

**CITY OF WOODSTOCK
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**
Regular Meeting
September 17, 2014
City Council Chambers

The regular meeting of the Woodstock Transportation Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM by Vice-Chairman Mark Indyke on Wednesday, September 17, 2014 in Council Chambers at City Hall.

A roll call was taken.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Hudson, Caron Wenzel, Mark Indyke, Jason Osborn

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Chairman Andrew Celentano

STAFF PRESENT: Assistant Director of Public Works Jeff Van Landuyt

OTHERS PRESENT: City Clerk Dianne Mitchell

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by C. Wenzel, second by S. Hudson to accept the August 20, 2014 Special Meeting minutes with the following correction:

J. Osborn referenced the conversation regarding MCRide and advised that it does operate on Saturdays.

Ayes: S. Hudson, M. Indyke, C. Wenzel, J. Osborn. Nays: None. Absentees: Chairman A. Celentano. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

FLOOR DISCUSSION:

No comments

TRANSMITTALS: (No discussion or action requested)

1. July 2014 Pace Ridership Report

M. Indyke reported that the weekly ridership of the two routes is 119 people on average daily. J. Osborn stated that given the frequency of the buses it's hard to get much out of those buses. He noted that 119 rides on MCRide would be very expensive for the County and cities. He stated that it would be nice to see it in the 90-150 range for each route. M. Indyke stated that it has the potential of reaching that goal with the addition of the kiosks and signs. J. Osborn advised that July is a lower ridership month for PACE buses and suggested checking again in March. C. Wenzel stated that she would like to see more. S. Hudson stated that she would like to see November. J. Osborn advised contacting Scott Hennings at MCDOT.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Consideration of revisions & acceptance of Chapter 6 – 2005 Transportation Plan

C. Wenzel thinks this chapter is pointless and thinks they should start over and have a baseline policy to make it a point of getting connections to the major airports into Woodstock that are more user friendly. S. Hudson stated that she thought it was good because it explains the difficulties and costs. C. Wenzel stated that it doesn't answer the problem. S. Hudson believes that it didn't come up with a specific vision for the future and noted that it is difficult to keep it in the same tone as the other chapters because it seems like it isn't a priority.

C. Wenzel stated that she knows a lot of people that travel out of town and use the airports and they complain that there is no way to get there other than limos, the train if you don't have luggage or driving yourself. She noted that when you drive you have to park at the remote lots. She reported that they used to have the Van Galder bus. J. Osborn advised that they still operate but they don't stop in Woodstock or Crystal Lake anymore. C. Wenzel stated that they would send a giant bus for five people but she thinks they need a smaller bus.

J. Osborn stated that his thoughts on this chapter are that it doesn't say that the City should pursue a municipal airport which many cities in the region have done. He stated that it says they should work for a local, private bus which he thinks is still very important. He stated that making improvements like adding new PACE routes that might run down I-90, Park and Ride lots and Metra are in the planning phases and as part of the process they might look towards the City of Woodstock to see if it supports those types of efforts. He stated that having a plan provides guidance and noted that those things are in play whether or not they are now or twenty years from now. He stated that Van Galder could be more immediate. He advised that there is an Amtrak station now at the Milwaukee airport and questioned if the chapter was updated since then. He noted that the improvements to I-90 that are happening right now will improve access to Rockford, O'Hare and Midway making it more reliable in terms of travel times.

S. Hudson questioned if it would be a good first step to select one airport to which they want to improve access; have that as a goal and objective. M. Indyke agreed and stated that Midway is impossible to get to. S. Hudson believes it would be Milwaukee or Rockford. C. Wenzel stated that she would say Milwaukee because they have the Amtrak. J. Van Landuyt questioned why they wouldn't pick O'Hare because of the number of flights going out and stated that if you are going to make access for Woodstock residents you want to give them one where they have the most accessible flights. S. Hudson stated that they should say that they are going to concentrate on getting a bus to O'Hare.

C. Wenzel questioned a subsidized shuttle like a PACE shuttle that specifically goes to airports. S. Hudson thinks you could do it once a day; one in the morning and one coming back in the evening after 8 p.m. She stated that it could be a goal; have something more concrete. The group decided that O'Hare should be the preference. M. Indyke agreed with a consistent, reliable shuttle. S. Hudson stated that you could do it without a car even if you had to stay overnight at a hotel by O'Hare. M. Indyke stated that it gives you an option; one means of reliable transportation on a regular schedule to O'Hare. S. Hudson stated that it would have to be a bus.

