



DRAFT MINUTES

April 29, 2010

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Springfield-Sangamon Regional Planning Commission, 200 S 9th Street Suite 200, Springfield, IL

I. ROLL CALL

Board: Cameron Moore, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission; Terry Kohlbuss, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Norm Sims, Springfield Area Transportation Study; Paul Russell, Mclean County Regional Planning Commission, Gordon Smith, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; Mike Lammey; Jerry Blair, East-West Gateway Council of Government; Mark Smith, Decatur Area Transportation Study; Kankakee Area Transportation Study; Bob Soltau, State Line Area Transportation Study; Brian Dickson, DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study; Mark Smith, Decatur Area Transportation Study.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Moore entertained a motion to approve the minutes of February 25, 2010. Treasurer Kohlbuss motioned to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Dickson. All members voted aye.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Kohlbuss informed members the new IDOT contract was signed on March 24, 2010. He is concerned about the balance for accumulated dues and recommended ILARC submit invoices for dues in May and payable in June. There being no objection to this recommendation, Chairman Moore requested Ms. Perales work with ILARC to get dues notices out in May. He further emphasized the duties of the Executive Director and to move the consultant stipend from a monthly rate to an hour rate. Chairman Moore further informed members IDOT appears to be comfortable with the revised UWP. Mr. Kohlbuss entertained a motion to accept the financial papers prepared by ILARC. Mr. Sims moved to accept the financial papers and seconded by Mr. Russell. All members voting aye.

IV. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairman Moore deferred the Chairman's report to new business.

V. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Perales asked members for feedback on the new email blast format using Constant Contact. Her goal is to send the email blasts at least twice a week. Mr. Russell and Mr. Sims felt the information was useful and was easy to forward to staff. She informed members that the May 7th adjournment date does not seem possible and the General Assembly may return the last week of May to pass a budget. Mr. Sims hears that they may pass a lump sum budget for six months and allow the Governor to sort out the rest. He further stated Representative Franks is introducing legislation to abolish DCEO to save monies. Chairman Moore requested staff keep members informed of developments regarding the state budget over the next couple of weeks.

Ms. Perales also informed members the Technical Committee met the previous week and the training topic was transportation conformity. Chairman Moore asked if there is a schedule of training topics. She is working with IDOT regarding a summer training topic to coincide with the release of IDOT's Complete Streets Policy. No date or location has been finalized for the IDOT fall planning conference at this time. Mr. Sims asked about marks for the PL funds. Mr. Kelso stated marks are at the same level as last year.

Mr. Kohlbuss asked whether there is any opportunity for MPOs and RPCs to provide representation on the High Speed Passenger Rail Commission. Mr. Gordon Smith expressed the same interest to Senator

Sandoval and he was receptive to the idea. Mr. Kohlbus motioned to submit a formal request to Senator Sandoval asking for inclusion of a representative from the MPO Advisory Council on the Rail Commission. Mr. Gordon Smith seconded the motion. All members voting aye.

Chairman Moore asked how many MPOs are involved in high speed rail discussion. Bloomington and Peoria would like access to high speed rail. East-West Gateway Council of Governments is dealing with the State of Missouri and there is some concern how to get across the river and the location of stations. Mr. Moore further indicated Senator Sandoval has been to Champaign to discuss high speed rail.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

PRINCIPLES FOR TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

Chairman Moore motioned to approve principles for reauthorization. Ms. Perales shortened the document to make it more concise based on feedback from members. In his recent trip to Washington, DC, Chairman Moore stated a few members from the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee felt work on a reauthorization bill will begin sometime in 2011, possibly in 2012. A motion was made by Treasurer Kohlbus and second by Mr. Blair to accept the principles for reauthorization and dissemination to appropriate federal authorities. All members voting aye.

Mr. Sims expressed the need for an Advisory Council white paper to both gubernatorial candidates to ensure that we educate them on MPO issues and recommended the principles for reauthorization could begin the development of the paper. Chairman Moore recommended briefing papers be developed to provide the importance of MPOs and their role in transportation policy and programs.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS BRIEFING

Mr. Abousleman informed members the President's top priorities do not include reauthorization at this time. Congress is scheduled to sunset at the end this year and all legislation will have to be reintroduced. There is no desire to pass a gas tax to raise the \$500 billion needed to fund the next transportation bill. 2011 will start clean and hopefully we will begin additional discussions that are more relevant to MPOs. The budget and appropriations process needs to be finished this year and it is very contentious in the House and Senate. Congress' time and energy is being taken up by restructuring of America's banking system and ultimately the nomination of a Supreme Court Justice.

