



DeKalb County Government

1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Minutes

PWI-Public Works & Infrastructure Committee

Friday, December 9, 2022

9:00 AM

Special Called Meeting

Meeting Started At: 9:06 AM

Attendees: Commissioners Cochran-Johnson, Patrick, Terry, Bradshaw, Davis Johnson

Present 3 - Commissioner Lorraine Cochran-Johnson, Commissioner Robert Patrick, and Commissioner Ted Terry

I. DISCUSSION

Transit MOU Revisions/ Finalize MOU

-discussion of draft Transit memorandum of understanding

-Attorney Welch detailed the facets of the Transit MOU, including Transit Infrastructure and Services Steering Committee structure

-comments provided by Chair Cochran-Johnson regarding the formulation and facets of the MOU

-RP: if this makes a committee does it go to the full BOC for approval?

-M Welch: yes sir, this needs to be adopted in the same method as other committees; additional response provided by Attorney Welch

-RP: one of my concerns is the amount of time - 24 months seems to be lengthy; monthly meetings seems to be another challenge. Also, during our San Diego trip I heard that some of these plans took up to 30 years to flesh out; I don't know if this has full support from our Board of Commissioners

-LCJ: I agree that 24 months is a bit lengthy, especially as other counties like Cobb & Gwinnett are preparing referendums to move forward regarding mass transit. It is important we discuss moving forward as One DeKalb, there has been an overwhelming desire by the municipalities to work collectively, which would include an official organ in which we can be guided. Additional comments provided by Chair Cochran-Johnson

-Question LCJ: are any of the municipalities present to determine a roll on the formation of the steering committee?

-Mayor Garrett votes yea

-Mayor Geierman - Mayor Pro Tem votes yea on behalf of Doraville

-Mayor Ernst votes yea on behalf of Brookhaven

-Mayor Deutsch - Eric Linton votes yea on behalf of Dunwoody

-Mayor Hammet votes yea on behalf of Pine Lake

-Mayor Jones - Darnetta Timus votes yea on behalf of Stone Mountain

-Mayor Auman has sent letter of support on behalf of City of Tucker

-Question LCJ: can we have letters that have been submitted by municipalities submitted to the Board of Commissioners be included in the minutes for this meeting?

-V Ernstes: yes Commissioner we have Mr. Allen of Central Staff that can include accordingly

-LCJ: I will forward those letters of support as well

-Question TT: regarding the MOU, the CEO approval of it - could Attorney Welch clarify whether this could be vetoed by the CEO?

-V Ernstes: yes it goes through the normal approval/adoption process as other items considered by the Commissioners. Yes the CEO has the power to veto

-Question SB: does this MOU contemplate any criteria for selecting members of the steering committee?

V Ernstes: no sir it does not

-SB: This proposal of the arrogate strikes me as unnecessary at the time, the rationale as follows; one, I believe the main items are basically set as it relates to modes of transportation, similar to funding options, sales tax, federal and state funding, bond or a combination thereof. Therefore I don't see how the committee as it is currently being contemplated will provide alternatives to what we already know. As an alternative, I would suggest: we have a MARTA Board that should be fully engaged in this process; we should task MARTA with laying out the options for us side by side in a systematic way. Something like this could be accomplished in short order. In the wake of that we could add a series of public hearings, public meetings, a countywide poll to take a temperature of the public, then we as the Governing Authority can start to make decisions. My comments are for the record for all to contemplate

I am having a hard time seeing how this committee as it is currently proposed will get us to an endpoint any quicker with anymore clarity than the options that are before us. I do not have a vote in this committee and I do not intend to actively oppose this construct, but my comments and concerns are made for the record to contemplate and if this comes to the full board I will make my final decision know at that time via the vote I take.

-LCJ: as it relates to public hearings and public meetings to be held, absolutely. Those options would all be discussed and determined by the committee. As it relates to MARTA, they have been a valued partner and have been clear that the determination to move forward should come from the Board of Commissioners and their engagement will continue. Those on the MARTA Board have been very present and would not leave were a committee to be created. I would ask formally, regarding South DeKalb, as to what is the best course of action for that particular jurisdiction, whether BRT, heavy/light rail. For South DeKalb I would like a side by side comparison of transit options, which would allow us to make determinations. I ask that from Indian Creek to Stonecrest a study is done, as well as Kensington to Stonecrest, and from Decatur Station to Stonecrest as well. That is particularly for South DeKalb; that should include cost, delivery times, and other impacts it may

have.

-MDJ: the difference that I see compared to a panel/committee and our role as Commissioners is that we were voted on by the people of DeKalb, and that's who we represent. We were fortunate to have the people in our districts count on us to make decisions on their behalf; if they deem that we don't do that, they have the option of voting us out of office.

I don't like to delegate my role as a representative of people that voted me in for a lay committee that I have no knowledge of who they may be or their qualifications. Regardless, I believe our role is better served not having someone else interpret data for us but for us as representatives being present and making the decisions and interpretations ourselves. I would like for us to be present to interpret this level of data to make an informed decision for the people of DeKalb. I embrace our mayors, our citizens, but I think that this is a job that we should do, being at the table talking to the partners and making an informed decision of how we should move forward. My vote would be to have participation from all of our mayors in the County, from all of our stakeholders, and I would like for us to be responsible for the outcome in what we interpret, and not what someone interprets for us. I want to do what is best for the people of DeKalb County that have voted me in. Therefore I will not vote for any committee because I believe that we should be the committee to review this longstanding issue.

-SB: regarding a side by side of South DeKalb I am in support of that, and I have made that ask of MARTA myself

-comments provided by Mayor Hammett

-comments provided by Commissioner Davis Johnson

-Question Bill Floyd: regarding the MOU, what does the word 'delegation' mean? Is there any funding applied to this committee, and who will be the staff support?

-responses provided by Attorney Welch

-LCJ: if this were to move forward there would need to be messaging and crafting of a message; I would anticipate more information on that, as well as determination of staff support. In terms of funding we would need that discussion

-LCJ: based upon the conversation today, I believe there should be no vote within the MOU; the conversation needs to be continued in the PWI Committee; after receiving determination from the BOC on the desire to move forward, there should be continued conversations with the municipalities. I would ask that we defer and revert back to PWI for further discussion

-RP: motion to defer back to PWI for further discussion

-Second LCJ

Vote: yes 2-0 (TT abstain)

Formation of the Steering Committee

Not discussed in Committee

Steering Committee By-Laws

Not discussed in Committee

Meeting Ended At: 9:55 AM

MOTION was made by Robert Patrick, seconded by Lorraine Cochran-Johnson, that this agenda item be adjourned meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Commissioner Cochran-Johnson, Commissioner Patrick, and Commissioner Terry