

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 8, 2011**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-Chair; Michelle Lyons, Co-Chair; Richard Bonney; M. Evette Brantley; Anderson Ayala; Manual Ayala

ABSENT: Denese Taylor-Moye

OTHERS: Donald Eversley, Director OPED; Steven Tylicszak, OPED

Co-Chair Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 4, 2011

**** MR. M. AYALA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 4, 2011.**

**** MR. BONNEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

15-10 AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF GRANTS FROM THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION AND THE STATE DOT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGEPORT INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER, PROJECT ID NO. CT-04-0024-00

Mr. Eversley briefly described the item which he said Bridgeport had been discussing for almost a decade. Previous administrations had viewed plans to enhance the intermodal transportation center in Bridgeport (i.e., the train station, bus station, the planned new bus station, ferry dock, and taxi stand) to interface with the downtown area. The City was successful to secure federal grants over the years and several portions of the entire project had already been ... the new bus terminal. He said the former administration had thought to develop the Mechanics and Farmers site into a mini “grand central station” which would connect two blocks over to the tracks and be a sort of larger entrance way to enhance the train station. The project never came to fruition. He spoke of other areas in the County where this concept was successful but stated that those areas were in much larger cities than Bridgeport where train tracks were underneath the enhancements. Because Bridgeport’s train station was a distance away from its downtown area, a project of this nature would have been very expensive, complicated and most likely, unsuccessful.

Mr. Eversley said the task then became how to best use the funds that were allocated to Bridgeport for an intermodal transportation system, as the granted stated that funds were to be used for the train station and related improvements. After extensive review of the situation, it was decided that a portion of the funds should be used to improve the City’s parking garage, and application to the State and federal government was nearly complete.

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Remaining funds from the allocated money had to be used within a certain period of time; some had already been appropriated in 2008, 2009 and 2010. If the balance was not committed, the City would in effect be forfeiting the money. The City was required to match by 20% whatever federal/State money was granted. Mr. Eversley said that discussions ensued between the City and the State DOT Rail Division to determine what type of project(s) would be allowable under terms of the grant. A solution was arrived at whereby Bridgeport would use approximately \$1.3 million City bond dollars to obtain \$6 million in State and federal dollars to use for additional projects.

He said the State feels there are a number of critical upgrades to the train station that are required such as repair of cracked platforms, repair/replacement of the canopy over the east bound line, a new canopy over the west bound line, installation of lights, cameras and surveillance equipment, and other upgrades to the station. Bridgeport was proposing to use some of the funds to connect the station to the City's downtown area. In addition, underpasses between the transportation area and the Harbor Yard Arena could be improved. Enhancement and improvement of the streets of the City and the station itself was important toward enticing people to visit as well as to provide greater safety for Bridgeport's residents and businesses who use the area.

Mr. Eversley said that in many respects, this could be considered a downtown project. Many local residents and business owners had requested improvements to the area. The appearance of the downtown area was critically important to the City. Negative perception could be very damaging. A city's downtown area always seemed to be a symbol representing what was happening there. Mr. Eversley said the thought should be toward the next century and how Bridgeport would position itself as a regional player. The new downtown residential population was already regional and a positive tax revenue generator. He said the current administration had project plans to upgrade many neighborhood streetscapes in the City.

Co-Chair Brannelly asked about the timeframe of the project to which Mr. Eversley responded the first step would be the design phase expected to be completed by early summer. Improvements would be visible in calendar year 2011. He further expected project completion to be a year to 18 months maximum.

Mr. Bonney asked how far improvements from the station would extend into the downtown area. Mr. Eversley said the suggestion was to take Water Street and Congress over to the garage to Main/Broad then under the highway to the service road back around, as well as under the viaduct over to the ferry. He said there are two other programs being run simultaneously with this one, a paving program to address some of the streets. Mr. Tylicszak said the State's project included Lafayette, John, Water and Broad Streets as well as South Frontage Road which were slated to be repaved, and basically all roads that would not be involved in the upcoming sewer separation project. He spoke also of the City's paving program which would address many areas that required immediate attention.

Ms. Brantley asked if the area entrance to the ferry would be open for cars or just pedestrian traffic. Mr. Eversley said it was preferred that the area would be reopened for vehicular traffic and a proposal had been made. The project at hand would be helpful to the Water Street dock because it would include way finding, or directional signage.

Mr. Anderson Ayala said the ferry area and downtown area were in his district and asked if the ferry were to move across the harbor, would a portion of the money be eligible for this. Mr. Eversley said that since Bridgeport would have a less dramatic intermodal area, Bridgeport needed to use funding now for what needed to be improved. He and others preferred the ferry to remain where it was. Mr. Anderson Ayala said the transportation center was a gateway into Bridgeport and he was anxious for improvements to be made. He encouraged Committee members and ultimately the City Council to approve this and move forward.

Co-Chair Lyons asked who had responsibility to maintain the inside of the station. Mr. Eversley said that DOT would address this and asked that City Council members provide him a list to pass along. He said that about one-half of the available \$6 million would be used for the station itself and the other portion for the surrounding area. Co-Chair Lyons felt strongly to stay on target so the project could be completed so the City would not be in a situation where agreement was reached but no action was taken. She requested to see an in-writing description of what would be included in this project's final request. She thanked Mr. Eversley for his in-depth presentation. For purposes of clarity, Mr. Eversley would provide a description of what would be actioned with the funds and the City would provide a list of their concerns to the DOT through Mr. Eversley.

**** MR. BONNEY MOVED TO APPROVE 15-10 AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF GRANTS FROM THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION AND THE STATE DOT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGEPORT INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER, PROJECT ID NO. CT-04-0024-00.**

**** MS. BRANTLEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Co-Chair Brannelly said that everyone was very anxious about this and wanted to see the project move forward, and she hoped it would sooner rather than later. Bridgeport did not want to lose their allocated money because of non-action.

**** MS. BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Graham for
Telesco Secretarial Services
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