Mr. Abousleman agreed with Chairman Moore that potential reauthorization might be 2012. He further advised that Congress will still have to figure out a way to pay for it. There are provisions that both the Senate and House have that could affect MPOs such as: changing the board and voting structures for MPOs, climate change provisions, and green gas emissions regulations and monitoring. There are issues that we have to keep aware of even if they are very deep in a bill and even though they don't have funding attached to them. NARC will continue to update members regarding these legislative issues.

CLIMATE CHANGE:

It is anticipated that the Kerry-Lieberman bill will die soon because of immigration reform discussions in the Senate. It was a super secret bill that would have potentially changed not only our energy policy but the way we were going to deal with climate change. There are two pending bills, the Boxer-Kerry (S1733) and the Waxman-Markey (HR2456) bill that are still in process. The question is whether they will finish immigration and financial reform to get into a comprehensive climate change policy and strategy. We are not convinced that this would be the time to tackle massive climate change or energy regulation that might have an effect on the economy when are talking about economic recovery.

ANOTHER STIMULUS BILL:

This would be the fourth projects bill that would follow the recent HIRE Act that restored the Trust Fund and took back the rescissions. The question for a 4th stimulus bill is how much will it be and where the money comes from. Currently there is discussion to use TARP money that has been recovered from banks that would now be turned over to help fund public infrastructure. The main issue with the 4th stimulus bill is timing. Congress would have to get something done before mid-term elections and with enough time for MPOs to actually get these projects in the pipe line. There is still some debate if this bill would move forward this year.

AIR QUALITY:

Even in the absence of climate change legislation, there is a lot of push on standards related to air quality. One of the things that we are monitoring is what does this new regulation mean for local government and MPOs. As you know the tightening of the standards will mean more counties will be in nonattainment. The whole State of Florida would go from completely in attainment to completely out of attainment meaning millions of new dollars of air quality planning and monitoring, for example.

One of the things NARC is concerned about is in the absence of climate change legislation is that EPA may regulate greenhouse gas emissions anyway. They are doing that in two critical areas for MPOs that could mean a completely new way of doing your job. Both dockets are open in how EPA would fight hard in greenhouse gas emissions and its effect on local governments and MPOs. One is through the regulation of greenhouse gases emissions in all NEPA review and the Clean Air Act. We have provided commentary on both because currently technology does not exist necessarily to meet more stringent greenhouse gas emission requirements. Many who do air quality monitoring know that you can't monitor greenhouse gas emissions as you monitor other area pollutants and ozone.

Treasurer Kohlbus asked Mr. Abousleman of the possibility that we can convince the USEPA to not look backwards prior to the time they make effective the lowering or tightening of the ground level ozone standards in calculating attainment vs. nonattainment, more specifically the design value. This summer Peoria is in attainment and it is difficult to convince people to do things to generate less ground level ozone because USEPA's own criteria indicate we have healthy air at this moment. It would be unfortunate if they adopt a new standard retroactive with the previous 3 years design values stating now you are not in attainment all of a sudden. Mr. Abousleman stated NARC's comments to the USEPA expressed their concern over the timeline for implementation. He did not see a grandfathering issue.

Mr. Kohler from FHWA stated the EPA has phased in the implementation with a specific time frame for the states to develop their plan and an additional time for areas to get into conformity. He further confirmed Mr. Kohlbus' concern about the EPA will use the previous three years before they designate attainment vs. nonattainment. FHWA has already worked phase in requirements by giving the states time for implementation plans and time for MPOs and state DOTs to get into conformity.

Ms. Menard stated Senator Rockefeller and Congressman Rahall have submitted companion legislation in both chambers to prevent EPA from regulating greenhouse emissions. This piece of legislation has not moved but was intended to be a discussion piece. If there is necessary requirement for action, it would be brought to the forefront.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT ZONES:

Ms. Menard stated NARC has been working on RIIZs for a few years and it was a concept introduced by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments. It is a federal legislative effort to change the federal tax code to allow individuals or businesses tax deductible contributions to public infrastructure projects/improvements that would go through the regional planning process and the local government approval process. It would be another tool in the tool box to stimulate private

partnerships, infrastructure investment and development. She expressed her appreciation to the ILMPO for their support of RIIZs. Currently, Senator Specter is holding the draft bill in the Senate, with a companion bill in the House by Congressman Geoff Davis of Kentucky. The bill is at the USDOT for a courtesy review of the legislation. NARC hopes to have something introduced before the end of May with the prediction of attaching it to another bill to get into law.