C. Wenzel questioned if they could add an airport bus onto MCRide and stated that it could be easier to implement it. J. Van Landuyt stated that Van Galder tried it but the county didn't support it as people would rather drive or take a limo or taxi. He stated that if PACE puts a bus together and does a route but it's not paying for itself cities have to subsidize it and you have buses operating at less than capacity. He noted that there has to be a demand from the community to want to utilize it.

J. Osborn stated that O'Hare provides more transit for the workforce around O'Hare. He stated that there are a lot of people probably even in Woodstock that work at or around O'Hare. He stated that there was an issue with the workforce and they had to create a waiver because they wanted to have a surcharge just to and from O'Hare. He stated that everyone that works at O'Hare uses the blue line. He stated that from the passenger side you think about how often do you fly out of O'Hare and getting a town car or taxi is pretty affordable when you consider parking and driving. He stated that you have to pay more but they are available and they will take you directly to your gate.

S. Hudson stated that the issue is a business person that travels a lot and wants to utilize public transportation probably will not choose Woodstock when they are looking for a home. So we need to try to find a way for this person to want to live here. She stated that maybe that is the option they present to sell; the most viable option for someone who flies frequently is to take a limo and it costs this much. She stated that they probably aren't going to work with the County to get things in place.

C. Wenzel stated that right now it doesn't appear to be a realistic option. S. Hudson stated that it should say that for right now the most feasible option is to go with a private limo company or taxi, it costs this much and that is our recommendation. J. Osborn stated that there could be barriers for smaller companies doing business in multiple communities in terms of needing to get placards so there is the need to coordinate with other agencies to make it easier for them to operate in multiple communities. He said the larger cab companies already have the ability to do that and he suggested working with McHenry County

Economic Development Corporation and some of the other municipalities to help the smaller taxi companies do what is needed so there is a greater presence of taxi and limousine services that would probably also serve O'Hare. S. Hudson suggested wooing a suburban cab company to come out here.

J. Osborn stated that he hears that the changes the Commission is looking for are prioritizing access to O'Hare and the use of limousine and other coach services is a good way to go. C. Wenzel stated that her vision has always been that a person can drive their vehicle and park it in a municipal parking lot in Woodstock and get on a bus to go to O'Hare Airport. She wants a bus that goes to the airport that leaves at 6:30 a.m.; the O'Hare shuttle. J. Osborn stated that he never used Van Galder. C. Wenzel reported that she used it all the time and advised that they picked you up at the Crystal Lake Holiday Inn. She stated that from a Woodstock point of view it was more convenient but it was still a pain. She stated that there would be people from Woodstock but there were about 10 people on a giant greyhound bus; it was overkill.

J. Osborn stated that buses are coming back strong - Megabus, Trailways and Greyhound. He stated that you have services like Megabus and it is possible that other players will be coming through. He stated that keeping the bus in the chapter is a good focus. S. Hudson talked about a demand response shuttle service to O Hare that was available when she lived in DeKalb.

M. Indyke questioned if it would be beneficial for a limo company to promote demand service and noted that he wouldn't mind sharing a limo. He thinks it would be good for local companies. S. Hudson noted that you would call the bus in DeKalb and schedule a time. J. Osborn stated that it is close to the Uber model; using social media to schedule trips. C. Wenzel stated that it takes it out of the commercial zone and puts it in a different sector and noted that there are regulatory issues with Uber. She stated that lots of younger people are going to take that route noting that they aren't going to get on a bus.

The group suggested adding to the goals and objectives a fixed route on a set schedule to O'Hare and on-demand limousine service for multiple people.

2. Update on High School Project Participation

J. Van Landuyt reported that C. Wenzel attended the last meeting. He stated that the students met with Diane Lucas, President of the City's consulting engineer firm Hampton, Lenzini and Renwick, and Wally Dittrich from MCDOT. He advised that the students are working on a roundabout for Madison, South and Lake. He noted that the students had good questions and were prepared for the speakers. He advised that it was the first meeting with guest speakers, that went really well, and he thinks the Commission will get a good report from the students. In response to M. Indyke's question regarding Marian, J. Van Landuyt advised that they tried to contact them but have not heard back. The club may meet later in the school year.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Event/ Party Bus

M. Indyke stated that his feeling about it is if they want to get into a public event party bus or leave it up to the people who plan the event and to get the participants there on their own. He stated that when you look at the big events like Gavers and Oktoberfest, there are people planning the event in conjunction with the City and his feeling is that if you are holding an event and you want people to attend and transport them then the people sponsoring the event should sponsor a party bus.

