington stated that she understood the Borough had extensively rewritten the MOU with DOT to find a better balance between the project approval process and public involvement. Ms. Huntington stated that from her experience there had been occasions when allowing the community to come and speak about a project had improved the project process. Ms. Huntington stated that she felt that it was critical that the public had a formal opportunity to comment on projects that had an effect on them or their property and make their concerns known for the record. Ms. Huntington stated that she understood the desire to streamline things, but would really urge that there be other avenues for formal public involvement in projects. Ms. Huntington stated that she looked forward to seeing how the debate on this issue progressed.

Marna Sanford commented via telephone. Ms. Sanford stated that she had also been on the FNSB Planning Commission for the past three years and wanted to speak out against the Bill primarily because she felt it was premature since the Borough was working on a new MOU to streamline the process. Ms. Sanford stated that she understood that it was an issue and they were trying to make it an easier process. Ms. Sanford stated that in all of the highway projects that came before the Planning Commission, whether controversial or not, there were always people who heard about the project and wanted to comment. Ms. Sanford stated that she felt that cutting the Planning Commission out of the process would cause the people of the community to lose their voice. Ms. Sanford stated that she thought the Bill should be tabled until the revised MOU was available to see how that MOU would streamline the process.

Mr. Roberts commented on the agenda item for the College Road study. Mr. Roberts stated that he felt it was a mistake to adopt the recommendations made by the consultant for the College Road study. Mr. Roberts stated that there would be two problems: the first when you got behind cars on a two lane road, people would end up using the turn lane as a passing lane and that would create an unsafe situation, and there would also be a

problem with snowplows on the road and people using the turn lane to pass the plows. Mr. Roberts stated that bikepaths on the road would not work on College Road, as people had been taught to use the sidewalks rather than the bike lanes. Mr. Roberts stated that there would be problems integrating the crosswalks and bikepaths. Mr. Roberts noted that for all the options on the plans brought out at all the public meetings, there was no option to keep the interior of the road and possibly make the sidewalk bigger. Mr. Roberts stated that the only other option offered was decreased lane width on the road. Mr. Roberts stated that it was weird when winter bikers were trying to use the bikepath and unable to see the lines in the road in the winter due to snowplows making the lanes crowded and the lines invisible. Mr. Roberts stated that this presented a dangerous situation. Mr. Roberts stated that gravel after the cleaning of the road would end up on the road lanes which would not be very helpful to bikers' safety. Mr. Roberts stated that safety and flow needed really be looked at. Mr. Roberts stated that the project timetable worried him. Mr. Roberts stated that if the no build option was not a possibility, the project should be delayed and further studied. Mr. Roberts stated that he felt that if the project could not be voted down, they should delay the road project or adopt the No Build option. Mr. Roberts stated that that instead of parceling the project out in pieces integrated into other projects, they should try to do it in one project and not fast track the west end restriping.

Mr. Roberts stated that he also wanted to comment on the Dennis Road Bridge project closure by DOT. Mr. Roberts stated that the Mayor had brought up or asked for a motion that no one had responded to at the Policy Committee meeting to have FMATS adopt the project. Mr. Roberts stated that he wanted to encourage the Policy Committee to have FMATS adopt that Dennis Road bridge project and felt it was an important infrastructure project to the Interior. Mr. Roberts stated that he had been trying to work with the Legislature to get the project funded. Mr. Roberts stated besides Secluded Acres, there was a lot of good riverfront property and great living space close to town that was not in the flight path. Mr. Roberts stated that people were already living over there and crossing over the pipeline to get there. Mr. Roberts stated that he wanted the Policy Committee to consider having FMATS adopt or approve the project.

Mr. Pruhs stated that he had been on the Planning Commission for six years. Mr. Pruhs stated that often the public had not seen some of the projects that were being put out. Mr. Pruhs stated that the Planning Commission did not delay projects but provided a forum for the public to come in and see what was being built and saw it as an opportunity for critical final public input.

Brenda Hewitt spoke via telephone stating that she was on the line and available in case something came up about New Business Item E of the Agenda.

4. Approval of January 15, 2014 Agenda

Motion: To approve the January 15, 2014 Agenda. (Hernandez/Golub).

