

RAMSEY COUNTY REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY

October 21, 2008

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority met at 11:30 am, Tuesday, October 21, 2008, in the Council Chambers, Third Floor Court House.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Jim McDonough
Commissioner Tony Bennett
Commissioner Toni Carter
Commissioner Rafael Ortega
Commissioner Jan Parker
Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt
Commissioner Janice Rettman

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chair McDonough called the meeting to order at 11:30 am.

AGENDA

Commissioner Reinhardt moved approval of the Agenda of the October 21, 2008 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Carter. Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0. Motion accepted.

MINUTES

Commissioner Carter moved approval of the Minutes from the September 9, 2008 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Ortega. Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0. Motion accepted.

1. **Authorize payment to the St. Paul Port Authority for services not to exceed \$10,000 for Post Office property acquisition work through December 31, 2008**

Commissioner Reinhardt moved approval to authorize payment to the St. Paul Port Authority for services not to exceed \$10,000 for Post Office property acquisition work through December 31, 2008, seconded by Commissioner Parker. Commissioner Rettman commented that she would be voting no on this item.

Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, McDonough – 6. Nays – Rettman – 1. Motion accepted.

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has contracted with the City of St. Paul for the professional services of St. Paul Port Authority for the negotiation of acquisition of Post Office buildings in St. Paul; and

WHEREAS, The St. Paul Port Authority provides detailed invoice documentation for services and costs accrued for Post Office property acquisition work; and

WHEREAS, The City of St. Paul no longer is involved with the work being done on the contract and is no longer responsible for 50% of the costs continuing on the project; and

WHEREAS, It is anticipated that the St. Paul Port Authority will invoice Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority for historic covenants and easements required as part of the acquisition in an amount not to exceed \$10,000 through December 31, 2008; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, Authorize the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority to approve payment to the St. Paul Port Authority for services not to exceed \$10,000 for Post Office property acquisition work through December 31, 2008.

2. Central Corridor Project Update

Robin Kaufman, Manager of Public Involvement for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Project presented updates on the project, public involvement activities and the public art project. She explained that the New Starts Application was submitted on September 5th and is starting its review with the Federal Transit Administration. She said they have also created a Parking Solutions Team (PST), in which staff from different project partners meet to discuss issues. The first team created covers the parking issues and is co-chaired by Dan Soler and Craig Blakely, who is with the City of St. Paul. They have held 2-3 meetings so far and are coming up with solutions to address some of the on street parking issues. This team includes Public Works staff and Outreach Coordinators. Outreach Coordinators have been surveying all the businesses to understand their impacts and needs, and this information is then brought back to the solutions team. This is a works in progress and the team meets weekly to discuss solutions.

Commissioner Ortega asked for clarification of the solutions teams.

Robin explained that previously there were Issue Teams that worked on issues that needed to be resolved. Now that they identified most of the issues, any outstanding details now fall into the Solutions Team.

To further clarify, Commissioner Ortega commented that off street parking, for example, is being addressed by a solutions team to come up with remedies for the issues.

Commissioner Rettman asked if the meetings were available for public attendance.

Robin responded that the meetings are currently at the staff level. However, she added that the Outreach Coordinators have been meeting with the community groups to work

through the specific issues in each area and they then share the information with the CDC's, as they are in a good position to help with some of the solutions.

Commissioner Rettman commented that there was supposed to be a community involvement section, which she had asked for previously and still has not been created. Additionally, she has been in contact with some of the groups Robin Caufman mentioned and the Metropolitan Council still does not have a funding commitment in order to act on the issues. She said the Met Council recently received a letter from a variety of groups addressing this concern and stressed that people should be able to attend the meetings.

Commissioner Carter commented that the solution teams being developed should be helpful in driving toward solutions in a variety of different areas, but that it has been difficult to keep track of where things are happening and how to participate in the key discussions to either observe or impact it. Specifically she said Community Advisory has been told that they would have opportunity to inform, impact or influence and that it there has been wonderment in how that influence role is to occur. She said at a prior Central Corridor Management Committee she suggested the development of a compact as a way to comprise and share how decisions are being made, how solutions are being derived and which groups are working on which solutions. She believes this is very necessary in seeing the whole picture and understanding how solutions are being derived. She asked if the Met Council team is considering this.