S. Hudson stated that maybe they should have to pay for it and reported that Rotary just had Oktoberfest in September and stated that she doesn't think the people having the events are always able to make arrangements that involve shuttling people. She thinks it is something the City would offer and the event planners would pay for it if they are trying to get people from out of town to attend the event and it is away from the train like at Emricson. M. Indyke stated that if he was holding an event, he would book the bus through a private bus company. C. Wenzel stated that she has booked buses for classes that aren't school bus, noting that you can get a school bus too. M. Indyke reported that they did a cancer walk in June and advised that the Hearthstone bus and the school buses were operating.

S. Hudson stated the reason the City would do it is to alleviate traffic and congestion during the event. She said if you had buses back and forth to the fairgrounds then you wouldn't have to avoid Rt. 47 during the fair, the city does it because it is an advantage to keep the roads moving. M. Indyke questioned if the fair people should provide the bus. S. Hudson stated that it is a normal thing that cities do and if the city does it they can decide if they want groups to help pay for it. She feels they should be willing to do it as opposed to adding more lanes to a road to accommodate traffic; it's a cheaper option than increasing the infrastructure.

S. Hudson stated that the idea of making it into a Woodstock party bus is to make it 'Woodstock looking' so the bus in itself becomes an attraction. It has to be another reason why someone is deciding to spend their recreational hours and dollars to come out here and engage in the event. She said you have your picture taken with the bus; it becomes a fun thing. In response to M. Indyke, S. Hudson stated that it would start at the train station and end at the event; it would go back and forth. C. Wenzel stated that there aren't that many trains that come in and out of Woodstock.

J. Osborne stated that the Commission talked about it helping with the flow of large crowds. He stated that Woodstock doesn't have the capacity to have large events at all and the County fairgrounds work; but from a pedestrian access across Rt. 47 it doesn't work at all. He stated that they thought it would be good to explore something that would get people to these activities safely and how to utilize more remote parking. He stated that the idea was if they made it an exciting attraction, then it might be part of the overall experience. J. Osborn questioned if the City has run shuttles in the past to the fair and M. Indyke said they did not.

S. Hudson stated that they discussed how dangerous it is and advised that when you are coming home from an event such as the Lighting of the Square and there are a lot of pedestrians it is very dangerous in the total darkness with no streetlights. J. Osborn suggested imagining if these events got twice as popular as they are today and advised that if they don't have the need today, then there may be a strong likelihood for tomorrow. He questioned if a group did come to the City for help whether the City would be prepared to do a shuttle of any sort.

S. Hudson stated that the events can only get as big as we have capacity to handle; it is self-limiting. She stated that maybe the 4th of July event is a good place to start. M. Indyke advised that he is on the Fireworks Committee and reported that the parking lots are always sold out and the revenue goes towards next year's fireworks. He stated that a good 40-50% of people walk and he's not sure they would take a bus. S. Hudson stated there might be people such as elderly people that can't walk and may not be able to drive a car but there should be some option for them.

M. Indyke questioned who would pay for that transportation. S. Hudson stated that it is the same situation as sidewalks, the idea would be that it would be serving a population that wouldn't otherwise be served and it will provide less congestion. M. Indyke stated that it is a benefit but noted that the fireworks is all private donations, with the City providing services, and advised that if they were going to have a bus to transport people from a central location somebody has to pay for it and he questioned where the revenues come from. S. Hudson stated it is the same question for everything so it isn't on the table. She doesn't think fireworks is the best one because it happens at one point in time. She stated what really got the Commission going on this was the City wanted to develop the Summer in the Park event at Emricson.

J. Osborn stated that they talked before about loading and unloading zones and questioned if you wanted to run a coach bus from Del Web to the fair where they would park at the fairgrounds. He stated that we have no capacity for coach buses to come in. He stated that we don't have arrangements with Jewel although we know there is a lot of informal parking probably going on. He questioned; even without a shuttle, how do we accommodate coach buses.

C. Wenzel suggested thinking about around the Square when they have a play or big concert and a bunch of party buses show up, you get five of those coaches and you can't move. She stated that each of those buses only holds about 35-50 and it's not a really significant amount of people using an event that would justify

the amount of energy in parking that they are taking up. S. Hudson feels that is why it is better to shuttle them than have them bring a bus and park it on the Square.

C. Wenzel stated that she has always thought about having an antique streetcar (but more modern) to hold people or a double-decker bus. S. Hudson stated that it is the same thing and noted that they just need a shuttle. She stated that the idea is to use a vehicle and put some kind of decals on it. C. Wenzel stated that her point is that “unique” would get attention and people would come to town to take it versus a Greyhound bus. S. Hudson stated that she was thinking of a little, yellow school bus. C. Wenzel said it needs to have some historical cache that would make people want to come here to take it. S. Hudson said it is just a matter of taste and noted that they are talking about the same thing.