Amendment to the Motion: To remove Item 8B (College Road Corridor Study Recommendation Approval) from the agenda. (Titus/Edwards)

Discussion: Mr. Titus stated that he thought it was premature to adopt the recommendations made by the Consultant since those recommendations were still in draft form. Mr. Titus stated that DOT was responsible for the infrastructure and had not had the opportunity to formally comment. Mr. Titus stated that he would be in favor of postponing or removing the item from the agenda until a final document was received.

Mr. Hernandez asked Mr. Titus if DOT was given an opportunity to comment on the process or development of the study recommendations.

Mr. Titus stated that DOT had an opportunity to comment on the draft recommendations but thought it premature to make recommendations and adopt a draft document.

Mr. Titus stated that the agenda item could be brought back in the future.

Mr. Hernandez inquired if there were some aspects that Mr. Titus had reviewed thus far that were not appropriate or had concerns with.

Mr. Titus stated that DOT had some concerns and he would have to ask his Construction section what items they felt were unsatisfactory.

Mr. Hernandez asked Ms. Gardino when the final draft of the document was to be completed.

Mr. Ringert stated that the final technical memo which was the recommendation memo had just been issued to the project team members involved in the process, including DOT. Mr. Ringert stated that they still had to complete the final report and stated that it would probably be at least a month or so before the final report was ready to go.

Ms. Gardino explained that there were five technical memorandums that were worked through the project advisory committee during the course of the yearlong process that had not been issued to the Technical Committee. Ms. Gardino stated that she had presented draft Technical Memo #5 and had an hour-long conversation with a DOT representative to discuss the memorandum and make any changes DOT wanted to see. Ms. Gardino stated that technical memorandums were the working memorandums and she had not heard any dissent on the recommendations.

Mr. Hernandez asked Mr. Titus how it would affect the ability to apply the project recommendations to the projects that were going to occur, particularly on the west end of College Road, if the Policy Committee were to delay their recommendation for a month. Mr. Hernandez inquired whether the month delay would negatively affect projects, or if they would still be able to integrate the recommendations into the project.

Mr. Titus stated that the projects would not be able to be obligated this fiscal year, but next, if the project recommendations were delayed. Mr. Titus stated that the project scope would change which would require local planning authority review and documents would have to be revisited with the scope change, which would require revising the environmental document which would cause the project to be delayed for this federal fiscal year. Mr. Titus stated the project recommendations could be implemented as a

separate project in the future, but putting the recommendations into the existing project would be problematic with respect to environmental and planning authority concerns.

Vote on Motion: Six in favor/One opposed. (Ward). Approved.

Amended Motion: To approve the January 14, 2014 agenda, as amended.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Approval of December 18, 2013 Minutes

Motion: To approve the December 18, 2013 meeting minutes. (Hernandez/Golub)

Vote on the motion: None opposed. Approved.

6. Committee Reports

a. Coordinator's Office Report and Technical Committee Action Items

Ms. Gardino stated that she had attended the full Design Status meeting at DOT which was very helpful in developing the TIP Administrative Modification and keeping an eye on the project development process.

Ms. Gardino stated that she had attended, along with AMATS, the kickoff meeting for the development of the TIP Tool. Amendment #1 to the TIP Tool Agreement was prepared to extend the performance period for four months based on the January start date and that Amendment was included in the meeting packet.

Ms. Gardino stated that she had drafted comments on the CMAQ Guidance which were included in the meeting packet.

Ms. Gardino stated that she met with DOT and Kittelson regarding the College Road Corridor Study.

Ms. Gardino stated that she developed an FMATS presentation for the Fairbanks City Council, per their request which would be February 10, 2014.

Ms. Gardino stated that four or five historical plaques were finalized and hoped to get the rest of the plaques by Friday, January 17th. Ms. Gardino stated that the last ones that came in needed further research and revision.

Ms. Gardino stated that she had entered the Capsis request into the State system.

