

**Steering Committee Meeting Notes
June 4, 2009
(Kick-off Meeting)**

Minutes

Harbor Transit Planning Study
Kick-Off Meeting

June 4, 2009

Attendees:

Tom Manderschied, Transportation Director, Harbor Transit
Sue Thomae, Operations Manager, Harbor Transit
Joanne A. Marcetti, (Retired), Former Supervisor, Grand Haven Charter Township
Lukas Hill, Community Development Director, Spring Lake Township
Craig Bessinger, City Manager, City of Ferrysburg
Patrick McGinnis, City Manager, City of Grand Haven
Phil Kazmierski, Mannik & Smith Group, Consultant
Larry Strange, The Corradino Group, Consultant

NEXT MEETING: JULY 16, 1:30 P.M., LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED

Introductions

The purpose of the meeting was to kick off the Harbor Transit Planning Study. Introductions of those in attendance were made. Larry passed out copies of the Agenda and a project area map for those to review. He introduced himself and Phil Kazmierski of Mannik & Smith Group introduced himself.

Schedule

Larry Strange initiated the discussion with an overview of the project schedule. He said that there would be an interim report produced in mid-July as an insert to the schedule. He said this report would be completed in mid-July. He said the schedule shows a start date of June and the project should be completed in early 2010.

Larry mentioned the public meeting/workshop for the study is tentatively scheduled for mid-September and the consensus of the group was that this was good timing. Larry said that it wouldn't just be one meeting but rather a series of meetings held over 2 or 3 days. There will be a meeting in each of the key jurisdictions in the study: City of Grand Haven, Village of Spring Lake, Ferrysburg, Spring Lake Township, and Grand Haven Charter Township. The committee emphasized that as much as possible comparable efforts to reach folks in each jurisdiction should occur. These will consist of using utility lists for mailings, public radio, and public television. Mailings would be focused on the likely proposed expansion area.

As part of the discussion of the public involvement program the consultant proposed a website be established. It was agreed that Corradino would create and maintain the site and that the City would have a link to it. Subsequent to this meeting, Tom Manderschied directed Larry to coordinate with Matt Vanportfliet of the city to coordinate this process. The site will be named www.harbortransitplan.com. A template of the opening page is presented in Figure 1. The site should be up and running by the end of this week (week of June 15).

Figure 1
Website Template



Community Issues

This discussion began with consideration of the focus of the project. Larry Strange said that his understanding was the focus was on the feasibility of expansion and the identification (and resolution) of obstacles to expansion. Following extensive discussion those in attendance agreed. Larry asked representatives of each of the jurisdictions in attendance to voice some of the key issues they felt should be considered during the planning.

Grand Haven

- The City has a desire for the transit system to expand its boundaries.
- They would support an authority concept if that made sense.
- They believe that all parties should be on board with the fair share formula or whatever funding mechanism is pursued during the expansion.

Grand Haven Township

- There is more cooperation today than in the past.
- There has been extensive growth in the township. There probably are as many transit generators in the township as in the city.
- The township would serve as a full partner, contribute financially to the overall operations, and serve in an advisory role on the board
- .The township is not comfortable with the existing fair share formula.
- Some examples of authorities that could work for transit currently exist (the North Ottawa Water Authority), the Library Authority.

Ferrysburg

- Fair share formula
- City gets charged for trips for people who walk in from the surrounding non-service area.
- Charter school using the transit system without contributing to the operating costs.

Spring Lake Township

- Perception of empty buses
- Who is the system designed for?

Following this interaction there was discussion of the various issues. Larry said that Phil Kazmierski's key focus early on in the project was analysis of the fair share formula and possible governance alternatives.

Larry said that he was going to try and schedule meetings with:

- Bill Cargo (Grand Haven Township)
- Gordon Gallagher (Spring Lake Township)
- Keith Konarska (Grand Haven Public Schools)

Larry also said that later in the study a more focused workshop with various agencies and government entity representatives would be held.

Larry also said because Ryan Cotton couldn't be at this June 4 kickoff meeting he (Larry) would schedule a meeting with him.

Transit Agency Issues

Some of the outstanding issues facing the transit agency follow:

- Ridership is stable (but not growing)
- Lack of technology
- The administrative/garage facility on Ferry Street needs a facelift.
- There are two distinct levels of service because of the amount of school children transportation provided by Harbor Transit – summer/non-school and school-year service.

Larry indicated that he would spend time in the facility and on buses during the study.

Other

There needs to be coordination with the County study (which now is focusing on an interurban concept linking Grand Rapids with the various communities in Ottawa County). The plan needs to be consistent with the comprehensive plans of each governmental unit.

The committee needs to be kept engaged in the planning process so the study doesn't lose steam.

Please feel free to contact Larry (lstrange@corrardino.com) or 502-523-7474 if you have any corrections or comments regarding these minutes or any other issues with the study.