

**Board of County Commissioners
Amended Worksession Minutes
February 8, 2011**

PRESENT: Commissioners Mullin, Moore, Dunn, Broomell and Hodge; County Administrator Al Wein, Public Works Director Scott Flanigan and staff; Planning and Zoning Director Eric Sennstrom; Information Technology Director Scott Mesneak; Economic Development Director Vernon Thompson; Budget Manager Craig Whiteford; Executive Office Administrator Vicky Rinkerman; Council Norman Wilson arrived at 9:45 a.m.; members of the press, and members of the public.

OPEN SESSION

9:00 a.m. – President Mullin called the meeting to order.

Public Hearing Senior Services and Community Transit FY 2012 Annual Transportation Plan

County Administrator Wein introduced Senior Services Transit Supervisor Leslie Gorak. Ms. Gorak reviewed the annual transportation plan for Cecil County relative to the proposal and budget requests.

There were no public comments in support or opposition to the transportation plan.

The Board concurred to adopt the Community Transit FY 2012 Annual Transportation Plan as presented.

Approval of January 4, 2011 meeting minutes

On motion by Commissioner Hodge, seconded by Commissioner Moore, the Board unanimously approved the minutes as amended.

Approval of January 11, 2011 meeting minutes

Commissioner Broomell presented several amendments to the minutes of the January 11, 2011 meeting:

-on page 4, 4th paragraph - change to read "Commissioner Broomell commented on the kiosk stating she appreciates the cross promotion of Cecil County tourism but would like to see an area in the casino with take away pamphlets on Cecil County attractions."

-on page 5, 6th paragraph - Insert in the beginning "Commissioner Broomell stated it was important to have all options on the table. Without knowing what the State will do regarding the teacher's pensions she requested that a waiver be filed for the maintenance of effort."

-on page 5, 12th paragraph - Insert at the end of the first sentence "and requested another press release be submitted to inform the public on why there is a charge for recycling."

-on page 6, 5th paragraph - 2nd sentence "Commissioner Broomell stated her objection to honor President Lockhart's letter dated 9/24/09 especially since at least two other Commissioners at the time claimed they weren't aware of the letter."

On motion made by Commissioner Broomell, seconded by Commissioner Moore, the Board moved to approve the minutes as amended by Commissioner Broomell. Motion did not pass.

Commissioner Broomell stated that she felt her comments needed to be noted and recorded in the minutes of the worksession meeting.

On motion made by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Hodge, the Board voted unanimously to postpone approval of the minutes pending review of the proposed amendments.

Informational Briefing – Video recording of Commissioners meetings

Director Mesneak briefed the Board on challenges that may be encountered with lighting, camera mountings, electrical modifications, server room connections, and workstation areas relative to video recording meetings in the Elk Room of the County Administration Building. Other challenges include computer web streaming capability and software to permit public viewing of the meeting in indexed segments as per the agenda. Additional personnel would be needed to attend the meetings and operate the equipment.

Commissioner Broomell asked if the audio recordings of the meetings are indexed.

Director Mesneak responded that the audio recordings are not indexed, and to do so would require an additional employee. There is a difference in cost between producing a "live signal" broadcast compared to web streaming a video. The cost would also increase to have the video streamed live during the meeting since it would require additional bandwidth. If the Board would move to require audio recordings off-site, it would require the purchase of additional equipment in order to maintain the professionalism of the recording.

Commissioner Broomell stated that she feels video recording meetings would be worth the investment.

Cost Savings Program for website

Director Mesneak reviewed the cost saving program proposal relative to gathering suggestions from employees and the public. The proposal would use the Survey Monkey program to collect data, comments, and suggestions via our website.

Discussion ensued relative to the available options for the Board to view the information submitted.

The Board concurred to authorize Director Mesneak to move forward immediately with initiating the cost saving program proposal. Commissioner Moore suggested that the Board consider how they intend to coordinate responses to suggestions if necessary.

Sierra Club Presentation

Program Coordinator Alana Wise briefed the Board on their Cool Cities initiative, which focuses on energy efficiency. She reviewed the programs from other jurisdictions and the relative cost savings from energy efficiency audits.

