
RPA 1 Transportation Enhancement Committee MINUTES: June 27, 2012

Present: Barb Schroeder, Tim Engelhardt, Rod Marlatt, Randy Uhl, Lora Friest, Elaine Govern, Robin Bostrom, Ashley Christensen and Karla Organist

1. Meeting was called to order at 12:10 p.m. by chair, Rod Marlatt
2. Committee member highlights:
 - a. Bostrom: TRRC has created a Safari program to engage families in the area, the bridge is done over the Turkey River and a grand opening should occur in July.
 - b. Uhl: The Trout Run Trail loop is nearing completion and the bridge is almost done. Tourism is looking at marketing now.
 - c. Schroeder: Added to Uhl's highlight that large banners were being created to place in strategic locations: the intersection, the hatchery and in parades to market the completion of the loop. A grand opening event is scheduled for Sept. 23rd. She also reported on the new restroom facility opening at the Hatchery on June 29th.
 - d. Govern: The Howard County group met with the Vision Iowa Due Diligence committee and are not going to be getting the requested extension – all alignments must be completed by Sept. of 2013. The bridge dedication on June 16th was very well-attended with about 125 in attendance. Elaine shared some of the positive comments heard at the event. She also noted that there are 4 miles remaining to connect MN and IA.
 - e. Engelhardt: Hosted the District Meeting @ Motor Mill. The shop drawings for the bridge are done, still need to raise \$90,000, but it's moving along. Tim also mentioned the Pony Hollow Trail and how much use it is seeing now.
 - f. Rod: Added to Robin's comments about the Valley bridge and how it has become an attraction itself.
 - g. Lora: The TIGER grant wasn't funded, but the group is moving on and intends to apply for state rec. funding.
3. The minutes from the May 16, 2012 meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Engelhardt, seconded by Schroeder, all approved.
4. Committee members reviewed the TIP status report and TPMS sections for accuracy on their projects. Any changes or corrections should be sent to Karla before the May 9th public hearing. The ILL projects will remain in the TIP.
5. RPA/DOT Updates: Federal government may be pulling together a transportation bill after all. The extension runs out on June 30th.
6. Backbone Completion Plan:
 - a. Barb Schroeder reported on her discussions with Sam Lankford who quoted about \$12,000 for a plan similar to the Humboldt master plan. The committee looked quickly through the elements in

- the Humboldt plan – as well as the MRT plan to select elements that would be needed for our backbone plan. After much discussion, it was thought that the backbone plan would benefit from having an economic impact study as part of the plan along with background information, the land trail and any significant resources it encompasses. The committee felt that \$20,000 should be our expected cost for going forward.
- b. Elaine Govern checked with the NE Iowa Funders Network to see whether this type of project might fit with the goals of this group, but at this time their funds are committed for the next three years.
 - c. Lora Friest has been contacted by a private funder who is interested in determining the economic impact of natural resources and thought that this study, if expanded in scope a little, may encompass what the committee needs. She will check with the funder. The committee discussed surveys and concluded that they need to determine who should be surveyed and where to survey, trails, historical sites, online, etc. All agreed that although there are many surveys from which we could extrapolate (Wellmark, Lanesboro, etc) – actual user and local input would be best.
 - d. Karla Organist reported that Enhancement funds can be used for a study, but the committee noted that we are out to funds in 2017 and we want to move more quickly than that. An RBOG application was discussed, but this may have a long wait as well.
7. Long Range Transportation Plan – Committee noted that the goals are still valid and that the backbone completion plan should be part of any long range transportation plan as a priority for the committee. A few other notes were taken on the goals sheet and will be incorporated as well.
 8. Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative – Active Living Work Group update: Karla is convening the Active Living Work Group meetings and feels that there is much overlap with the enhancement committee work. While the ALWG has the goal of getting Northeast Iowans using the built environment, rather than the building focus of the enhancement committee – both share the same interests. Karla invited enhancement committee members to participate in the ALWG and will let the group know when the next meeting is held. The ALWG is interested in collecting baseline user data, so perhaps the group can help the enhancement committee on that front. They envision a trail count to be held – perhaps twice a year, a Saturday in early summer and a Saturday in the fall, with volunteers from the FFI. Enhancement committee members were asked for good dates and good locations for such a survey that would be a good representation of average use.
 9. Items from committee members: a discussion was had regarding bringing one of the Cresco trail committee members into these meetings so that they are aware of the regional approach we are taking in trail development and are aware of the other projects going on in the region. An invitation will be extended for the next meeting.
 10. Having no other items from committee members, the next meeting date was discussed but not yet set. The committee will set a date once we hear from Lora.
 11. Motion to adjourn was made by Bostrom, seconded by Engelhardt, all approved, meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.