Robin Caufman responded that she was not aware of Commissioner Carter's suggestion of a compact but that they could work on additional ways to inform the communities on all the teams and meetings that are taking place.

Chair McDonough commented that the commissioners do receive the news updates on all the communities and suggested that that they add the project Solution Team meetings to those updates, so that people are aware of when and where they are happening and can get a sense of participation opportunities.

Robin Caufman said she would take that suggestion back to the project office.

Robin Caufman continued the project update and said they are conducting traffic modeling on University Avenue as well as downtown St. Paul and are beginning to review the results of those.

She also updated the Commissioners on the Public Involvement activities. She mentioned that a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) mixer was held on September 25, an opportunity they presented to small minority and women owned businesses, to encourage them to think about the construction phase and possibly bidding on some of those contracts. 160 people attended and over 20 businesses expressed interest in becoming certified and have begun the certification process. They will hold more of the mixers in the next months and will begin to work on some of their Work Force in having some mixers such as the DBE mixer. Robin Caufman said they

have been holding monthly meetings with the CDC's, about every two weeks, to learn about the issues especially coming from the small businesses. She said she is trying to find out what resources are out there to fit small businesses as they come closer to construction. She continued her update to say that Central Corridor Partnership hosted a business listening session. This is a brain storming exercise to work on the business concerns, find out what resources they will need for construction and figure out how they can start planning and organizing around those issues. They have held one session so far and plan to hold 2 or 3 more.

Robin Kaufman continued her update on the Public Art process. She said that the stations' structural design will be consistent through the corridor. It was learned from the Hiawatha Corridor that it is very difficult to maintain the differently designed stations because they all have unique parts and pieces. They also found that the stations are not necessarily up to current ADA code because some do not have seating arrangements and seating structures may not provide adequate seats. Therefore, they found that creating consistent structures is crucial and have received positive feedback from the community on that piece. She said they are now working on integrating the public art into the station design.

They are in the process of hiring five artists to assist them in this process. The artists will help to reflect the community around each of the stations, as well as make each of the stations unique with their art. They have about \$2.8 million budgeted for art at each station, which amounts to \$187,000 per station. The Artist Selection Committee that assisted the project office in selecting artists consisted of Sarah Penman from Ramsey County, Marcus Young from St. Paul, Regina Flanagan from CAAPB, Craig Amundsen from the University of Minnesota, Mary Altman from the City of Minneapolis, Joe Scala from Hennepin County, Erin McLennon from Minnesota State Art Board and Denise Hals from Minnesota Department of Transportation. For the selection process, they began with Requests for Qualifications for which 87 responses were received and 66 of those were eligible. The Artist Selection Committee reviewed all the qualified applications and narrowed the selections to 10 finalists who they believed would work well with the corridor and meet the criteria. The next step in the selection process was Request for Proposals in which the finalists submitted a concept station plan and a proposal for how they would engage the community in the process. The criteria used in the selection process consisted of artistic merit, materials and durability – taking in consideration the outdoor environment, maintenance and vandalism, demonstrated grasp of the work, familiarity and understanding of the neighborhood and its identity, public involvement approach, impact on transit customers and their successful completion of similar projects. The artists were then interviewed and the selection committee made a recommendation for 5 artists.

Robin Kaufman then talked about the 5 artists who were selected and briefly detailed their backgrounds. The first artists are Andrea Myklebust and Stanton Sears, former residents of the Twin Cities who moved their studio to Stockholm, Wisconsin. Their previous public art works include LRT Stations, public work projects and airports. They have flexibility with many materials including aluminum, stone, terrazzo, bronze, steel

and concrete. They are familiar with the communities and neighborhood organizations and plan to hold a visioning session with the public. Specific works include the Lindborgh Station on Hiawatha Corridor, the Edgerton Street Bridge in Vadnais Heights, the World War II Veteran's Memorial on the Minnesota State Capital, and a structure at Arizona State University.

