

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

July 14, 2020

A meeting of the Committee on Traffic and Transportation was held this date beginning at 3:03 p.m. over Zoom Conference Call.

Notice of this meeting was sent to all local news media.

PRESENT

Councilmember Seekings, Chair; Councilmember Brady, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Delcioppo, and Mayor Tecklenburg **Present:** Jennifer Cook, Andrew Dickson, Janie Borden, Matt Moldenhauer, Councilmember Appel, Susan Herdina, Keith Benjamin, Robbie Somerville, Troy Mitchell, Edmund Most, Jason Kronsberg, Rick Jerue, Parrish Brown, Thomas Tisdale, and Bethany Whitaker

The meeting was opened with an invocation provided by Councilwoman Jackson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On the motion of Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilwoman Delcioppo, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 26, 2020 meeting.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Report: Open Streets

Chairman Seekings said that Mr. Moldenhauer was the Co-chair of the Bike/Ped Committee and a very conscientious member of that committee and the community. At the suggestion of Councilmember Brady, they set Open Streets as a discussion point to the Bike/Ped Committee. That Committee had met on a number of occasions and had come up with a series of recommendations. There was a letter to the T&T Committee about the results of where they were so far.

Mr. Moldenhauer stated that they should thank the entire committee for helping to prepare the memo. He was thankful to be there representing them. The memo addressed three simple points that were developed in response to Coronavirus. The first was the Open Street concept and opening South Market Street. The second was to approve a temporary parklet pilot program. Essentially, a parklet was a parallel parking space that was temporarily set up with seating options. It was another way of providing businesses the ability to spread out customers. The third recommendation was asking staff to study providing bike facilities at Wentworth Street. The memo provided justification for those three recommendations. There had been a lot of deliberation and discussion, including how the items were worded. Equity was an important issue and also how they could enable their local businesses to survive throughout Coronavirus. They proposed some details in the memo such as specific hours in consultation with staff and local business owners. It was worthy to have discussion about those items. The Bike/Ped Committee encouraged the T&T Committee and Council to take on the concepts of providing open streets for businesses. That would be one way to get people outside and spread out. They encouraged the consideration of parklets at least temporarily as another option to spread people out, and then to study getting people on the street on bikes.

Councilwoman Jackson thanked Mr. Moldenhauer for his list of items. She liked the variety, especially if they were looking at it as something that was piloting a variety of ideas. Having a mix of things to try was great. She wondered if he had any examples of the bike facility improvements they would recommend for Wentworth. Chairman Seekings said that recommendation actually came from him. One of the things they had talked about was on Wentworth Street, there was no east/west connected point between King and

Meeting Streets. Wentworth Street from Meeting to King Streets was one way to the west. They talked about making a two-way 'cycling track' from the southern lane for bicycles to be able to commute across Wentworth Street. There are some complications with that at the terminus of either end of that, but it seemed like a pretty low-hanging fruit to allow for east-west travel across the Peninsula that was currently cut off on a main artery. Councilwoman Jackson said they were talking about taking one lane of Wentworth and making it a bikeway. Chairman Seekings said that was correct. Mr. Moldenhauer said that in the memo, they kept it vague intentionally because they knew there may be some variables out there that they hadn't fully studied yet. The request in the memo was to study it to understand what option may be available. Mr. Benjamin said that part of the conversation was what could be piloted, so they were talking about something temporary and not necessarily the infrastructure they would usually use. So, even though it was a connection that should be looked into, there were a number of conflicts if there was permanent infrastructure there such as entry ways to the hotel and garage. Part of what was proposed was the study of what would be appropriate. There just some concerns from a City staff standpoint in introducing that infrastructure. Chairman Seekings stated that they worked really hard on the memo. The South end of Market Street was a very popular idea to try. They had talked with the business owners and had, essentially, gotten unanimous support in that area. That seemed to be the most achievable and readily implementable pilot of the three. Mr. Moldenhauer stated that he glossed over the parklet idea and didn't want to discount it as a valid pilot project or program. Staff worked hard in developing a draft protocol on how that would work. It would be similar to the curbside pick-up that had been implemented.

