

Meeting Minutes

RAMSEY COUNTY RAILROAD AUTHORITY MEETING

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority met on March 22, 2005, in Council Chambers, Third Floor Courthouse.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Rafael Ortega
 Commissioner Tony Bennett
 Commissioner Jim McDonough
 Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt
 Commissioner Janice Rettman (arrived at 11:10 a.m.)
 Commissioner Jan Wiessner

OTHERS PRESENT: Julie Kleinschmidt, Kathy DeSpiegelaere, Alicia Vap, David Twa, Toni Carter,
 Steve Morris, Deb Bloom, Lisa Falk, Mark Fabel

Chair Ortega called the meeting to order at 11:05 am.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

1. Approve minutes from February 22, 2005 RCRRRA meetings

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Wiessner, to approve the minutes from the February 22, 2005 RCRRRA meeting.

Roll call vote was taken:

Ayes – 5, Nays – 0
Motion accepted.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Wiessner to adjust the policy agenda to review action items five, six and seven before item four.

Roll call vote was taken:

Ayes – 5, Nays – 0
Motion accepted

2. Ratify Partial Payment No. 7 in the amount of \$17,264.42 to Metropolitan Council for consulting services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 Transit Study for the period of December 25, 2004 to January 21, 2005

(Commissioner Rettman arrived at this time).

A motion was made by Commissioner McDonough, seconded by Commissioner Wiessner, to ratify Partial Payment No. 7 in the amount of \$17,264.42 to Metropolitan Council for consulting services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 Transit Study for the period of December 25, 2004 to January 21, 2005.

Roll call vote was taken; Commissioner Rettman voted no:

Ayes – 5, Nays – 1
Motion accepted.

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has contracted for the professional consulting services of Metropolitan Council for the purpose of conducting the Central Corridor Phase 2 study; and

WHEREAS, Metropolitan Council has satisfactorily completed portions of the work identified in the referenced agreements, and provided detailed invoice documentation for services and costs accrued through January 21, 2005; and

WHEREAS, submittal of invoices and payment documentation to the Rail Authority for ratification at the next scheduled meeting following staff approval of invoice documentation is required; and

WHEREAS, Metropolitan Council Invoice No. NCV-3484, Partial Payment No. 7, in the amount of \$17,264.42 attachments thereto, provide the correct documentation of payments due Metropolitan Council through January 21, 2005; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, Payment to Metropolitan Council in the amount of \$17,264.42 for services rendered through January 21, 2005, is hereby ratified.

3. Ratify Partial Payment No. 12 in the amount of \$110,976.83 to DMJM+Harris, Inc. for consulting services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 Transit Study for the period of November 27, 2004 to December 31, 2004

A motion was made by Commissioner McDonough, seconded by Commissioner Wiessner, to ratify Partial Payment No. 12 in the amount of \$110,976.83 to DMJM+Harris, Inc. for consulting services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 Transit Study for the period of November 27, 2004 to December 31, 2004.

Roll call vote was taken; Commissioner Rettman voted no:

Ayes – 5, Nays – 1
Motion accepted

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has contracted for the professional consulting services of DMJM+Harris, Inc. for the purpose of conducting the Central Corridor Phase 2 study; and

WHEREAS, DMJM+Harris, Inc. has satisfactorily completed portions of the work identified in the referenced agreements, and provided detailed invoice documentation for services and costs accrued through December 31, 2004; and

WHEREAS, submittal of invoices and payment documentation to the Rail Authority for ratification at the next scheduled meeting following staff approval of invoice documentation is required; and

WHEREAS, DMJM+Harris, Inc. Invoice No. 100-1710-5, Partial Payment No. 12, in the amount of \$110,976.83 attachments thereto, provide the correct documentation of payments due DMJM+Harris, Inc. through December 31, 2004; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, Payment to DMJM+Harris, Inc. in the amount of \$110,976.83 for services rendered through December 31, 2004, is hereby ratified.

POLICY AGENDA

5. Approval of trail easement to the City of Roseville

Commissioner Wiessner clarified that the intent of the easement is to allow for transit as well, that the corridor is wide enough to handle both the path and transit in the future.

Commissioner Rettman clarified that there will be a sign posted for this easement.

A motion was made by Commissioner McDonough, seconded by Commissioner Bennett, to approve the trail easement to the City of Roseville.

Roll call vote was taken:

Ayes – 6, Nays – 0
Motion accepted.

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has proposed for possible future development a transitway extending from White Bear Lake to downtown Minneapolis (Northeast Diagonal); and

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority purchased a segment of former Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad right of way from the Hennepin/Ramsey County line to Walnut Street in Roseville in 2003 for future transit on the Northeast Diagonal; and

WHEREAS, The City of Roseville has requested an easement from the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a trail along this former railroad right of way; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority approve Easement ENE050 with the City of Roseville for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a trail along the right of way owned in Roseville, and authorizes the Chair to sign the Easement.

6. Approval of Bruce Vento Regional Trail Extension Plans by the City of St. Paul

A motion was made by Commissioner McDonough, seconded by Commissioner Wiessner, to approve the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Extension Plans by the City of St. Paul.