7. Old Business

a. Tip Administrative Modification #6 (Action Item)

Motion: To approve TIP Administrative Modification #6. (Hernandez/Golub)

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

8. New Business

a. Chena Riverwalk Permit and Project Start Authorization (Action Item)

Mr. Schmetzer introduced Jackson Fox from the City of Fairbanks who provided a brief background on the land use permit from the Railroad for the Chena Riverwalk project included in the meeting packets. Mr. Fox stated that there had been a couple of years of negotiations with the Railroad on the content of the land use permit. Mr. Fox stated that they had received the final permit from the Railroad this past fall prior to Mayor Cleworth's departure from office and the Mayor was not comfortable signing the permit until maintenance for the project was worked out. Mr. Fox stated that the City had asked the Borough to take over maintenance of the trail after it was designed and constructed but the Borough Mayor was leary of taking over maintenance of a trail the Borough had not seen a final design for. Mr. Fox stated that they had asked the City Council to pass a Resolution for the new Mayor to sign and accept the land use permit from the Railroad. Mr. Fox stated that within that permit there was a clause that provided an exception to have another entity take over maintenance. Mr. Fox stated that the City intended to ask the Borough to take over maintenance in the future. Mr. Fox stated that FMATS Policy Committee had approved \$400,000 for the project and in order to release that funding and initiate a project there had to be a maintenance agreement in place and the decision was made by the City to accept initial responsibility for the maintenance.

Mr. Schmetzer stated that he the City did not yet know what the path would or bridge would look like but he could foresee an agreement where the City collectively maintained the project with the Borough.

Mr. Titus stated that he remembered when Mayor Hopkins was concerned about this project and wondered what his position was regarding the permit brought forward today.

Motion: To request the DOT&PF initiate the Chena River Walk project and have the State execute a TORA with the City of Fairbanks for the design of the project. (Eberhart/Hernandez)

Discussion: Mayor Eberhart stated that he was happy to see the permit come forward and felt the river was an important asset to the community and the City.

Mr. Titus stated that he was curious how Mayor Hopkins felt about the project.

Mr. Hernandez stated that Mayor Hopkins was totally in favor of the project moving forward and just wanted to know what was involved and what it would look like.

Mr. Schmetzer stated that Mayor Hopkins contacted him and was in favor of the project moving forward.

Mayor Ward inquired if DOT was comfortable with the City maintaining this project.

Mr. Titus stated that DOT was good with that.

Mr. Schmetzer stated that the City planned to start surveying this summer if the project were approved.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. College Road Corridor Study Recommendation Approval (Action Item)

Removed from the agenda by an earlier motion.

c. CMAQ Guidance Comments (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained the comments were included in the meeting packet.

Ms. Gardino stated that the most significant item for FMATS was the ineligibility of CMAQ funds for emissions modeling since that activity did not directly influence emissions.

Mr. Titus inquired if previous use of the CMAQ funding for emissions modeling activities had been approved by the FHWA.

Ms. Gardino stated that the FHWA had approved previous activity and stated that they needed to better monitor the future use of CMAQ funds.

Motion: To approve the comments on the CMAQ Interim Program Guidance (Edwards/Titus).

Discussion: Ms. Edwards noted that there were transportation projects with emission benefits that could use CMAQ funding and it would be nice if the guidance better clarified those projects.

Mayor Ward stated that his concern was that if they were unable to use CMAQ funding, they would have to find funds to do future monitoring and was concerned that the funds would have to come out of PL or project funds.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

d. TIP Tool Amendment #1 (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained the progress of the TIP Tool and that the date was the only thing changed by this amendment.

Motion: To approve TIP Tool Amendment #1. (Hernandez/Golub).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

e. Resolution of Support for House Bill Amending A.S. 35.30.010 (Action Item)

Mayor Ward introduced and explained his intent in bringing the motion forward.

Mayor Ward stated that the Resolution was for a House Bill that had not been filed and would not be filed without support from this MPO as this was the only MPO that was affected. Mayor Ward stated that the amendment allowed instances where the Municipality and State agreed that certain projects might not need to be brought forward to the Planning Commission if they were within the TIP and had already had sufficient public participation during the design process. Mayor Ward

stated the idea behind the bill had been to make one area for public comment and to expedite the process.

Motion: To support the resolution in support of amending A.S. 35.30.010. (Schmetzer/Eberhart).

Discussion: Mr. Schmetzer stated that he had been an Engineer in the state for 27 years and was also a Borough and service area commissioner. Mr. Schmetzer stated that he liked the fact that projects went to the Planning Commission, especially the more contentious ones like the Chena Small Tracts project.