Mr. Benjamin said that they were asking the T&T Committee for direction as to how to move forward with these recommendations. That was part of the reason in why they wanted to do the due diligence in putting together recommendations for them. Councilwoman Jackson stated that they had stated that the Committee had said that they would keep discussing and bring back more recommendations. They were only having one City Council meeting in August. Knowing these were temporary and they were looking at timing, she was hoping they had something they could implement at the end of the summer. Chairman Seekings said he may have misspoken. He didn't mean to include these three items, as he thought the Bike/Ped Committee had done all they would do on those items in terms of recommendations and the memo. It was now up to the T&T Committee to move it forward and give direction to Mr. Benjamin as to how to proceed. When he said they would expand and continue, he meant they would look at and discuss other options. Councilwoman Jackson asked if they would like to entertain a motion to authorize at least the South Market recommendation. She would personally make the motion to authorize all three good ideas to be studied. Chairman Seekings said that there was a motion to move the three recommendations forward to the next phase with Mr. Benjamin. Mayor Tecklenburg said that they could do the easier ones first, or the ones that had the most consensus such as South Market Street. Chairman Seekings said that the actionable item is the South Market item and the other two are to be studied. For the parklet recommendation, one of the corridors they accepted for the pilot program was King Street. Mr. Benjamin said that for the parklet item, the Civic Design Center had done a good job trying to condense the design aspects for temporary parklets. To move that item forward, they would have to refine the design aspects and also have temporary changes to the ordinance structure to allow the parklets to function. South Market was one that they could potentially do as soon as they got their staff together. The Market vendors had said they hoped this was something that could be introduced. Councilmember Brady said that the Bike/Ped Committee had done a wonderful job. Some of them may be difficult to implement, but it was important to dream big.

On the motion of Councilwoman Jackson, seconded by Councilmember Brady, the Committee voted unanimously to move forward with the three items/recommendations, as presented.

Signal Maintenance and Projects Update

Mr. Benjamin stated that a few months ago, they had Mr. Mitchell present to them. Mr. Mitchell was the Signal Division Manager and had been with the City for over three decades. Their division was tasked with operating the signal system in the City on behalf of the SCDOT. They got a lump sum payment every year in order to do that, and it also opened the door for potential projects. They had just gotten a project prioritization process a few weeks ago, and so they wanted to come back and give a rundown on what was happening. He also wanted to introduce Parrish Brown who was now the Assistant Signals Manager.

Mr. Mitchell said that he wanted to give an update on their projects. These were projects for 2020. He would start with DOT projects that were fully funded by them. For Folly Road/Formosa, all of the signal design and studies had been handed off to DOT. DOT was going to try to let the project that year. It was a joint effort between the City and DOT. The City would be responsible for the mast arms part of the project. For the intersection improvement project/526, the project was slowed down because of Covid. The contractor had pulled off the project, but returned on June 8th. They were continuing with improvements down Hwy. 17 with traffic signal operations and flashing yellow arrows, as well as pedestrian improvements. Along with that, they had picked strategic locations for battery back-ups, so when the power went out, those locations would stay afloat for around 2.5 hours without power. They were trying to close on the end of the traffic responsive item. The contractor had returned and they were going to install the communications infrastructure which was wireless radios. Once they got those in, they would get back with DOT and move forward to try to get the traffic responsive in before December. Damaged vehicle loops was just the yearly maintenance that they had to do per DOT. Pedestrian Improvement Project was a joint effort between DOT and the City where the City provided the design for ten locations on the Peninsula to be upgraded with pedestrian signals, added legs, and improved crosswalks. It was completed in April. For City projects, the intersection improvement upgrades to left-turn arrows, they met at the mid-year and had brought on Kimley-Horne to do the studies and try to implement flashing yellow arrows at the location of US17 at Farmfield and Lockwood Drive at Calhoun Street. In September, they would begin to do the field count and begin the designs for the intersection. For Meeting Street at Brigade Street Intersection Improvements, he would let Mr. Benjamin take that one.

Mr. Benjamin said that project was a partnership with SCDOT. Originally, it was going to have a trial period. The outside stakeholders really pushed and it became an actual project. The entirety of Brigade Street was on the resurfacing list for SCDOT. So, the City was bringing dollars to the table with the SCDOT to introduce what would hopefully be the first protected bike infrastructure in the City's history. They worked to have Brigade Street on the tail end of the resurfacing process which would be in October. The community had asked for the bus stop at Brigade and Meeting to be moved because of accidents and line of sight issues. They were working with a development up the street on Meeting to be able to have the bus stop moved there. The project would have some drainage improvements, some bulb-outs, and some rapid beacon flashers.