LIVABILITY:

NARC is testified at a US Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee Staff Briefing on the benefits of livability in small and rural communities. NARC Board Member for Region 1 (New England) Dave Danielson, Commissioner of the Town of Bedford, New Hampshire testified on behalf of NARC. Many Senators have expressed interest in understanding how S. 1619, the Livable Communities Act, will benefit rural and small communities. S.1619 provides two pots of funding for comprehensive regional planning and implementation for regions of all sizes, capabilities and locations. The push is to get the bill passed before Chairman Dodd ends his term in December. We expect additional Senate Banking Committee to hold a hearing in late May/early June and NARC hopes to testify in future hearings.

The Obama administration is moving forward with their Sustainable Communities Partnership with the recently announced interim NOFA through USDOT for Tiger II discretionary funds. The interim NOFA is an opportunity to comment on the potential of a joint HUD-DOT funding and program that combines \$35 million for Tiger II planning grants and \$40 million of HUD Community Challenge planning grants. From the comments submitted, DOT and HUD will determine a program and funding opportunity in late May/early June. Ms. Menard encouraged members to submit comments to NARC by May 7th. She further stated the USDOT intention is to make regulations and funding opportunities more streamlined to push the funding as a viable opportunity moving forward. Mr. Blair stated in the notice applications require a benefit cost analysis and it doesn't distinguish between planning and actual implementation projects. He asked would planning need some form of benefit cost analysis.

Upon request from Treasurer Kohbluss, Ms. Menard further clarified that there are various potential livability grant opportunities, including: 1) \$35 million TIGER II planning grants, 2) \$40 million at HUD in Community Challenge grants and 3) \$100 million in the HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant program. Ms. Menard stated the \$100 million NOFA was suppose to be announced in April but has been delayed until sometime in May or early June. She encouraged members to register through www.grants.gov to be ready to apply once the NOFA comes out. The Tiger II discretionary grant program has \$35 million of Tiger II planning grants and they are asking should they take the HUD \$40 grant program and marry them for one application process and one granting opportunity that would fulfill both goals within DOT and HUD. Treasurer Kohbluss stated he has people who have the Secretary's ear. Ms. Menard stated NARC has advised USDOT they should streamline their programs and easily developed guidelines.

Treasurer Kohbluss asked of the \$100 million is there is any indication to put \$25 million set aside for the smaller MPOs. Ms. Menard stated there will be some monies set aside, small and rural areas. Chairman Moore asked about the motivation of climate change legislation this year. She responded that it may be both a tactic to get Congress motivated to pass a piece of legislation. She believes that they would run into a lot of congressional procedural activity if the EPA started to regulate gas emission on their own and there may be lawsuits if they do so. They are going to be pushing to get something moving.

Ms. Menard stated in a recent Senate Democratic Rural Caucus meeting she was surprised that so little of the discussion was focused on infrastructure and rural transportation needs. She advised members need to reaffirm Congressional members on the importance of rural infrastructure needs soon.

Treasurer Kohbluss asked NARC to provide some insight into the possibility of new leadership in DC. Mr. Abousleman responded that Senator Dodd is the champion of livability and his goal is to get all of this done before his retirement. The Senator's bill focuses on potential authorization of \$400 million in competitive planning grants and \$3.75 billion in competitive implementation grants for Congress to consider every year. There is bipartisan support for Regional Infrastructure Improvement Zones (RIIZs) – supported by IL MPOs. He further advised that they all need to gather right after November to take a look at the new leadership in Congress.

Mr. Sims questioned whether rush legislation and new concepts are difficult when they have not been defined. Chairman Moore stated it appears they are creating more flexibility but illustrates some of the challenges in providing flexibility. Treasurer Kohbluss stated Washington is tweaking its priorities that reflects at the local level what should be happening. Chairman Moore expressed that we do have some challenges ahead from the local areas to try to address these issues and agreed with Mr. Sims point. Terms like sustainability and livability, they have different meanings for different people through this process they must become defined to see if we are achieving our goals. Chairman Moore addressed the change at majority/minority leadership and further stated NARC has built relationships built with both the minority and majority parties. Ms. Menard confirmed.

Treasurer Kohbluss stated in late August or early September, Secretary LaHood will help cosponsor a transportation conference in Peoria and recommended a topic on what is livability and sustainability. Mr. Sims recommended examples of what livability and sustainability is and how it can be accomplished. Mr. Abousleman advised with sustainability, it is not necessary just about community design, but efficiency at the federal government. NARC is primarily concerned that MPOs are already doing all of this work through a number of federal processes, programs and planning that has been there for 40 years. The question is can we make them more efficient and effective to meet your needs of what your community vision for sustainability is.