Mr. Schmetzer stated that his experience with the City of Fairbanks property owners had been very positive. Mr. Schmetzer stated that he had received easements and rights-of-way from many businesses and people who could not wait to give easements, which was very different from the Borough or other service areas he had dealt with. Mr. Schmetzer stated that his experience with the Borough Planning Commission on the Wickersham and South Cushman projects had been good, but thought there needed to be a solution between the Borough, DOT, and the City of Fairbanks. Mr. Schmetzer stated that if there were no right-of-way takes on a project, he did not think the project should be delayed by the approval process. Mr. Schmetzer stated that if the plans were submitted and reviewed at 60 percent, rather than 100 percent completion, it would avoid delays and a mechanism should be put in place to push projects through.

Mr. Hernandez stated that a lot of time was spent discussing this issue in the Technical Committee. Mr. Hernandez stated that there were several opinions as to what the word "may" in the Resolution might mean. Mr. Hernandez stated that no one knew who made the determination which projects would be seen by the Planning Commission and which would not. Mr. Hernandez stated that in legal terms, "may not" meant "shall not", so the bill meant that all projects would not go through the process and that was the number one thing that should really be understood.

Mr. Hernandez stated that no projects had been delayed by the Planning Commission to date and there was a 90-day time frame for the public process. Mr. Hernandez stated that the 90-day period was concurrent with all the other project activities and did not delay any time or processes. Mr. Hernandez stated that what was really important was the fact that the Borough had a Comprehensive Plan that integrated land use and transportation planning and transportation projects that did not take land use into account were not making the most efficient use of funds. Mr. Hernandez stated that very few people came to the Technical and Policy Committee meetings, but many people attended Borough meetings and it gave the public opportunity to speak about the projects. Mr. Hernandez stated that he thought the City did a great job. Mr. Hernandez stated that the discussion was about wisely using public dollars and the public process was an integral part of that. Mr. Hernandez cited the Dennis Road project as illustrating the relationship between land use planning and transportation projects with respect to

Fort Wainwright. Mr. Hernandez stated that the Borough was concerned about land use and transportation planning working together and encouraged everyone to vote against the Resolution.

Mr. Titus stated that he would like to add to what Mr. Schmetzer said regarding the MOU the DOT had with the Borough regarding time traps and deadlines with local planning approval. Mr. Titus stated that there was an opportunity to comment on the development of the MOU and thought we had a very good document now that was being reviewed by the Borough and attorney general. Mr. Titus stated that the 90-day timeline had always been a concern and thought that if there was a problem there was probably a way to get that project in front of the Borough to meet that timeline. Mr. Titus stated that he had not had a problem with project timelines in the past. Mr. Titus cited the Goldstream project and peoples' concerns about that as an example. Mr. Titus stated that the Planning Commission could make recommendations but could not say that DOT could or could not do something on a project. He did not feel that the legislation would solve anything. Mr. Titus stated that he felt that the draft MOU was a good document that should have been started a long time ago and would not vote in favor of the Resolution.

Mayor Eberhart stated that he disagreed with Mr. Hernandez or his lawyer regarding the word "may not" did not necessarily mean "shall not". Mayor Eberhart did not quite understand why the City was not part of the MOU existing between DOT and the Borough. Mayor Eberhart stated that he understood Mr. Schmetzer's comment about the project starting late and citizens' concerns about project delays. Mayor Eberhart stated that as a new Mayor he did not anticipate a member of the appointed by the City coming forward against the Resolution. Mayor Eberhart stated that he would like to hear more information about the streamlined process currently being worked on between the Borough and DOT.

Mr. Titus stated that it was a document between the Borough and DOT that was currently being worked on.

Mr. Hernandez stated that the City had been given an opportunity to comment on the MOU during the process.

Ms. Golub stated that she did not see a need for the bill and would not be supporting it. Ms. Golub stated that she would like to see the public remain involved in the process as much as possible.

Ms. Edwards stated that it was very unusual for a State agency to be commenting on a bill that was in draft form and had not had an opportunity to comment on the bill. Ms. Edwards stated that it seemed premature to be making a resolution in support when they did not know what the legislation would ultimately look like when it was filed.

