

MEETING MINUTES

SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN RAIL TRANSIT COMMISSION

Tuesday, March 11, 2003, 12:30p.m.
Dane County Highway Garage
Basement Conference Room
Madison, WI

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was call to order by Chairman Hoesly at approximately 12:35 p.m. The following roll call was recorded.

Members Present: Bob Hoesly, Harvey Kubly, Oscar Olson, Paul Ziehli, Fred Bartol

Others Present: Frank Huntington and Vicki Schaefer, WisDOT Rail Bureau; Bill Gardner, WSOR; Dana White-Quam, WDNR; Wade Wittenwyler, Monticello; and Kenneth Lucht, SWWRPC

2. Proof of Public Notice

It was noted that the meeting notice had been sent to the Green County and Dane County Clerks for posting in the county courthouses. Also, notice was sent to several news media. The meeting notice was also posted at the office of the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in Platteville, WI.

O. Olson moved, P. Ziehli seconded that the meeting was properly noticed. Motion carried.

3. Approval of Agenda

H. Kubly Moved, F. Bartol seconded, that the agenda approved as distributed. Motion carried.

4. Approval of November 22, 2002, Meeting Minutes

O. Olson Moved, P. Ziehli seconded, that the minutes of the November 22, 2002 commission meeting be approved as distributed. Motion carried.

5. Approval of Bills / Treasurer's Report

H. Kubly presented the attached Treasurer's Report. There were no bills for consideration.

O. Olson moved, P. Ziehli seconded, approving the Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion carried.

6. Special Announcements / Board Comments

K. Lucht stated that one of the primary reasons for calling this meeting was to consider a request from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to amend the existing SCWRTC/WisDOT/WDNR Rails to Trails Agreement.

7. General Commission Business

K. Lucht stated that he has submitted a letter of resignation to the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC). Lucht's new assignment will be as Community Development Manager for the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Company. This new assignment includes continued coordination with the rail transit commissions in Wisconsin. Lucht's last day with SWWRPC will be March 14, 2003.

8. Property Management Issues

None.

9. Consideration/Action on SCWRTC/WDNR Rails to Trails Agreement

D. White-Quam reported that recently the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) applied for funding assistance through the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) program for bridge and surfacing work, and were denied because of lack of long-term interest in the corridor. The application was for approximately \$900,000.

In order to facilitate the success of this application, it was suggested by White-Quam to take out the 20-year time frame from the existing SCWRTC/WisDOT/WDNR Rails to Trails agreement and leave the remaining agreement as is, leaving the term continuous in perpetuity.

B. Hoesly mentioned that back in the year 2000, WDNR supposedly had the money to develop the corridor, whereas money from federal sources was not relied upon. Now, with the state budget as it is, more and more agencies are depending on federal dollars.

H. Kubly stated that our attorney should review any amendment to this agreement. Additionally, there may be some officials in Monroe who would like rail access to a mile or two of rail within the municipal limits of Monroe.

White-Quam mentioned that approximately \$1 Million still needs to be done in terms of installing the limestone surface of the trail. Also, it will take approximately \$300,000 to repair the tunnel near Belleville.

K. Lucht asked if a 25-30 year time frame would satisfy LAWCON in terms of its long-term definition. White-Quam did not think that would suffice, given the length of time it takes to build or reconstruct bridges. In all likelihood, the only way to get LAWCON funding would be to drop the 20-year time frame from the agreement.

K. Lucht stated that because of the state's budget situation, which is not unique to Wisconsin, communities, businesses, state government, and other entities are forced to look other places for funding assistance. It would be a disadvantage to the SCWRTC and the WDNR if LAWCON funding is not pursued any further because of a 20-year time frame associated with the Rails to Trails Agreement. If the SCWRTC does not seriously consider WDNR's request to get rid of the 20-year time frame, then \$900,000 to develop the trail is lost. On the other hand, if the

SCWRTC seriously considers the request, it would be highly probable that \$900,000 could come to Dane and Green Counties for development of the trail.

F. Huntington and V. Schaefer mentioned that no other Rails to Trails Agreements have 20-year time frames in them. One of the only reasons this agreement has this time frame is because the Illinois Department of Natural Resources wanted to buy the Illinois portion of this corridor and in their agreement a 20-year time frame was put into effect. The agreement for the Wisconsin portion of the corridor merely mirrored that agreement.

P. Ziehli moved, F. Bartol seconded, authorizing the commission attorney to review the existing agreement to see if WDNR's request could be accommodated, and to collect more information from WDNR and LAWCON on why the 20-year time frame was the basis for denying the recent application. Motion carried.

10. Old Business

None.

11. New Business

None.

12. Set Next Meeting Date

Chairman Hoesly stated that the next SCWRTC meeting will be called by the chairman when the need arises. It is expected that the SCWRTC will meet next month sometime after April 15th.

13. Adjournment

P. Ziehli moved, F. Bartol seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.

Judy Olson, Secretary

Recorded by: Kenneth Lucht, SWWRPC