

MINUTES
KANKAKEE COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE
JANUARY 20, 2005

IN ATTENDANCE

Members:

Frank Koehler, Rich Howell, Dave Bergdahl, Ralph Paarlberg, Mel Blanchette, Lisa Dugan, Dennis Peters and Chad Miller

Others:

Jim Piekarczyk, Mike Van Mill, Mike Lammey, Kankakee County; Steve Husak, EDC; Tim Schmidt, Kankakee; Laura McElroy, Herald; and Brian Gebhardt, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Koehler called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

MINUTES

Mr. Howell moved approval of the November 18, 2004 Minutes, and Mr. Peters seconded. Unanimous vote.

AIRPORT UPDATE

Chairman Koehler commented on news coverage of Congressman Jackson and Mayor Daley and their efforts on the airport issue. He also discussed the activities of IDOT in buying land for the South Suburban Airport.

6000 N. ROAD INTERCHANGE

Mr. Lammey stated that the EDA had provided assistance in this study, and that he would like to acknowledge that assistance, and to thank Mr. Husak for the hard work of his organization. Mr. Lammey stated that he was a week away from the release of that "draft" report.

CORRIDOR PRESERVATION

Mr. Van Mill stated that some updating of the network is being done along with the update of the Comprehensive Plan, and that some additional criteria were being proposed and developed.

UPDATE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Mr. Van Mill stated that the Land Use Subcommittee is scheduled to meet at 4:30 P.M. to discuss the consultant report on Scenarios of Development. He stated that all members are

invited.

COMMUTER RAIL

Chairman Koehler stated that the next meeting is scheduled for February 15, 2005 at 2:30 P.M. in Peotone. He stated that IDOT has been reviewing the report.

TRUCK ISSUES

Chairman Koehler introduced Mr. Piekarczyk, County Engineer for a presentation on Truck Size and Weight Opportunities, summarized as follows:

- Review Evolution and Context of Illinois Truck Size and Weight Limits (TS&W)...Relationship to Kankakee County Highways and Bridges?
- Review Illinois Funding Mechanisms (Revenue) Supporting Increased TS&W...Relationship to K3 Co.?
- Develop an Awareness of the Relationship between TS&W and Funding in a Balanced Local Economy
- Review Policy Statement – TS&W
- Review Available Options – TS&W
- Review Recommendations – TS&W
- Look at Progress Made – TS&W

Mr. Piekarczyk stated that the average cost to improve a mile of roadway to an 80,000-pound capable roadway was found to be \$715,000 per mile. He stated that this figure included increased right-of-way to be purchased, and increased geometric design to be provided at intersections.

Mr. Howell asked if the Truck Access Route Program (TARP) funding would be used to improve Lehigh Road. Mr. Piekarczyk stated that it would be, in conjunction with contributions from Vulcan Materials. He stated that the County contributions would be whatever the cost would be to build a 1 ½ inch overlay, and that Vulcan would be expected to contribute whatever additional cost to build an 80,000-pound roadway, minus that TARP funding. Mr. Bergdahl asked what that cost differential would be in general, and Mr. Piekarczyk stated that the figures vary widely, based upon the condition of the existing roadway and base.

Mr. Piekarczyk stated that the County Highway and Sheriff's Departments had proposed a program of increased enforcement of weight limit issues, to include the purchase of portable scales and dedicated personnel to the issue. The proposal was to have included fines that would have been used to offset the cost of enforcement, and would have provided funds for improvements to County Highways to enhance the system of Truck Routes in place.

Mr. Piekarczyk stated that this proposal had been presented to the State's Attorneys' Office, and the preliminary indication received was that any funds received above the level of the costs of enforcement might be viewed as a new tax, and would be a legal issue. This has put the proposal on hold for the time being. Chairman Koehler stated that the increased enforcement of weight limits would protect the life of the existing roadways, and that this was a worthwhile goal.