Commissioner Broomell stated that she would encourage an energy efficiency audit of the county buildings.

Commissioner Dunn stated that he feels the County should take any measure available to find savings in the budget.

Commissioner Hodge requested a proposal for Cecil County. Ms. Wise stated that there is grant funding available for this purpose, and she will follow up with officials on providing this service for Cecil County.

Local Impact Grant draft Multi-year Plan

Commissioner Moore thanked staff for compiling the data for the plan, and the purpose of the briefing is to present the financial information for the projects. The Board should prioritize the projects on the list and send their choices to Budget Manager Whiteford.

Budget Manager Whiteford stated that the plan is for a five-year period with annual reviews. The largest project on the list is improvements to Razor Strap Road. Some of the projects are included in the operating and capital budgets, and a few others are new projects.

Commissioner Moore introduced a local impact grant procedure that would provide an opportunity and process for the community to apply for video lottery revenue funding to offset the impact of the gaming operation.

Commissioner Broomell suggested that the boundaries of the impact area be defined in the grant application.

Director Thompson explained the criteria used to judge projects on the list.

In an effort to keep this process moving, County Administrator Wein asked the Board to forward their project priority list to staff by the end of the week.

Citizen Budget Advisory Committee

County Administrator Wein stated that the Board previously agreed that each of them would appoint one individual to the committee.

Commissioner Hodge provided the Board with a mission and a proposal for the charge of the committee.

Commissioner Dunn stated that he objects to appointing this committee; however, he feels the time commitment for meetings should be defined for the proposed members.

Several Board members concurred that the committee members should determine the parameters of the time commitment necessary.

Commissioner Broomell stated that the qualifications for the appointment would be determined by the Board member; however, she recommended that the individual have a financial or business management background.

The Board concurred on the qualifications for the potential committee appointments. Commissioner Hodge stated that he would not exclude people from outside the county participating in this process.

President Mullin stated that the Board would discuss this issue further at the afternoon session.

Chapter 209 Dogs and Other Animals public hearing

County Administrator Wein stated that the Board received several public comments from the hearing.

Commissioner Hodge stated that the animal control task force has requested permission to review the comments provided by the public.

The Board concurred to postpone the vote on the proposed ordinance relative to review of the public comments from the hearing by members of the animal control task force.

County Administrator Wein stated that if proposed revisions are substantial, another public hearing would be required for the ordinance.

Commissioner Hodge stated that the Board should wait to see the revisions before deciding to schedule another public hearing.

Commissioner Dunn stated that he feels this ordinance was introduced due to SPCA complaints, and it has ended in being an "over reach" of government.

Commissioner Hodge objected to Commissioner Dunn's comment stating the perceived corruption at the SPCA was unfounded. The proposed ordinance is not an "SPCA" Ordinance or contract; it is an Ordinance for animal control services in Cecil County. The County may use any animal control provider to enforce this ordinance.

Discussion ensued regarding the task force not having an opportunity to review revisions made to the ordinance prior to the public hearing.

The Board concurred to request the animal care and control task force review the ordinance and forward comments to the Board.

Signal conversion at Route 1/Red Pump Road intersection

County Administrator Wein reviewed the signal conversation procedure relative to this intersection.

The Board concurred to add this proposal to the video lottery list of projects.

Director Flanigan stated that he has not reviewed the State traffic study; however, he has found that State officials recommend signal conversation only if the data supports the recommendation.

Discussion ensued regarding the cost of the project. County Administrator Wein stated that the State is paying the majority of the costs and the County's portion of the cost would be for the signal conversion only.

The Board concurred to table a decision on the signal conversation until they have more information on costs, and to add this proposal to the video lottery list of projects.

Commissioner Items

Commissioner Dunn commented on several meetings and events he attended during the week. He stated that the Board is willing to meet with Rising Sun Town officials relative to water and wastewater issues.

County Administrator Wein stated that town officials have contacted the county to schedule a meeting with the Board.

Commissioner Hodge commented on several meetings and events he attended during the week. He stated that County officials should continue to seek relief from the toll impact on economic development in the county.

Commissioner Broomell commented on the Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan rezoning hearings. She stated that she feels the public is not aware of the hearings or the extension to accept applications through February 15, 2011.