Roll call vote was taken:

Ayes – 6, Nays – 0
Motion accepted

WHEREAS, The Northeast Corridor right of way, extending from Kellogg Boulevard in St. Paul to Beam Avenue in Maplewood was acquired by Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority in 1992; and

WHEREAS, The Northeast Corridor was acquired to preserve the property as a future option for a light rail transit line; and

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has approved Easement025 with the City of St. Paul for an easement to use RCRRRA right of way for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail from the northern city limits to East Seventh Street; and

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, the City of St. Paul, and Ramsey County executed a Joint Powers Agreement to define the roles and responsibilities for the planning, development, and operation of the corridor for trail and potential future light rail transit use; and

WHEREAS, The City of St. Paul has requested to extend the trail south to Fourth Street and Commercial Street, and different parts of the trail will utilize Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority right of way; and

WHEREAS, per Easement025 and the Joint Powers Agreement, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority must review and approve trail plans; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority approve the Bruce Vento Regional Trail extension plans from East Seventh Street to Fourth Street and Commercial Street by the City of St. Paul.

7. Approve Phalen Boulevard Contaminated Soil Management and approve Amendment One to Easement 049 with the City of St. Paul for indemnification language

Commissioner Rettman commented that thanks should be given to the staff that worked diligently to ensure that the County's interests are protected.

A motion was made by Commissioner McDonough, seconded by Commissioner Wiessner to approve Phalen Boulevard Contaminated Soil Management and approve Amendment One to Easement 049 with the City of St. Paul for indemnification language.

Roll call vote was taken:

Ayes – 6, Nays – 0
Motion accepted

WHEREAS, The Northeast Corridor right of way, extending from Kellogg Boulevard in St. Paul to Beam Avenue in Maplewood was acquired by Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority in 1992;

WHEREAS, The Northeast Corridor was acquired to preserve the property as a future option for a light rail transit line; and

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has approved Easement 049 with the City of St. Paul for a permanent easement to use RCRRA right of way for the construction and permanent roadway, Phalen Boulevard, from Payne Avenue to Johnson Parkway in St. Paul, a length of 1.6 miles; and

WHEREAS, The City of St. Paul has proposed to remediate contaminated soil from within RCRRA right of way under Phalen Boulevard and has proposed to indemnify RCRRA for all of the soils placed, as part of the Phalen Boulevard construction, within the area that will be formally defined and recorded as the Phalen Boulevard roadway easement area; Now Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, That the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority approve Phalen Boulevard contaminated soil management from Payne Avenue to Johnson Parkway as proposed by the City of St. Paul; Now, Be It Further

RESOLVED, That the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority approve Amendment One to Easement 049 with the City of St. Paul for indemnification language contingent upon approval by the St. Paul City Council and Mayor.

4. Presentation by Mark Fabel, McGough Development, on transit-oriented development

Kathy DeSpiegelaere introduced Mark Fabel, McGough Development, who presented information about development being done in Bloomington at the Bloomington Central light rail transit station. He reported that McGough Development purchased the forty-three acre property with the knowledge that light rail would intersect the property. He explained that the plans evolved into a mixed-use project, including housing, business and retail buildings. He commented that the City of Bloomington has been involved in the process from the beginning, which has been beneficial to the development process.

Questions were asked concerning the existing neighborhoods around the area of development and how they are being blended into McGough's plans; when the City of Bloomington became involved in the project; and whether there was opposition from the Mall of America. Commissioner McDonough commended Mr. Fabel and McGough for working with the City of Bloomington to make this project happen and commented that the payoff in working together is invaluable for the community. Commissioner Bennett commented that he would like to see St. Paul doing the same with the Central Corridor project, with development plans in place before track is laid down.

8. Central Corridor Update

Steve Morris stated that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) gave verbal approval on March 4, 2005 to the Metropolitan Council Regional Travel Demand model. He explained that this approval means that the Central Corridor consultants can use that to develop the travel time information and user benefit information necessary for the FTA. He commented that the Central Corridor team has continued to meet with the University of Minnesota work out issues related to the stadium and has come up with cost estimates of the various scenarios the University has put on the table, to show the impacts of some of those requests.

Mr. Morris distributed a copy of the March 9, 2005 letter issued from the FTA Administrator, Jenna Dorn, which discusses changes the FTA is planning to make to the cost effectiveness index (the \$25.00 figure). He reported that the FTA wants future projects to be approved that have a medium rating or higher, rather than a low or higher medium rating. He explained that as part of the ratings changes, FTA also plans to change how they calculate the index. He stated that the FTA is looking for comments by April 1, 2005.

Mr. Morris also distributed a comment letter approved by the Central Corridor Coordinating Committee (CCCC), which generally supported the idea that FTA needs to revise the costs to make them as accurate as possible.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wiessner, seconded by Commissioner McDonough, to authorize the RCRRRA Chair to write a letter to the FTA in general supporting the ideas as presented in the letter by the CCCC.

Roll call vote was taken; Commissioner Bennett was absent from the vote:

Ayes – 5, Nays – 0

9. Legislative Update

Kathy DeSpiegelaere stated that the Central Corridor project has been included in both the House and the Senate conference committee proposals on the bonding bill for \$5.25 million.

She also noted that the House passed its version of the Federal Authorization Bill, a six year transportation bill, last week. She stated that four projects in Ramsey County are authorized in that bill; Central, Union Depot, Rush Line and Red Rock Corridor.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.