The second artist is Janet Lofquist, a local resident of Minneapolis who has studios in Minneapolis and St. Paul. She has also worked on LRT stations, college campuses, plazas and institutions. Her materials include stainless steel, painted steel, stone, cast and sheet bronze, glass, cast concrete, wood and concrete pavers. She also plans to explore the relationship of the station location with the local architecture and community. Her public artwork includes the Hiawatha VA Station, a sculpture at the Metropolitan State University in St. Paul, a structure at St. Cloud State University and a plaza piece at the Minnesota State University in Bemidji.

The third artist is Seitu Jones, who lives and works in St. Paul's Frogtown neighborhood on University Avenue. He has done public infrastructure and plaza type pieces, using a variety of materials such as bronze, granite, concrete, steel and wood. He plans to bring in two artists who he will train and mentor in public art and he also plans to collaborate with groups of people including neighborhood residents, engineers and school children. His public artwork includes a piece on Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis, the "Summer Park Overlook Bridge in Heritage Park in Minneapolis that is accompanied by the "Summer Park Overflow" Grate, and a retaining wall on Wabasha Street in St. Paul.

The fourth artist is Roberto Delgado from Los Angeles, California. His previous work includes transportation projects for bridges, retaining walls, sound barriers and LRT stations and he uses a variety of materials such as ceramic tile, stone and metal. He engages the community by taking area photos, interviewing, researching the community's culture, history and archival graphics. He has public artwork at the US Border Station in Douglas, Arizona, the East Los Angeles Civic Center in California, the Port of Los Angeles Cruise Ship Promenade, and the Heritage Square LRT Station in the Lincoln Heights District in California.

The fifth artist is Nancy Blum from New York, who has worked on transit stations, airports and public works projects. The materials she uses are cast iron, cast resin, cast aluminum and cast bronze. She plans to engage the small businesses, diverse residents and local organizations around her station. Her previous public artwork includes the station art at the Dobbs Ferry station in New York, a wall piece at Seattle/Tacoma International Airport and a pothole cover in Seattle, Washington.

Robin Kaufman explained that the Artist Selection Committee has also begun to designate the artists to the stations, taking into consideration their knowledge of the communities and expressed interest. Assignments have been made and are as followed: Blum will work at the U of M stations and at Fairview; Delgado will work at – Village, Snelling Avenue and the downtown 4th and Cedar Street Stations; Lofquist will work at the 29th Avenue station and at Capital East and the 10th Street station;

Myklebust and Sears were selected for the West Gates and Raymond stations, as well as the Union Depot Station. Jones was selected to work at Lexington Avenue, Rice and Dale Street stations.

Commissioner Rettman asked if Mykelbust and Sears would be designated to the Western, Victoria and Hamline stations as well.

Robin Kaufman responded that those stations have not yet been assigned to an artist.

Robin Kaufman said the next step in the public art process is to award the public art contracts, which is on the Metropolitan Council's agenda for Wednesday, October 22. They will be taking action on this item, which was passed by a 5 to 3 vote by the Transportation Committee on Monday, October 13. Once this action is passed by the Met Council, the regional administrator will be able to execute the contracts, which is anticipated in November. They will begin the Public Involvement Process.

Chair McDonough wanted to confirm, first, that the artists' station preferences were taken into consideration in assigning them to their stations. He then wanted to clarify the 5 to 3 vote by the Transportation Committee on the artists' contracts by saying that the 3 votes opposing the contracts were not necessarily unsupportive of the proposed artist. Rather, they were opposed to spending any money on public art. He stated it is important for the community to understand this.

Commissioner Carter commented that it was very surprising to hear of votes that were not in support of spending money on public art for a public project when it is a federal requirement to support it. She was, therefore, pleased that the Transportation Committee did pass the recommendation for artists' contracts and that it is moving forward. She mentioned, however, that there is a concern about the manner in which the process will move forward. She asked Robin Kaufman to explain what is being done to assure the management of the public art processes such as working with the artists, working with the architects, engaging the community and ensuring that we are moving forward with a process that works for the community and that they have influence in the processes.

