

Meeting Minutes

RAMSEY COUNTY RAILROAD AUTHORITY MEETING

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority met on April 5, 2005, in Council Chambers, Third Floor Courthouse.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Rafael Ortega
 Commissioner Tony Bennett
 Commissioner Toni Carter
 Commissioner Jim McDonough
 Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt
 Commissioner Janice Rettman (arrived at 10:34 a.m.)
 Commissioner Jan Wiessner

OTHERS PRESENT: Kathy DeSpiegelaere, Alicia Vap, David Twa, Steve Morris, Kris Longhenry,
 Jane McClure, Mark Voerding, Kris Amundson, Ted Davis, John Stiles, John
 Choi

Chair Ortega called the meeting to order at 10:30 am.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

1. Approve minutes from March 22, 2005 RCRRA meetings

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

Roll call vote was taken:

Ayes – 6, Nays – 0
Motion accepted.

2. Ratify Partial Payment No. 13 in the amount of \$6,518.75 to Goff and Howard Inc. for consulting services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 Transit Study for January 2005

A motion was made by Commissioner McDonough, seconded by Commissioner Wiessner, to ratify Partial Payment No. 13 in the amount of \$6,518.75 to Goff and Howard Inc. for consulting services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 Transit Study for January 2005.

Roll call vote was taken:

Ayes – 6, Nays – 0
Motion accepted.

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

WHEREAS, Goff and Howard, Inc. has satisfactorily completed portions of the work identified in the referenced agreements, and provided detailed invoice documentation for services and costs accrued through January 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, Goff and Howard, Inc. Invoice No. 9083, Partial Payment No. 13 in the amount of \$6,518.75 attachments thereto, provide the correct documentation of payments due Goff and Howard, Inc. through January 2005; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, Payment to Goff and Howard, Inc. in the amount of \$6,518.75 for services rendered through January 2005 is hereby ratified.

3. Ratify Partial Payments Nos. 11 and 13 in the amount of \$124,370.09 to DMJM+Harris, Inc. for consulting services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 Transit Study for January 2005

A motion was made by Commissioner McDonough, seconded by Commissioner Wiessner, to ratify Partial Payments Nos. 11 and 13 in the amount of \$124,370.09 to DMJM+Harris, Inc. for consulting services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 Transit Study for January 2005.

Roll call vote was taken:

Ayes – 6, Nays – 0
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 January 31, 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, DMJM+Harris, Inc. Invoice No. 100-1066-5, Partial Payment No. 11, in the amount of \$23,103.89 and Invoice No. 100-2158-5, Partial Payment No. 12 in the amount of \$101,266.20 attachments thereto, provide the correct documentation of payments due DMJM+Harris, Inc. through January 31, 2005; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, Payment to DMJM+Harris, Inc. in the amount of \$124,370.09 for services rendered through January 31, 2005, is hereby ratified.

(Commissioner Rettman arrived at this time).

POLICY AGENDA

4. Report on Central Corridor Community Involvement by Ted Davis and Kris Amundson

Kris Amundson, Goff and Howard, introduced herself and Ted Davis, of Davis Communications. Ms. Amundson and Mr. Davis presented a progress report on public outreach efforts on Central Corridor. Ms. Amundson listed the areas that would be covered in the presentation: an update of the work that has been done to date and the progress that has been made; an overview of outreach efforts; discussion of the tools used with the community groups; the planning for public hearings; what is being learned in the community as people have been talked with; and a viewing of the powerpoint presentation that is shown to the public which includes a simulation. Ms. Amundson stated that their main goal was to generate meaningful public participation in the

planning and design piece and to create community channels to connect the design team and the RCRR with the community as the project moves forward.

Mr. Davis stated that the central strategy to the public outreach efforts was to meet people where they were, not to set up new and different meetings.

Mr. Davis talked about various meetings that had been held with different community groups, to inform them of the status of the Central Corridor project. He reiterated that one of the goals in the community outreach effort was to keep the community up to speed. He commented that they have information regarding station areas from the engineering firm and they will be using that as a jumping off point for discussions with the community. He noted that meetings have been set up with community councils.

Commissioner Bennett asked how many meetings had been held with Red Rock, Rush Line, and LOCATE to coordinate connections, such as at the Union Depot and at the University of Minnesota with the Red Rock corridor. Mr. Davis responded that they had not met with those organizations. Kathy DeSpiegelaere stated that information is passed along; the Rush Line corridor meetings have a Central Corridor Update, LOCATE has representatives for these corridors and Commissioner Peterson, Chair of the Red Rock Corridor Commission, also sits on the Central Corridor Coordinating Committee (CCCC).

Commissioner Bennett commented that if the process is at the point where changes are going to cost money, then there should be open dialog among the different commissions to ensure costly changes aren't necessary. He talked about his concern that the University was going to be within six blocks of the Red Rock Corridor, and how will the corridors be connected. Discussion then turned to engineering plans and design plans and parameters. Chair Ortega commented that there would be difficult decisions to make and that there needs to be a process for community involvement, which is critical. Chair Ortega continued, saying that it is important that there be another means of sharing information, in addition to the current practice of the various projects having a representative on the other's board.

