

Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: February 15, 2018
To: Citizens Advisory Committee
From: Benjamin H. Pingree, PLACE Director
Subject: Summary Minutes for November 16, 2017 CAC Meeting

Committee Members present:

Allen Stucks, Chair	JR Harding
Claudette Cromartie	Kathy Bell
Gordon Hansen	Kent Wimmer
Henree Martin	Neil Fleckenstein
Hugh Tomlinson	Peter Okonkwo

Committee Members absent:

George Smith	Stewart Proctor
Gina Kinchlow	

I. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

- Magnolia Drive Design Concepts
- Appointments to the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Citizen's Advisory Committee
- First Public Hearing to Consider a Substantial Amendment to the Blueprint 2020 Airport Gateway Project

II. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS

- Blueprint Project Updates
 - Autumn Calder provided a brief overview of the status of Blueprint projects. A copy of the presentation is on file at Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency.
- OEV Project Updates
 - Al Latimer provided a brief overview of the status of OEV projects. A copy of the presentation is on file at Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency.

III. CONSENT

ACTION TAKEN: Peter Okonkwo moved the consent agenda as presented. Kathy Bell seconded it.

The motion passed 9-0.

1. Approval of the September 7, 2017 CAC Meeting Minutes
Option #1: Approve the September 7, 2017 CAC meeting minutes.
2. Acceptance of the Status Report on Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Infrastructure Projects
Option #1: Accept the December 2017 status report on the Blueprint infrastructure projects.
3. Status Report on the Operations of the Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality
Option #1: Accept the Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality Status Report.
4. Ratification of the Application for the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund
Option #1: Ratify the Office of Economic Vitality's application for the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund.
5. Reappointment of Neil Fleckenstein and J.R. Harding to the Blueprint Citizens Advisory Committee
Option #1: Recommend the IA Board reappoint Neil Fleckenstein and J.R. Harding to serve their second three-year term on the CAC.

JR Harding joined the meeting.

IV. GENERAL BUSINESS

6. Approval of the Magnolia Drive Trail Concept

Megan Doherty gave a brief presentation on the modified agenda item.

Kent Wimmer thought that 8-foot was substandard width for multiuse trails. Ms. Doherty noted that it was the minimum allowed by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Mr. Wimmer concurred but stated that it was less than optimal from a user perspective.

Gordon Hansen inquired about the integration of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Ms. Doherty stated that the inspiration for the design came from Franklin Boulevard. Mr. Hansen thought that it would be helpful for the community to see a cross section of that concept; in addition to a plan view that was included in the agenda material. Autumn Calder stated that cross sections would be developed once a concept was approved.

Kent Wimmer stated that without including bike lanes on the roadway, the 8-foot trail was insufficient to the safety of users. He strongly recommended a 10-foot trail. Ms. Calder stated that the feedback from the residents supported the narrower trail option to allow space for the additional amenities.

Gordon Hansen wanted more details regarding the 4-foot buffer; also noting that the type of landscaping used would create variables. He thought it needed further evaluation.

Claudette Cromartie stated that lighting was also an issue along Magnolia and should be considered for safety. Autumn Calder stated that lighting would be included upon the completion of construction.

Hugh Tomlinson encouraged continued CAC input to the process; however, he did not feel that it should supersede the opinion of the residents and primary users of the trail. Ms. Doherty directed the committee to the written comments received on the subject that were included in the agenda item. Mr. Hansen stated that it did not seem like a significant sample on which to base a decision.

Option #2: Approve the Magnolia Drive Trail concept for future phases of the project to include an 8' wide sidewalk with 4' landscaped buffer between the back of curb and trail.

Hugh Thomlinson moved approval of Option #1. It was seconded by JR Harding.

The motion passed 8-2. With Gordon Hansen and Kent Wimmer dissenting.

Henree Martin departed the meeting.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

9. First Public Hearing to Consider a Substantial Amendment to the Blueprint 2020 Airport Gateway Project

Patrick Kinni introduced the item stating that it was the third project on the 2020 Sales Tax Extension project list approved by the Intergovernmental Agency Board (Board). The process to amend any of the projects on that list included: public participation, two advertised public hearings, three recommendations to approve or to not approve the amendment from the Technical Coordinating Committee, the Citizen Advisory Committee, and the Intergovernmental Management Committee, and a super-majority vote by the Board. The first of two public hearings was occurring currently; the second would be at the December 5, 2017 Board meeting.