Mr. Mitchell said that for cyber security, with all the new technology and updates they were making to the signal system and equipment they were installing, it had been noted that keys for the cabinets could be purchased online and anyone could get into the cabinets. They were starting a project where they were going to install cyber security on the cabinets with electronic keys and switches. They would have scan card protection and it would show them anyone who logged in. They keys could only enter the cabinet if they

were programmed. They would begin the installation and training of this in August. The vendor would be there to provide training. For the Communication Infrastructure Project, it was a continuation of the project to upgrade the communication infrastructure to fiber optic cable. They would be working on Calhoun Street from Courtenay to Washington Streets. This would give them the ability to upgrade to the advanced traffic controllers. This project went all the way back to 2009 when the City approached DOT with this technology to upgrade the copper wires which were beginning to break down. With the installation of this, they would be able to provide more pedestrian protection with advanced walk and all pedestrian phases. It would also help with the Lowcountry Rapid Transit system. Mr. Benjamin said that Calhoun Street was one of the Road Safety Audit corridors and there were significant suggestions to improve safety there. In order to introduce those types of signalization opportunities, it was linked to retiming. Since downtown hadn't been retimed in some time, they felt like it had to be a priority for them to welcome new types of functionality and maximize the signal system. Mr. Mitchell said that when they approached DOT on this, it wasn't only because of the communication infrastructure, but it also worked in concert with the traffic signal retiming that they did in 2016 and 2018. DOT had provided the bulk of the monies spent on this, even as far back as 2009. For the school zone automation project, it was delayed because of Covid. The vendor was not able to send anyone out for the installation and training. They were still waiting on a date that they could return. The company wouldn't release anyone out at this time because of Covid. Hopefully, they could get this completed by December. For the Connected Vehicle Project, they had been working with IT to iron out some issues. Hopefully, the contractor would return in August so they could begin the project. It was a pilot project that DOT was aware of, but what it did was have all the signals connected with the vehicles. Before it was released to the public, it would be reviewed internally by the City and DOT. For the WestEdge Flasher Project, it was completed in May. They added rectangular rapid flashing beacons at a crosswalk from WestEdge to the baseball stadium. It could be activated via push button to let the pedestrians across. The artistic traffic cabinet project was completed in March. They partnered with the Gibbes to complete cabinets at Meeting/Huger, and Folly/South Windermere. The traffic signal retiming project, they had submitted in the budget for this year and it was something they must get done. For the Island Park/Fairchild Intersection Improvement Project, construction should have been done that week, however there had been a delay. The project should take 60 days to complete and should be done by the end of September. The Flood Stat project had been completed. They installed two flood warning systems. One had been removed. The one at Fishburne/Hagood was operating perfectly and sending alerts via text to T&T and the Emergency Operations Center. For the replacement of damaged/missing decorative bases, they had completed all of King Street. They hadn't received anymore funding for it, but hopefully they could go in and finish it.

Application for Original Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity:

- *Charleston Car Service, LLC (Taxi)*

On the motion of Councilwoman Jackson, seconded by Mayor Tecklenburg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the above item.

Traffic Calming Speed Humps for Approval:

- *Bluewater Way – Bolton's Landing*

Mr. Somerville said this was a long-standing request. They first started studying it in 2010, but they weren't able to get the petition signed by the required amount of people until this year. The 24 hour count was just under 1,900 vehicles. The average speed was 30 mph, however there were 49 vehicles recorded going over

55 mph. Chairman Seekings asked if they had alerted homeowners near these speed humps. Mr. Somerville said that once the locations were finalized, they would notify them. They had funding left to be able to do this one and possibly a little bit of maintenance on existing traffic calming. Councilmember Brady said that Bluewater Way came in on the southbound side of Savannah Highway and the neighborhood was getting bypassed to pass the main road and intersection. He had been approached by the residents and was glad that this request was going through.

On the motion of Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilwoman Jackson, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the above item.

Build Grant Ashley River Crossing

Chairman Seekings stated they would keep this item on the agenda as a regular update on the agenda going forward. That didn't mean they would always talk about it though. It would be helpful to get a generalized update, and Mr. Benjamin could give a more technical update at the next meeting.