Commissioner Bennett asked if there was an exchange of information between the engineers working on the Union Depot and the engineers working on the Central Corridor. Ms. DeSpiegelaere responded that at this time, they have not met. Steve Morris commented that the scope of the work for current work on the Central Corridor is very narrow and does not look at the Union Depot. Chair Ortega summarized the discussion by saying it appears that it is important for RCRRA to look at all projects interdependently, particularly when there are overlaps in planning and design for the various stations, etc.

Commissioner Reinhardt commented that there are three levels of communication that need to take place; 1) Technical communication and how does Central Corridor fit in with Rush Line, Red Rock and Union Depot; 2) Communication updates between existing committees; and 3) Community involvement.

Commissioner Wiessner agreed with Commissioner Reinhardt's assessment of the levels of communication but added one more, the role of the County Board. She commented that the Boards' role is to look at all of the projects and how they fit in Ramsey County. Additionally, Commissioner Wiessner noted that the Board has a responsibility to the people who elected them to plan for a system that makes sense. She also agreed with Commissioner Bennett that the Board itself should have some input to some of the decisions that will be made for the lines.

Chair Ortega stated that he agreed that the Board should have input to some of the decisions that will be made. Commissioner Wiessner commented that each member has issues that are important to him or her, but there isn't a forum as a group in which they can raise those issues.

Commissioner Carter stated that the Board has an incredible opportunity as part of RCRRA to represent the community. She added that she is looking forward to hearing of a community information and outreach plan

that will reach well into the future. Commissioner Carter commented that it will be important for the Board and their staffs to enter into conversation and agreement to determine the plans for the future.

Mr. Davis reiterated that the primary strategic choice that was made going into the community outreach was to meet with people in their existing organizations. He noted that they will look to the Board for help in identifying organizations that have not yet been contacted.

Commissioner Carter asked how RCRRA provides, as an organization that represents Ramsey County, a cohesive picture of the input they've received. She commented that RCRRA has a unique opportunity to develop a picture using the parameters that exist and understanding the needs that have been reflected in the community.

Ms. Amundson talked about the tools they are using to get information out to the public, including the Central Corridor website, a large display that has been moved to various locations in the Twin Cities, fact sheets which have been translated into five languages. Mr. Davis talked about how to work with the public hearing process as a catalyst for public outreach and noted that a plan is in place. Ms. Amundson discussed what has been learned from the public outreach and commented that there is a residual impact from the work done on I-94 that split neighborhoods and there is concern that Central Corridor will do the same thing. She added that people are excited about the potential success that Central Corridor might provide to businesses, as evidenced by the activity the Hiawatha Line has brought to Minneapolis. Mr. Davis commented that that as communities begin to sense that the Central Corridor is real, there is a fear of what may happen to and for their neighborhoods. He suggested that this is the time that RCRRA needs to listen to find out what people's fears are and how to address those fears.

Mr. Davis invited RCRRA to request and suggest venues for the presentation he provided. He also invited RCRRA members to participate in giving the presentation. He then delivered the presentation.

Commissioner McDonough asked for clarification regarding the role of Ms. Amundson and Mr. Davis and their work. Chair Ortega responded that Goff and Howard has had a contract with RCRRA for one year.

Commissioner Bennett suggested that the City and County Public Works be brought together with the Central Corridor consultant to ask how do we work together on Snelling and University.

5. Central Corridor Update

Mr. Morris opened his discussion of the Central Corridor update by directing the RCRRA to the letter sent to Jenna Dorn, Federal Transit Authority (FTA), discussing the potential changes to the cost effectiveness criteria. He stated the FTA has indicated they will be responding to comments by the end of April 2005 and the information he receives will be shared with the RCRRA at that time.

Mr. Morris commented that modeling is underway and being calibrated for the Central Corridor to create the travel time information the FTA requires. Additionally, Mr. Morris talked about the issues regarding changes requested by the University to the tunnel option in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). He commented that they should have more information regarding these issues in another month or more.

Mr. Morris talked about the FTA decision-making process for the Central Corridor and other projects like it. Commissioner Wiessner asked whether the expectation of the FTA was that a standard number of the projects in the Alternatives Analysis (AA) phase of development would move along to the Preliminary Engineering (PE) phase, or would all projects move into the next phase. Mr. Morris commented that typically, some projects don't make it out of the AA phase, and that some projects that have advanced to the PE stage can stall. He added that if a project does get to the Final Design (FD) phase, it is generally completed.

Chair Ortega requested clarification regarding the locally preferred alternative process, i.e. when is it decided and who is responsible. Mr. Morris noted that for the Central Corridor, the Coordinating Committee, a group that has representation from the Counties, the Metropolitan Council, Mn/DOT, the Cities and the U of M would have public hearings and make a recommendation on the local preferred alternative. He noted that a few years ago, when the draft document was initially completed, the preference was for light rail transit. He explained that the decision will be made final after the documents are released and public hearings are held. He added that the recommendation would need to be ratified or approved by the Metropolitan Council, and the Council would be the likely agency to move ahead with the request to FTA to enter into PE.

Discussion continued around the AA and DEIS, and how much flexibility the committee has in making changes to design plans. Mr. Morris stated that design elements are not locked in, but the further along one goes into the project, the more costly it becomes to make design changes. A question of when the DEIS will be released was asked and Mr. Morris replied that the modeling is underway and he is hopeful that they'll have the results in a couple of months, provided there are no glitches in the model. Mr. Morris commented that if FTA finds the results of the modeling reasonable, in their view, the results of the DEIS could be released.

6. Legislative Update

This item was not addressed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 pm.