Ben Pingree and Autumn Calder gave a brief presentation on the proposed substantial amendment to the Airport Gateway project, including, an analysis of the initial cost estimate of conceptual improvements to North Lake Bradford through Springhill Road and the ability to expand the beneficial impact through cost sharing and leveraging of funds for an additional three miles of roadway in the southwest area. Additionally it would include a "gateway treatment" throughout with substantial roadway improvements, enhanced pedestrian access and safety in sidewalks and trails, bike lanes, beautification, and the expansion of safe transit of goods, services, and people through the district. A copy of the presentation is on file at Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency.

Citizen Comments

Ron Miller, Leon County Research & Development Authority, delivered a letter of support from the LCRDA Board and spoke in favor of the amendment as it would be critical to the full realization of the potential of Innovation Park. Improving visibility and supporting the OEV strategic plan of business attraction and the research and development assets at Innovation Park.

Stanley Sims, resident, spoke in favor of the amendment as it improved public safety. He encouraged the hiring of local residents, specifically former inmates, for “gap jobs” through the work as well.

Sue Dick, Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce, spoke in favor of the amendment by their Board of Directors as it leveraged and enhanced the critical need to improve access to the airport. As well as further exposure to Innovation Park and leverage the 800+ acres that were to be activated near the Airport in the creation of jobs through business development.

David Stich, resident, spoke in favor of the amendment stating that it was a logical extension of FAMU Way and the improved aesthetics of beautification. It would also reduce traffic in the Providence neighborhood. He was simultaneously concerned with adding new traffic volumes to the area.

Bill Peebles, resident, spoke in opposition to the amendment noting that it would shift the “gateway” away from Springhill Road, which was identified as the Airport Gateway in both the original Blueprint 2000 and Blueprint 2020 project lists, to South Lake Bradford Road.

Darwin Gamble, resident, spoke in opposition to the amendment citing “mission creep” from the Airport Gateway project to the FSU project.

Keith Mille, resident, spoke in opposition to the amendment because historically and presently, the community supported Springhill Road as the Airport Gateway.

Debbie Lightsey, resident, spoke in opposition to the amendment citing negative impacts to neighborhoods, timing, and too little cost sharing from Florida State University.

Kevin Graham, Florida State University Real Estate Foundation, spoke in favor of the amendment. For FSU to continue to expand its programming and invest in the future growth of young adults, expansion of the southwest campus was essential. Connectivity from the Airport to the Mag Lab, the College of Engineering, Research Foundation and the many other uses in the Southwest Campus is critical to FSU's long-term success, as well as developing the infrastructure that moved people in, through, and around campus.

Eric Chassignet, resident, spoke in opposition to the amendment stating that the value to the community was unclear but the detriment to neighborhoods was.

Don Dietrich, resident, spoke in opposition to the amendment citing lack of public support and disruption to the Lack Bradford Road neighborhood.

Edward Holifield, resident, spoke in opposition to the amendment citing the disturbance of the Providence, Callen, and Lake Bradford neighborhoods.

Shauna Smith, resident, spoke in opposition to the amendment because it seemed to only benefit Florida State University.

Allen Stucks closed the public comment portion of the public hearing for the Committee to take up the discussion.

Hugh Tomlinson excused himself from the discussion and abstained from vote because of the appearance of a conflict of interest through his affiliation with the Seminole Boosters. JR Harding stated that as an employee of Florida State University he would also abstain from the vote. Patrick Kinni stated that Universities were an exception to the Voting Conflict Provision of Chapter 112. The precedent was set by the Board of County Commissioners; one member of that Board was also employed by a University. There was no conflict of interest for Mr. Harding. Mr. Kinni stated that it was unclear whether the service organization Mr. Tomlinson was affiliated with would be exempt or not. He did not believe that it would be though. The memo of voting conflict for Mr. Tomlinson is on file at BPIA.

Neil Fleckenstein asked for clarification of the condensed timeline. Ben Pingree shared that the Board first provided direction to staff to proceed with amending the project at the September 19, 2017 Board meeting. Staff began immediately with the planning and engagement of public outreach.

Claudette Cromartie requested information on the daily traffic count on Springhill and Lake Bradford roads. She was also concerned with the time frame. Autumn Calder stated that the opportunity to refine the typical sections and cost estimates through the Southwest Area Transportation Plan, as directed by the Board, would uncover that information. Currently the focus was on roadway alignment and where the project description would change should the modification be approved by the Board. The next step would be the completion of the Southwest Area Transportation Plan followed by any other planning or design studies that would go into the actual construction of improvements.

