

**Environmental Management Commission
Meeting Minutes – January 9, 2008**

Meeting Location: Mid-America Regional Council, 2nd Floor, Westview Room

Attendance

Commissioners present: Bob Berkebile, John Ware, Marty Kraft, Jim van Eman, Carol Adams, Rachel Treanor, Stephen Hopkins, Jim Scott, Richard Rocha

Guest Presenter: Gerri Doyle, Transit Planner, MARC

Others present: Dennis Murphey & Jerry Shechter – Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ); Bruce Wiggins – City Planning & Development; Matt Gigliotti – Law Department; Ron McLinden, Claus Wawrzinek – Sierra Club; Dustin Jensen – Metropolitan Energy Center; Amy Bhesania, US EPA; Tom Jacobs - MARC

John Ware, Vice Chair, opened the meeting at 4:05 pm; A quorum was present

- A. Introductions were made by all attending
- B. EMC Letter to Mayor and City Council Committee – John Ware reported that the letter approved by the EMC, regarding transit and the proposed 3/8¢ sales tax, has been sent to the Mayor and to the members of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee of City Council. The letter transmits the EMC support for a comprehensive transit planning process, support for continuation of the 3/8¢ sales tax for current bus system, and support for looking for a regional solution.
- C. Update of Smart Moves project of MARC - Gerri Doyle
The regional transit system is bus based as light rail proposals have been rejected by voters in the past. The bus based system is the lower cost alternative. One of the goals of the Smart Moves project is to find alternatives for the multiple transportation trips taken in this region many of which are across jurisdictional lines.

Update points:

- There is too little long term vision
- Planning has now included the recently developed Citizen's Task Force starter alignment
- Attitudes toward transit are changing
- Planning includes criteria, standards and corridors

Next step is policy workshops – Ideas, issues will be presented to elected officials before going to the general public. Goals include:

- Support for healthy, strong regional economy
- Maximum access to opportunities for all residents
- Support for quality built and natural environment
- Promote safety and well-being of the traveling public

Dennis Murphey detailed the presentations to the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee (1) by KCATA about the current bus system, and (2) about the Paseo Bridge.

It was noted that MARC is tracking only those projects which have federal funding through the MARC committees.

General discussion followed:

- Transit planning is not part of a broader regional plan – and it needs to be. EMC should be supporting a regional planning process
- MARC Technical Forecast Committee does employment projections and is in the process of devising alternate development plans for the region. The question is how to better to arrange things to be transit supportive.
- There appears to be a lot of good technical work being done but without a defining vision
- Comparison of transportation costs is not available locally but should be able to derive appropriate numbers from available national numbers.
- Numbers do not mean anything if we do not have a transit service which is a viable alternative. Must have transit connected with walking potential (as opposed to having “transit” on I-29 where no one can get on or off).
- We do not really know how many people want to go where and when. How do we build a system based on what people actually want? How do we find out?
- KCATA is not sufficiently sensitive to people’s real needs
- The “Eco-Pass” connecting employers and employees to the transit system. KCATA is discussing this type of system with Commerce Bank
- We do not know if transit is really less of an environmental impact than single occupancy vehicles. We need a vision of serving real transit needs.
- We tend to focus on the many technical aspects of transit but fail to look at and discuss what kind of community we really want to be. We need to look at the best practices of others and learn from their errors. How do we make transit serve us?
- Social equity issues are hidden and are the last issues addressed. Think of transit as an element of broader planning – land use planning. There is not necessarily a causality between transit and development. It is dangerous to burden transit with other issues such as business development, housing, etc.
- The Smart Moves update should be available for public view in March, 2008.
- Should lobby MARC to focus on identifying (1) regional corridors (not details of the system), (2) regional strategy, (3) what transit really means to the community, (4) best case studies, and (5) errors made by others. The focus should be on changing the discussion to what the future could be.
- Can EMC actually influence the debate? The community is hung-up on light rail rather than how best to move people to where they want to go. EMC should encourage deriving a common, positive view of the future. Light rail is a good, appropriate element, but it is only one element of an effective transit system.
- Jeff Boothe, a national expert on transit who testified before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, challenged the City to determine what it is we really want to accomplish with light rail.

Stephen Hopkins made a motion, seconded by Bob Berkebile, that the EMC provide clarity by encouraging and advising the Mayor and City Council to (1) extend the sales tax supporting the KCATA, (2) to act as a unit on this issue, and (3) to think about transit wholistically while moving light rail ahead in this context. The motion passed.

- D. Minutes of the December meeting – Jim van Eman made a motion, seconded by Stephen Hopkins, to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 12, 2007, as presented. The motion passed.
- E. Committee Reports.
1. Transportation – No Report.
 2. Climate Protection – No Report.
 - a. Solid Waste Management – No Report.
 4. Compliance – Rachel Treanor - Andy Savastino, OEQ, spoke to her about the need to begin thinking about judges for the Environmental Achievement Awards. Three EMC Commissioners are judges annually. Updates will be provided on the Environmental Management System after appointment of new Commissioners.
 - 4-a. LEED – John Ware – No report
 5. Water & Air Quality – Carol Adams - Meetings have been cancelled. The Stream Setback provision of the Development Code will be on the docket on Dec. 18, 2007 at 11:00 am and supporters are needed. It is expected that staff will not support changes requested by the development community and that the development community will object. The issues were explained.
 6. Membership and Appointments – Carol Adams – A list of nominees for new Commissioners, has been forwarded to the Mayor’s office. Seven names were forwarded for the 6 vacant seats. The EMC should stimulate interest in the EMC and its focus areas by increasing and improving awareness among various groups so that they become interested in membership. Dennis noted that the recommendation to the Mayor is to (1) re-appoint those currently filling expiring terms, (2) appoint Jamie Green as the replacement representative from the GKC Chamber of Commerce, and (3) fill the remaining 6 vacancies from the list of 7 names provided.
 7. Communications & Outreach – No Report.
 8. Energy – Jim Scott – No report
 9. Local Foods – Marty Kraft – General update on No-Till Gardening
- F. Announcements – Dennis Murphey
1. Dennis and Bob Berkebile have been involved in an activity, prompted by the Civic Council, to make this area “America’s Green Region”. The initial goals of the activity were distributed. This is a work in progress and has been endorsed by the Climate Protection Plan Steering Committee. It is hoped the final form will be available by February 15, 2008 for the Chamber of Commerce Governor’s Summit. It is expected this will be a living process that others would add to over time. In part, the activity is to identify the area’s gaps to achievement. Bob Berkebile added the Civic Council believes this is important for the region as do the Chamber, MARC, KC Area Development Council, and Bridging The Gap. Central to the effort is recognition that natural systems do not recognize or understand political boundaries.

Carol Adams made a motion, seconded by Stephen Hopkins, that the EMC endorse the concept of “America’s Green Region” and encourage the Mayor and City Council to endorse it. The motion passed.

2. Conflict of Interest forms were distributed to the Commissioners to complete and file with the City Clerk.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.

Next meeting is February 13, 2008 at 4:00 pm. in the Westview Room at MARC.