In response to Commissioner Carter's question, Robin Kaufman commented that the Federal Transit Authority requirement is only a guideline for including public art into the project and is suggested to be between .5 – 5% of construction cost. She explained further that part of the challenge has been that state laws in the procurement processes do not allow them to share the content of the artists' proposals with the public prior to the contracts being executed. Therefore, they created the Artist Selection Committee to be able to bring in the community interests and knowledge as part of the process in the selection. She said she is aware of the concerns and comments in this issue.

Commissioner Carter asked if the content of the proposals would become available to the community now that the artists have been selected, how soon would that happen and if there was a set person to be in charge of the public art process.

Robin Cauffman responded that as soon as the contracts are executed, the information could be shared with the public. She also said the person managing the public art and architecture processes has been recently replaced with Alicia Vap. Once the artists are under contracts, they will work closely with the outreach coordinator and a task force for each station, to help with the public involvement process and to help bring the community into the process. She also pointed out that the artists understand that their proposals and concepts presented during the selection process may or may not be used, as they were solely used for the artists' selection into the project. Therefore, the proposals may be shown to the public for their input but the artists may also just start from scratch.

Commissioner Rettman asked when the Public Involvement Plan would be available. She said at a recent Regional Rail Authority meeting, it was determined that the Plan was still not available to the public and needs to be.

Robin Cauffman replied that she would need to confer with Dan Soler on the availability of the Plan.

3. Comments for Metropolitan Council's Transportation Policy Plan

WHEREAS, The Metropolitan Council is required to update the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) for the region; and

WHEREAS, The Council is receiving public comments on the plan until November 6, 2008; and

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) has been working toward, and is committed to, improving transit options in Ramsey County and the rest of the East Metro area; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, That the RCRRA believes that the lack of transitway corridors in the East Metro area is a serious shortcoming of the plan; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, That, while the Metropolitan Council is not responsible for intercity rail planning, projects like the Union Depot Intermodal Transit Hub are vital to the region's economic future; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, That the RCRRA does not agree with identifying corridors such as Red Rock as bus corridors when prior planning work identifies them as rail corridors; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, That the plan's assumption of one rail corridor at a time is inadequate and inconsistent with legislative direction; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, That the bus funding in the plan appears to be inadequate and the Metropolitan Council should take a more aggressive approach to identifying adequate funding; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, That the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority is eager to work with the Council to improve the regional transportation system and we will be active advocates for East Metro projects.

Chair McDonough commented that the resolution, for the item Comments for the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), needs to be more strongly geared toward Ramsey County's specific issues. He said the Metropolitan Council needs to take a lead in recognizing that an intermodal transportation hub in the community is vital to a healthy transit system. He suggested that the Regional Railroad Authority return on the November 4, 2008 meeting with the re-worded resolution

Commissioner Reinhardt commented that the legislators in Ramsey and Washington County - the East Metro, are also very alarmed about what is being proposed. She said it is very important that they work in conjunction with Washington County, the state legislator and business partners to be much more aggressive on the issue.

Commissioner Parker agreed that more discussion on this issue was necessary. She also wondered why the copies of the 2030 TPP they received were missing certain chapters.

Steve Morris responded that only the Transit and Summary components were included in with the board packets and that the rest of the chapters could be accessed on the Metropolitan Council's website.

Chair McDonough asked the Regional Rail Authority to provide hard copies of the other TPP chapters to the Commissioners.

Tim Mayasich commented that he would contact Ken Haider, Director of Public Works, to coordinate responses regarding the other TPP chapters and that it is the role of Public Works to provide comments on the Plan as well.

Chair McDonough commented that the Commissioners should forward any individual pieces to the Regional Railroad Authority. He said it is important that they have a firm voice about what their vision is for the 2030 TPP and how it affects Ramsey County and the East Metro.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.