Mr. Paarlberg stated that he has seen the progression of vehicles hauling grain from wagons to grain trucks to semi-tractor trailers. He stated that he sees minimal damage from trucks on roadways that were not 80,000-pound routes, and wondered about the incremental damage in going from 73,280 to 80,000 pounds. Mr. Piekarczyk stated that he had heard the argument before, but that he sees the long-term damage, and has concern about the practice.

Mr. Miller stated that “universal access” for 80,000-pound trucks is a goal of the Farm Bureau, and that the 12% increase in productivity from the current limit of 73,280 pounds to 80,000 pounds is seen as a priority. Mr. Piekarczyk stated that there was a cost associated with that practice. He stated that any increase in weight limits must come with some increased funding consideration to build the roadways needed to support those increased weights.

Mr. Miller stated that there was confusion among his membership as to why some out-of-town trucks are allowed to travel on portions of 9000 N. Road, while local trucks are not permitted to use the same facility. Mr. Piekarczyk stated that he understood the concern, and stated that the federal government established the rule that allowed transient trucks but not local trucks to use certain parts of the system.

Mr. Miller asked if the section of 9000 N. Road was being considered for 80,000-pound design. Mr. Piekarczyk stated that the concern of the Farm Bureau had been known, and that the design for the section of roadway in question was over 60% complete. Mr. Howell asked if the same arrangement for funding as is the case for Lehigh Road, and Mr. Piekarczyk stated that the same arrangement would be possible, were a local entity to come forward to share the costs.

Mr. Howell asked if the new section of Armour Road will be built to 80,000-pound capacity, and Mr. Piekarczyk stated that this was under consideration. He stated that the increased costs of building a new section to a higher load carrying capacity were not as great as trying to retrofit an existing section of roadway.

ILLIANA EXPRESSWAY

Chairman Koehler introduced Mr. Gebhardt, from the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, to discuss the status of work toward the Illiana Expressway, or any other attempt to connect Interstate 57 with Interstate 65 in Indiana. Mr. Van Mill stated that the original intent was to have Mr. Swanson from the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission discuss the Indiana perspective on the issue, but that NIRPC had their quarterly meeting at the same time as the Transportation Subcommittee meeting. He stated that efforts to involve someone from the Indiana side on this issue will continue.

Mr. Gebhardt stated that the current status on the Illiana Expressway is that there is “no news”. He stated that the project is in “concept” stage, as the new governor of Indiana had expressed some interest in the project. He stated that a group from the Will County area had met with Indiana officials to discuss the issue.

Mr. Gebhardt stated that the project is included in the Chicago Area Transportation Study 2030 Regional Transportation Plan for Northeastern Illinois as a corridor for further study. He stated that the project was also included as part of the planning for the South Suburban Airport project,

but has now been deleted from IDOT planning for the SSA project. Chairman Koehler stated that construction projects during the coming season will produce “gridlock” to an extent that will make the need for a facility such as the Illiana Expressway evident. Mr. Gebhardt stated that the Mayor of Crete is a vocal proponent for the project.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Koehler stated that there were at least two Interstate 57 (one in the south suburbs, and one in the Champaign area) groups studying the corridor, and stated that the Kankakee County area was an area of connectivity between the two groups. Mr. Husak stated that the Interstate 57 Corridor Studies are active, and that representatives from the Kankakee County are being sought for those groups. He showed a prototype of a brochure that will be developed.

Mr. Husak stated that committee involvement is being sought for the marketing approach for the Interstate 57 corridor, and explained the purpose and goals for such a committee. Chairman Koehler stated that the Kankakee County area had a competitive disadvantage because of the lack of east-west access. Mr. Husak stated that the next meeting of the group will be in Gilman, and invited participation from Transportation Subcommittee members.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Koehler stated that the next meeting date will be March 17, 2005 at 10:00 A.M.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Howell moved adjournment, Mr. Miller seconded, and the vote was unanimous. Chairman Koehler adjourned the meeting at 11:45 A.M.