From NARC's perspective, MPOs work in separate pots of money through separate programs that don't necessarily talk to each other. Their goal is to go back to the federal agencies, this is how you can be more effective leveraging monies especially in the tight economy and falling tax revenues. Make sure these processes are linked, that they cross talk and they actually do achieve a community goal that is predominately that is based on economic development. Ms. Menard advised that we do not want the federal government to tell us what livability or sustainability is. We want them to set basic principles and federal goals that we can make meet through our own livability activities and plans. If we ask them what it may look like, we may get something that we don't like. Chairman Moore stated they are trying to provide some flexibility and working in a variety of communities around the country and the definition varies depending on where you live.

IDOT BRIEFING

Mr. Sherman stated he is on a National Cooperative Highway Research Program panel through the Transportation Research Board which is almost a year into its study that is looking at benchmarks for transportation agencies for sustainability communities. He believes sustainability is the integration of the social, economical and environmental perspectives. In some perspectives, it is a management by objective statement. He further indicated sustainability and livability are not exactly the same thing. We tend to think of livability a nice little suburban community that has parks and bike trails and high density, as well as shops, everything is walkable. In terms of sustainability, it starts with the sustainability for every kind of transportation mode. He further stated we need to come to terms with transportation investments as a strategic way of shaping development. Chairman Moore state the rule of expectations is that we can't meet expectations when we don't know what they are. Treasurer Kohbluss stated this topic would be great for the IDOT Fall Planning Conference.

Mr. Sherman stated the state metropolitan planning funds will cover the \$5 million comprehensive regional planning funds. The funds will be distributed at the same ratio as the CRP with more restrictive guidelines. The Auditor General had a finding against IDOT that we were not adequately tracking how those funds were used. We would appreciate some sort of statement of how those funds will be spent with a possible quarterly report highlighting how those funds are being used.

Treasurer Kohbluss stated both Ms. Perales and himself sat in the IDOT Budget Appropriations hearings in Springfield and none of the legislatures asked about the status of the funds. Mr. Sherman stated the Secretary of IDOT understands the difficulty of establishing those funds and the flexibility it provided to MPOs and RPCs. Chairman Moore provided an example from Champaign they would like to expand their travel demand modeling program. He further emphasized Chairman Oberstar's advocacy of MPOs and its impact in local communities. He is an avid bicycle rider but he is scheduled to retire soon. Treasurer Kohbluss is convinced that Secretary Hannig is sincere in his efforts to improve the relationships among MPOs in Illinois.

Mr. Sims asked how we develop teams of state agencies that are working with RPCs and MPOs. The whole concept is to break up these silos to effectively work together. Mr. Sherman stated the IDOT Office of Program & Planning has specific functions to ensure MPOs are meeting their federal requirements. We want be able to provide guidance and assistance when necessary – not just talk at each other but to each other. He provided an example of the CSS process as transit oriented development because of housing development with access to a transit location. There are other topics we can come together and have policy discussions about. Mr. Sims supported the concept that other state agencies are able to address the MPO Advisory Council in policy development and implementation. Chairman Moore stated this is why this group was created to have these types of discussions.

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS:

Chairman Moore solicited volunteers to serve on the nominating committee for new officers to begin July 1. He is willing to serve on the nominating committee and members can meet over a teleconference call. Mr. Soltau expressed an interest in serving. Chairman Moore will call current officers to see if they are interested in serving again.

Jon Paul reminded members of a travel demand webinar. Chairman Moore discussed travel demand modeling and that LEAM provides better forecasting and projections. The Champaign County Regional Planning Commission is trying to expand that beyond the metro area in Champaign. Mr. Blair indicated a lot of work came out of Peoria, but integration with consultants is imperative.

IX. CALENDAR

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 20, 2010. The next Illinois Association of Regional Councils meeting is scheduled to meet on the same day. Chairman Moore suggested an alternative date in June, in case there is not enough business for a May 20 meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Moore entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lammey motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Sims. Chairman Moore adjourned the meeting at 12:35 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Marta Perales

In attendance:

Others: FHWA, Betsy Johnson and Jon-Paul Kohler; IDOT, Tom Caldwell, Tom Kelso and Keith Sherman; and Marta Perales, Illinois MPO Advisory Council. *Teleconference:* Fred Abousleman and Shannon Menard from NARC.