

MINUTES

COMMUTER RAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY TASK FORCE

AUGUST 16, 2005

IN ATTENDANCE:

TASK FORCE MEMBER AGENCIES

Aroma Park – no attendee
Bourbonnais – Frank Koehler
Bradley – no attendee
Illinois Department of Transportation – Sharon Durbin
Kankakee – Tim Schmidt
Kankakee County – Sam Nicholos
Manteno – Mayor Nugent, Paul Nicholson
Monee – no attendee
Peotone – George Gray
Will County – Colin Duesing

OTHERS PRESENT

Mike Lammey and Dave Bergdahl, Kankakee County; Phil Pasterak and Rich Juvinal, PB; Mary Baskerville, Daily Journal; Joe Heinrich, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association; Bernie Thompson, Village of Manteno; Bob Herrick, Will County Center for Economic Development; David Hinderliter, Kankakee River Valley Chamber of Commerce; and Laura McElroy, Herald.

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nugent welcomed the group to the Village of Manteno, and Chairman Nicholos called the meeting to order at 2:35 P.M. Chairman Nicholos had everyone introduce themselves.

MINUTES

Mr. Koehler moved that the Minutes of the May 17, 2005 meeting be approved, and Mr. Gray seconded. Unanimous vote.

SOUTH EAST SERVICE

Chairman Nicholos introduced Mr. Heinrich, a new staff person for the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, to give the progress report on the Southeast Study. Mr. Heinrich stated that the Land Use and Local Financing Study has been completed, and gave the Task Force a copy of the final report. He stated that Metra has been invited to the September 13 meeting of the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor, to be held

at the Matteson Village Hall. He stated that the Scope of Services for the next study to be conducted was being revised currently.

PHASE II APPLICATION

Mr. Lammey stated that he and Mr. Duesing had taken Ms. Durbin of the IDOT Office of Planning and Programming on a field trip of the potential station sites along the line extension under consideration to familiarize her with the study. He stated that her views as someone who had not been part of the Phase I Study were invaluable in how the Phase II application was approached, and that some actions had been taken to incorporate those views.

Ms. Durbin stated that there was a great deal of potential for the public benefit of the potential line extension, and that she had informed Mr. Lammey and Mr. Duesing that any application for funding from her office was viewed by the amount of potential support, both legislative and public, that was demonstrated for the project.

Mr. Lammey stated that Ms. Durbin's comments had led the staff of Kankakee and Will County to consider a Public Outreach Campaign for the Phase II Application, and stated that volunteers for such a program had found. Chairman Nicholos introduced Mr. Herrick, from the Will County Center for Economic Development, and Mr. Hinderliter from the Kankakee River Valley Chamber of Commerce, who have agreed to assist in this effort.

Mr. Koehler asked if the Phase II Study should consider the funding mechanisms for the eventual local shares for both capital and operating costs for the eventual service. Mr. Lammey stated that the Southeast Service had done a hybrid Phase II study to accomplish just such a purpose, and that this report would be reviewed.

Chairman Nicholos stated that a significant event was occurring in the near future, the River Valley METRO Mass Transit District service from Bradley to University Park. Mr. Lammey reviewed the proposed service, and the survey effort of potential riders that is underway. He stated that the potential service will begin when the two buses have been retrofitted to serve as commuter buses. Mayor Nugent questioned how a stop in Manteno could be arranged, and Mr. Lammey stated that Manteno would have to become part of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to become part of the service area of the METRO system. He stated that the question of how that could be accomplished has been asked of IDOT.

Mr. Koehler stated that the recent passage of the federal transportation bill has made it clear that the best time to request the capital funding support from the federal level would be when the next federal transportation bill comes up for passage. Mr. Lammey stated that this has been the goal of the staff of Kankakee County since the process began.

Mr. Schmidt asked a question about the Public Outreach Campaign, in reference to the support letters that will be requested and attached to the Phase II application. He asked how often letters of support will be requested from governmental and private bodies. Ms.

Durbin stated that new letters of support should certainly be attached to any request for funding assistance for planning studies, and that any indication of public support, even from private organizations, or major employers in the area should be considered as part of the support package. Mr. Koehler indicated that the support of the MPO should be considered in this process, as well.

Mr. Lammey distributed the most recent draft of the Scope of Services for the Phase II Study, and reviewed the major points of the document. Mr. Lammey stated that the amount of funding which would be requested would be \$300,000, for a study which would last two years. Ms. McElroy asked when the study would begin, with consultant selection, and Mr. Lammey stated that as soon as the funding for the study is granted, the process will begin.

Mayor Nugent asked when the requests for support from the local governments will be made, and Chairman Nicholas stated that the application will be submitted at or around the time of the next meeting of the Task Force, set for October 18.

Mr. Pasterak of PB stated that he wanted to echo Ms. Durbin's comments of the expressions of public support. In his experience, those studies which progressed to actual construction were the ones which had the most visible support from the communities involved.

Mr. Koehler asked about the appropriate level of support for this study, given the price tag of \$300,000, in relation to the construction price tag which will be more than ten times that size. Chairman Nicholas stated that the hope is that public support will grow as the time approaches for actual construction.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Nicholas stated that the next meeting would be on October 18, 2005, at 2:30 P.M. The meeting location was to be announced, although Mr. Koehler volunteered the Village of Bradley.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Koehler moved adjournment, and Mayor Nugent seconded. Unanimous vote. Chairman Nicholas adjourned the meeting at 3:29 P.M.