Peter Okonkwo questioned the impacts of delay. Mr. Pingree stated that while he did not have specific impacts that a delay of three to fifteen months might cause, delaying a decision would risk the partnership with Florida State and the process for public input to the development of the southwest area.

Claudette Cromartie expressed concern over the safety of the existing Lake Bradford Road and Orange Avenue intersection and need for improvements there. She did not feel that it had been fully considered in the amendment.

Gordon Hansen stated that it was a disingenuous process for FSU and Blueprint to propose a change now, to a project so many years in the making.

Kathy Bell questioned what the anticipated timeframe of construction for any iteration of the project would be. Ben Pingree stated that piece was yet to be determined for many of the Blueprint 2020 projects. Prioritization for all 27 of the 2020 projects was just completed at the September 19, 2017 Board meeting; along with staff direction to develop a financial implementation plan for them. There were multiple steps to be completed prior to breaking ground on this or any other project including: substantial traffic and safety planning, PD&E study, construction design, abundant stakeholder engagement, potential right of way acquisition, etc.

Claudette Cromartie requested to review any minutes or notes from the community meetings. Mr. Pingree stated that the unfiltered citizen comments received at the community meetings or through direct submittal to BPIA would be included in the BPIA Board Meeting agenda material. Autumn Calder stated that copies of the written comments were available for review in binders at the sign-in table for the meeting.

Claudette Cromartie moved to delay the Board's vote until the March 1, 2018 IA meeting when further information was available. It was seconded by Gordon Hansen.

Kent Wimmer shared that the proposed substantial amendment was a fundamental change to the design of the project as well as commitments to citizens and promises to neighborhoods through the work of the Sales Tax Committee. It offered benefits to some but would 'hammer' others. He was not comfortable supporting the amendment.

Gordon Hansen inquired as to why FSU had not proposed this concept ten years earlier. Mr. Pingree stated that he did not have an answer as to why it had not been brought up in the past.

Kathy Bell stated that it was shortsighted not to understand that this project would increase access to Innovation Park and the Mag Lab. The possibilities for opportunity that could grow out of immediate exposure upon leaving the Airport would be a significant economic driver for the Southside. She understood that where we work and live sometimes bump up against each other, however, it was essential to find ways for them to coexist. Tallahassee needed more good jobs and a strong economy for all of the citizens that live here. Without them, it would be difficult to continue to have or create safe neighborhoods, schools, and family oriented activities. The project was, on some level, about FSU. However, exposing the FSU/FAMU School of Engineering, Innovation Park, etc. to the broader community, state, and country serves all of us.

Gordon Hansen stated that he could see the tremendous advantages but he did not want to see the process rushed through. The real estate ownership had not changed significantly for ten or twenty years. He thought that they could have proposed this years ago rather than pushing it through now. Hugh Tomlinson stated that it was unfair to expect any business to predict circumstances, needs, or the direction of leadership decades in the future.

Patrick Kinni clarified the motion, that the CAC's recommendation was for the Board to delay their vote. Claudette Cromartie confirmed.

The motion passed 6-2 with JR Harding and Kathy Bell casing the dissenting votes. Hugh Tomlinson abstained from voting.

7. Appointments to the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Citizens Advisory Committee

Autumn Calder gave a brief overview of the vacant positions and applicants.

Option #1: Appoint Elva Pepper to the CAC to fill the position of Natural Scientist/ Biologist and appoint Bill Berlow to the fill the Position-at-Large.

Hugh Tomlinson moved approval of Option #1. It was seconded by Neil Fleckenstein.

The motion passed 9-0.

8. Election of Blueprint Citizens Advisory Committee Vice-Chair

Allen Stucks noted that Hugh Tomlinson would be the next CAC Chair and opened the floor for nominations from the Committee.

Hugh Tomlinson moved the nomination of JR Harding to Vice-Chair. It was seconded by Claudette Cromartie.

The motion passed 9-0.

VI. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDAED ITEMS

There were no speakers to be heard.

VII. ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Kent Wimmer updated the Committee on conversations with Florida Department of Transportation about the crossing of the Chain of Lakes at Capital Circle Southwest. The Department would be replacing the boxed culvert with a bridge allowing wildlife and canoe crossing.

VIII. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 6:40 pm.