Mr. Schmetzer stated that when the MOU Agreement was rewritten, it was his understanding that FMATS was not invited to the discussion. Mr. Schmetzer stated that the MOU should allow some type of process for approval of a project where there were no right-of-way takes.

Mr. Hernandez stated that he thought that the South Cushman project already had received local planning approval.

Mr. Schmetzer stated that South Cushman was a project that needed to go to the Planning Commission and if it they had to go the Planning Commission with final plans, it would not go this year.

Mr. Hernandez responded by stating that to his knowledge, no project had ever been delayed by this process and Mr. Spillman always worked with the Borough and DOT when there were project timing issues. Mr. Hernandez stated that if everyone were in agreement with what the project should be, then there would be no problems or delays. Mr. Hernandez stated that the public process was a very important process and needed to be as transparent as possible.

Mayor Ward stated that one of the reasons why the Borough was responsible for planning and zoning was through State statute and cities deferred to the Borough for decisions on planning authority. Mayor Ward stated that if a project were not contentious, this would give the Borough an opportunity to move that project through as mandated by the MPO. Mayor Ward stated that his intent was to allow for better use of public funds to expedite the process, but if there were better ideas for how to accomplish that, he would love to hear them.

Mayor Ward inquired if FMATS was involved in the discussion about the MOU.

Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS was allowed an opportunity to comment but was not involved in the discussions.

Mayor Ward stated that he did not believe that the City of North Pole was afforded an opportunity to comment on streamlining the process in the MOU.

Mr. Titus stated that he did not know whether the draft MOU Agreement addressed whether plans had to be completed, but he did not believe that project plans needed to be completed.

Mr. Titus stated that those types of projects, like Wickersham were anomalies and the draft agreement might be an opportunity to correct that. Mr. Schmetzer stated that he would not support the Resolution after seeing that there might be another solution and was in favor of projects going before the Planning Commission.

Vote on Motion: 1 in favor (Ward), 6 opposed. Motion failed.

9. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)

No public comment.

10. Other Issues

No other issues.

11. Informational Items

a. Bentley/Helmericks Roundabouts

Mr. Schmetzer introduced Mr. Fox who gave a brief slide presentation that recapped design, construction, and maintenance of the Bentley/Helmericks project.

b. PL Funding Increase

Ms. Chapman explained that DOT met with Headquarters two weeks ago and the preliminary indication was that FMATS would get about \$100,000 in PL funds and some of those could be used for Air Quality.

c. State LRTP Update Stakeholder Group Meeting March 5, 2014

Ms. Gardino stated that the meeting packet contained a letter regarding the State kickoff of the LRTP and the first meeting of the LRTP Update Stakeholder Group was March 5, 2014.

d. FMATS Historical Plaque Update

Ms. Gardino stated that the update for the historic plaques had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

e. Obligations/Offsets

Ms. Gardino explained the obligations/offset list included in the meeting packet.

12. Policy Committee Comments

- Mayor Eberhart stated that he thought it had been a good meeting, apologized for his lack of knowledge on some of the issues, and hoped he had not ruffled any feathers. Mayor Eberhart stated that his wife told him he was about as subtle as a sledgehammer sometimes and thanked everyone for the approval of the Chena Riverwalk.
- Mr. Hernandez stated that he liked the roundabouts and thanked the City for their efforts on that project.
- Ms. Golub stated that she also liked the roundabouts.
- Ms. Edwards stated that the air quality hearing would be in Fairbanks next Tuesday during the day on January 21, 2014 and DEC had sent out a supplemental notice that the hearing comment deadline was Friday, January 24, 2014.
- Mr. Titus stated that the Helmericks project tied into the Bentley project very nicely and had turned out to be a very nice intersection and he was very pleased with the result.
- Mayor Ward stated that he would like to make a motion to change the March meeting date that occurred the same week as the Arctic Winter Games to ensure full participation by Policy Committee members and staff as well. Mayor Ward stated that he thought the meeting had gone well and as long as there was

discussion of the issues, there could be a reasonable solution.

13. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn: (Hernandez/Golub).

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08PM.

The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 19, 2014 at the DOT&PF Main Conference Room on Peger Road.

Approved: _____


Mayor Luke Hopkins, Chair
FMATS Policy Committee

Date: _____