Director Sennstrom stated that applications are posted on the website as they are submitted; however, adjoining property owners are not notified of the requests.

Commissioner Hodge stated that residents who are aggrieved by a rezoning request have the opportunity to attend the Commissioners public hearing meeting for the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Moore provided the Board a draft letter for employees relative to the cost savings program. She distributed an update on our legislative proposals, and reviewed the potential impact of the Governor's budget for parks and recreation maintenance.

President Mullin stated that the Board has a copy of a draft letter from the Board and the Economic Development Commission opposing the toll increases on I-95, which details the detrimental impact on Cecil County.

The Board concurred to continue efforts to seek alternatives on the proposed toll increases to forward to State officials. County officials should continue to voice concerns and opposition to the detrimental impact on our County residents.

Commissioner Broomell stated that there are residents opposed to the Pearce Creek project also. The Board concurred to continue efforts to protect the community from any adverse impact that may result from the project.

ADJOURNMENT

11:30 a.m. On motion made by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Hodge, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

OPEN SESSION

2:30 p.m.

President Mullin called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Fire Sprinkler discussion

Commissioner Hodge provided the Board with copies of a proposal for fire sprinkler systems.

This proposal would not mandate fire sprinklers; however, it includes a process for builders to provide education on fire sprinkler systems to homebuyers.

Discussion ensued relative to options available for mandating fire sprinkler systems, and current firewall regulations for single family homes, duplexes, and town houses.

Code Building Inspector Funk advised the Board that the code does not define duplex housing. In his opinion, mandating fire sprinkler systems in one and two family dwelling units goes above the minimum standards and intent of the building code.

Discussion ensued regarding permitting single-family homeowners to opt out of mandated fire sprinkler systems and defining duplex homes in the county ordinance.

Discussion ensued regarding the current regulations requiring two family dwelling units to have a one-hour separation wall between the units. A firewall is different from a separation wall and is constructed to stand-alone.

Building Inspector Funk stated that there is still confusion relative to the International Building Code for mandated sprinkler systems. He advised the Board that removing the stipulation would not be a problem.

Commissioner Moore stated that she feels the data supports the value of fire sprinkler systems for saving lives and property; however, there would be additional costs for private well systems. The missing piece of information is a process for educating the homebuyer, and she provided an example of flyer that is being used in another jurisdiction.

Commissioner Hodge stated that it is not the role of government to educate the public on fire sprinkler systems; it should be up to the homebuilder to provide the information. There should be a minimum requirement for homebuilders to provide education to the consumer, but the final decision to install a fire sprinkler system should be left up to the public.

Discussion ensued relative to available options for educating the public on fire sprinkler systems

Code Inspector Funk stated that he has requested comments and information from builders and fire safety personal on proposed code revisions relative to this issue.

The Board concurred to revise the ordinance to provide a process for homebuilders to educate new single-family homebuyers on fire sprinkler systems. County officials were authorized to define duplex homes in our ordinance.

Discussion ensued regarding the differences between a fire sprinkler system, firewall and separation wall.

Code Inspector Funk stated that according to code, a masonry firewall between housing units designate the dwellings as two separate dwellings. Permits and Inspections staff agreed that a firewall contained the fire in one unit in at least 90% of all the connected residential buildings with a firewall.

Discussion ensued relative to research on the effectiveness of sprinkler systems and firewalls in duplex dwelling unit and mandating a costly system for our citizens.

The Board concurred three in favor (Moore, Dunn, Hodge) and two against (Mullin, Broomell) to permit duplex homeowners the option to install a fire sprinkler system provided there is a firewall in the unit. All new homeowners in one or two family dwellings must decline installing a fire sprinkler system, and the burden of education on sprinkler systems will be left to the consumer.

The Building Department will provide an update of the revisions for the Board.

Citizen Budget Advisory Committee – The Board concurred to appoint the budget committee members at the next worksession meeting and authorized County Administrator Wein to schedule a kick off meeting on Tuesday, February 22 or Thursday, February 24 at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

3:30 p.m. – On motion made by Commissioner Hodge, seconded by Commissioner Moore, the meeting was adjourned.

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