M. Indyke stated that having a unique vehicle like a double-decker bus or trolley would be great but you would have to hire someone to drive it during the events, you have to pay for it, insure it and promote it. S. Hudson stated that if they want to market their events to those living outside of Woodstock, this is something to consider because we don't have the infrastructure to support what would be considered highly successful events that are away from the Square. She stated that if they want to have Summer in the Park in Emricson Park and have people come from out of town you have to take the next step and have a way for them to get from where they come into town to the event which is off-site. She advised that we have the fair and now the Summer in the Park and this is a recommendation for them to start thinking about transportation.

C. Wenzel thinks a street car would work noting that it would have one route. S. Hudson stated that no one said it has to be free; they could pay. She stated that the issue is if they can't get from the train station to the event, they aren't going to come to the event. C. Wenzel suggested a donation box and M. Indyke suggested a nominal fee. S. Hudson stated that the people who use it could pay for at least the cost of the driver and the fuel.

C. Wenzel stated that the City has the hotel tax and she thinks it would be one way to pay for the maintenance and upkeep. M. Indyke advised that the tax is designated towards non-profit organizations and the Opera House. C. Wenzel stated that the railway museum is in Union and eventually they are going to build the Coyne Road station so the whole area is going to become more train oriented. She stated that if you want to promote it in a fun way, you could be electric on a trolley line. She suggested getting one of the old cars from the museum and turn it into an .org that runs the trolley in Woodstock May – Christmas. S. Hudson doesn't think it should be a fixed route and thinks it should be something that runs in the streets so it is flexible and can go different places.

J. Osborne thinks that if we recognize that these events are going to get bigger and Woodstock can get more value in terms of people spending more money and time in Woodstock, then getting the highway improvements on 14 and 47 will help draw people, but it might not draw bigger crowds because they are driving here and now parking is an issue. He stated that shuttles and access to the train station may be a way of getting the bigger crowds and bigger and even new events. He stated that whenever he goes to the County Fair he thinks about what an untapped potential it is. He stated that the County Fair groups have decided to invest a little more into that location and it looks like they are staying put. He advised that it was crowded and he often thought they could get it up a notch and tap into a much larger market if they knew how to get people over Rt. 47. He thinks it becomes an economic development thing to consider and the party bus concept is a way to become a better transportation host. He advised that it would be great to put lodging and transport into place so people can spend multiple days in Woodstock spending their money and not just driving through.

C. Wenzel stated that there is a lot of cool stuff that goes on here and the transportation party bus angle could definitely be one of them but it has to have a hook or excitement about it for people to use it. She suggested that it could be a trolley plus shuttle buses that go to the hotels. J. Osborn stated that he did a tour of Helena, MT in an electric train that was a souped up golf cart dragging cars behind it. He can't imagine it was too expensive and stated that it wasn't much but it provided some sightseeing and it was

booked. He stated that this can be accomplished any number of ways, but Woodstock has a lot of history and he sees people get off the train and start snapping pictures like they have wanted to come here so you know there are tourists that make their way out here.

S. Hudson stated that the Commission brought up the issue of the shuttle for the remote events especially the Summer in the Park, 4th of July and the County Fair which are three big events that are not very accessible to those without a car. S. Hudson stated that those are the three right now but there could be something else added. She stated that they are planning events but the City needs to take this into consideration if they are going to have events that aren't held on the Square; there are transportation issues involved. C. Wenzel suggested a holistic vision and figuring out what to facilitate to have it all come together. S. Hudson suggested requiring events to have a plan for transportation before issuing a permit to have the event and the City should lead the way by having something for its own event.

M. Indyke questioned if the Commission should suggest that the City consider a unique mode of transportation to community events. S. Hudson stated, "a mode of transportation," and a secondary underneath that it is the possibility of a "unique form" that might also be an attraction. She stated that the basic problem is a transportation problem and even if it isn't an attraction in itself there is still the need to accommodate people that come into the city without a car. She stated that the County Fair is not a Woodstock sponsored event but the Summer in the Park is and they should lead the way in this. She thinks it could tie in with the idea of the lunchtime gridlock also; whatever they use as a shuttle for special events might also be able to be used at lunch time. She suggested that the Commission think about it and write something up after more discussion.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Continued Review of Transportation Plan – October 2014
2. 5 year Capital Improvement Plan Review
3. Discussion on Frontage Roads along IL Rt. 47 Corridor – November 2014

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by J. Osborn, second by S. Hudson to adjourn the regular meeting of the Woodstock Transportation Commission to the special meeting October 15, 2014 @ 7:00 PM. Ayes: S. Hudson, M. Indyke, C. Wenzel, J. Osborn. Nays: None. Absentees: Chairman A. Celentano. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Mitchell - City Clerk