Mr. Kronsberg said he would give a general overview of a very complex and dynamic project. They were assigned the project at the end of January 2020. They brought on a project manager and her start date was April 8th. At that time, she hit the ground running learning the city processes and delving into the complex grant agreement with the Federal Highways Administration. The first thing to talk about was the contract that City Council approved a few months previous to get some work moving. That contract with HDR had been completed and included some jurisdictional determination of critical areas, a woodstork survey, aerial mapping creations, and field surveys. They were waiting on all of that to be delivered to the City for review and hopefully they would have that in the next week. That was the first portion of work that they got going. The next two items were the grant agreement and the design/build/support scope of work. They were concurrently moving forward. The Legal Department had been working on the grant agreement and it hadn't been as easy. They were having some difficulties getting the FHWA and SCDOT to see along the same lines and agree to specific details. They were trying to reconcile it and would be meeting weekly to get over the hump. They also had the scope of work going on. They were working with the FHWA and had selected a consultant team off the SCDOT's on call list. They selected HDR with approval of FHWA. The scope of work included 16 different tasks and at the end, they would have an RFP out for the actual design and build. It would go through traffic studies, environmental services, roadway/path design, structural design, hydraulic design, geo-tech services, utility coordination, etc. The Feds had approved the scope of work and the next step was to negotiate a contract with HDR. These were all required stepping stones they had to go through for the federal procurement. Then, they could bring a contract to Council for the pre-designed services. They had some milestones in there all going back to the September 30th, 2021 commitment date for the design/build contract to actually build the bridge. Mr. Most said the only thing he would add was that the contract, HDR was originally procured through a DOT process. The DOT typically worked with the County and the County would pick up a consultant so it was easy to work out the details. That's what was making it a little more difficult because they didn't have a contract with DOT. However, DOT was being very helpful, but their contract would be with Federal Highways. That was just something they had to iron out.

Councilwoman Jackson asked what the opportunities were to bring in minority and women owned businesses into the contracting set up. Mr. Kronsberg said that was a part of every project they did. When they had a pre-bid meeting, they would have the goals of the program explained and that was how they kicked off every capital project. When it came down to issuing, it was up to the general contractor to put together the best team and they stressed the importance of that program and having women/minority

owned contractors. Once they got close to a contract, if they didn't have the goal of 20% met, they would go back and tell them to do better. Mr. Benjamin said that federal requirements were strict, and he was also adamant that a project of this magnitude should be reflective of the community it was in. He was very serious about that. He had a conversation with a potential vendor who was an expert in right of way acquisition who had a minority firm. They wanted to make sure that those companies had a seat at the table and had a chance to be involved. Councilwoman Jackson said she would look forward to that being reported. Mr. Most said that HDR understood the City's and FHWA goals and had already identified a number of minority and women owned subs. That was definitely in their process. Chairman Seekings said that the questions they would get was if they were on task and moving forward and if it would happen. Mr. Kronsberg said he couldn't speak to the funding portion because there were a lot of considerations. The Feds had indicated that they were going to request for City funds to be used first. For the schedule, they were a little behind getting the grant agreement in place. They had given the Feds everything they could, and they were just trying to figure out the FHWA and SCDOT relationships. If they looked at the schedule, they were planning on advertising in December for qualifications. They thought they were on schedule if they could get the pre-designed services approved and get the grant agreement in place. Mr. Benjamin said that for clarity purposes, the City was a grant recipient and so the functionalities and what had to be put in place was very different than what they traditionally do around infrastructure and building. The fact that the SCDOT had stepped up was very helpful in helping them utilize their processes. It was complicated and new. They wanted to walk hand in hand and give updates, but it was a process they had to follow. Chairman Seekings said they should give updates as regularly as they could because people had a lot of interest. Mayor Tecklenburg thanked the team on working hard to figure all of this out. They met with Secretary Paul in Columbia and she was very supportive in giving access to resources they had. It was happening. They have that deadline date in mind to meet all the requirements and the team was working to do that.

Director's Update

Mr. Benjamin stated that he also wanted to introduce them to another assistant manager. They were in a position now where every division had a manager and assistant manager. For traffic operations, they had Michael Mathis as the manager, but now they had brought in Thomas Tisdale as the assistant manager. He was a 15 year veteran of SCDOT and had worked at different local offices within the state. They were grateful he decided to come to Charleston and come on with the City. He had been getting a lot of emails regarding work orders and things to be done in districts. They had the city-wide maintenance plan in different areas they were in every month. July, they would be on Daniel Island. August, they would be in James and Johns Island. September, they would be on the Peninsula. October, they would be in West Ashley. November, back on Daniel Island, and December, back on the Islands. They had received great news. They had gotten the report out on the Transportation Sales Projects that would be awarded. Hopefully, they would move forward. It was a testament to the coordination with Charleston County. The projects included the North Bridge bike/ped improvements study, Folly/Fort Johnson Pedestrian Upgrades, St. Philip and Coming Street mid-block crossings, Romney Street Bike Lanes, Courtenay/Doughty Street All Ped Phasing, Ashley Avenue at Congress, Chadwick Drive, and Nicholson. They were excited about all those projects. Lastly, they got the co-sign to continue the Project 700 with four intersections on the Peninsula in the second quarter.

Having no further business, the Committee adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

Bethany Whitaker
Council Secretary