Transportation Task Force
1/2/08 Meeting
Minutes

Members Present:

Randy Kincaid, Chairman	Andrew Grant, Ex. Director	Mayor Swain, Huntersville
Gary Knox, Vice Chairman	Karen Floyd, Secretary	Mayor Tarte, Cornelius
Mitch Abraham	Chris Ahearn	Mayor Thunberg, Mooresville
Jim Bensman	Carroll Gray	Mayor Woods, Davidson
Brian Jenest	Charlie Jeter	
Lawrence Kimbrough		

Air Quality Consideration – Eldewins Haynes, Charlotte Department of Transportation

The topic of air quality was chosen by Mayor Kincaid because it relates to most aspects that will be discussed by the task force.

Mr. Haynes, of Charlotte Department of Transportation, explained that air quality is tied to transportation. On road transportation sources are responsible for 55% of the region's air pollution.

Mayor Knox stated that the federal government has mandated that a plan must be in place to achieve the reduction of NOx in non-attainment areas in the region. Mr. Haynes explained that the federal mandate requires that the area transportation plans meet the on-road transportation emissions and do not exceed certain limits.

Mr. Gray asked if the plan was date specific. Mr. Haynes stated that the critical date is June 15, 2010. The EPA will then determine whether or not the ozone standards have been achieved. The ozone season runs from April to October and the EPA decision will be based on those seasons of 2007-2009.

Mayor Kincaid asked who was in charge of the action plan. Mr. Haynes stated that the air quality plan, called the State Implementation Plan, is governed by the State. A large element of the plan deals with power plant emissions; cars, trucks, and diesel emission elements are being driven at the Federal level. This plan will determine how the region will come into attainment by the required date and will also require EPA approval.

Mr. Kimbrough questioned what determined the impoundment of federal funding for highways if the air quality standards are not met. Mr. Haynes clarified that there is no impact on highway funding if the air quality is not met in the mitigation plan. If the air quality standards are not achieved by 2010, only new point sources (e.g., plants) will be affected by sanctions. The only rules affecting vehicles are federal rules on what the emissions standards are for new vehicles.

Mr. Haynes explained that the State generates a mitigation plan for each region. There are several ways to help the reduction of emissions: providing alternate transportation, improving sidewalks, adding bike lanes, and improving road efficiency. These are all key factors to reducing congestion without increasing pollution. There has to be a certain amount of traffic congestion in order to help regulate pollution. If traffic idles too long it creates higher levels of pollution but if traffic moves with ease, vehicles then travel at a faster rate of speed which also increases the level of pollution. The optimum vehicle speed

for low emission is between 25 and 45 mph. A balance needs to be obtained between reducing congestion and lowering pollution.

Mayor Thunberg explained that when the transportation plan was being developed there was collaboration between SEQ and EPA to ensure that the plan incorporated everything needed to meet the required measurements. Mayor Kincaid stated there seemed to be some disconnect between the DOT plan and the EPA action required.

Mayor Kincaid asked if there were any constraints concerning air quality the committee would be faced with. Mayor Knox stated that the federal government has mandated the State implement an air quality plan but questioned if the State would fund the implementation of the plan and if any local funding opportunities could be created. Mayor Swain then asked if there were funds associated with the attainment of the plan. Mr. Haynes stated that he did not recall any funding available by the State for air quality projects.

Mayor Tarte asked if the committee would be doing something during other action items that will help the improvement of air quality. Mayor Thunberg said the four towns need to be in sync with each other's transportation plan. Mr. Jeter asked if it was possible to get a copy of the plan as it relates to each Town. Mr. Brice said to contact Norm Steinman of CDOT for copies.

Mr. David Carol stated that the next plan will be impossible to achieve if the current plan is not done. Mayor Thunberg stated that the group needs to focus on the things they can control and collaboratively work together on road improvements that will benefit the entire area instead of waiting on the State. Mayor Swain agreed but said she would like financial recognition by the State for those efforts put forth as a group. Mayor Knox suggested being ahead of the curve may enable some type of available funding. Mayor Swain suggested coming up with a list of improvements that could be done collaboratively. Mr. Gray stated that commonality projects may be factors of influence by the State when considering funding. Mayor Thunberg stated that by joining together, funding opportunities can be maximized.

Mr. Grant asked how the approval of new projects will impact the plan. Mr. Haynes explained that at certain horizon years (2015, 2025, and 2035) throughout the plan it will be necessary to show that the air quality goals are met and that the plan is fiscally constrained. Every project will need a funding source. The funding shortfall at the State level has affected the entire state. Mr. Haynes stated that a copy of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) can be found at www.mumpo.org .

Mayor Swain stated that connectivity is a key factor. Mr. Jenest commented that a comprehensive connectivity plan between all towns would be beneficial.

Future Topic Discussion

Mr. Grant went through the list of meeting dates and confirmed that all meetings will be held on Wednesday evenings at Cornelius Town Hall, Room 204, 5PM – 7PM.

Mr. Bensman asked who would be writing the report. Mayor Kincaid stated that he will write the report. The draft format will be in bullet form followed by the group's recommendation. Mayor Kincaid welcomed all thoughts and comments through email.

Mr. Jeter asked if more time could be allowed for the Commuter Rail topic. Mr. Grant said he would look into arranging more time.

Ms. Ahearn asked if signalization would be part of the topic discussion as retiming of lights could have a huge impact. Mayor Thunberg stated that if the scope is within the town's control it should be given consideration.

Mr. Jenest asked if any public/private partnerships (TIFS) for funding would be discussed. Mr. Grant made a note to add the TIF topic to the meetings list for discussion.

Mayor Kincaid summed up the meeting by listing the following points of interest agreed upon by the group:

- Obtain adequate facts on topics of discussion
- Create actionable facts
- Create a useful report
- Define joint action by all four towns
- Recognize all four towns are in it together for the long haul

Information Link

For additional information and Task Force updates please refer to the Town of Davidson's website www.ci.davidson.nc.us

Adjournment

6:54PM