

**MINUTES
TOWN OF CONCORD
CITIZENS TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
Thursday July 26, 2012
7:00 PM-9:30 PM
Clock Tower Room
Harvey Wheeler Community Center**

Present: Lisa Bergen, presiding
Rick Anderson
Ray Bruttomesso
Kate Damon
Abraham Fisher
Louise Haldeman
Mark Hanson

Citizens present: none

1. Call to order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Chair, Lisa Bergen

2. The minutes:

The minutes of the July 19th meeting were approved pending corrections to a spelling error and changing “conservation” to “conservancy”.

3. Correspondence:

Ms. Bergen reported that she had received an email copy of a letter from William Plummer which he has sent to the Superintendent of Schools, requesting that the Superintendent ask the MSBA to consider some changes in the approved design of the high school driveway. Such changes would make it possible to keep the present transportation maintenance facility in its present location. He also included overlays of the site and other pertinent documents. The letter will also go to the MSBA itself, the school committees, town officials, building committee, architects and everyone who received the original letter from the MSBA. Ms. Bergen was asked by the committee members to forward the letter to them.

In discussion of the letter, Ms. Bergen pointed out that while the MSBA is willing to talk to all interested parties, only the applicant can request changes. In this case, the applicant is the Superintendent representing the Regional School District. She also reminded the CTC committee that the Regional School District is legally separate from the Town of Concord and does not have the same resources as does the municipality. While the Town of Concord has built three new schools in the past decade, it has been many years since the district itself undertook a major building project.

Committee members hoped that the technical separation between the Regional School District and the Town would not prevent either from seeking advice of the other. They also hoped that the Regional School Committee would request the Superintendent give careful consideration to Mr. Plummer’s suggestions and not dismiss them out of hand.

Ms. Haldeman asked if Carlisle’s opposition to moving the transportation facility elsewhere on the grounds extended to opposition to keeping the building in its present site. It appears that the Carlisle representatives favor outsourcing entirely since they do that already, K- 8 to a private company and 9-12 to the Region. Since the building is in place however, a majority of the School Committee could decide to leave it there. It was noted that that there would be “cons” as well as “pros” to leaving the building in and the CTC intends to study it further along with other options.

4. Chair’s Report:

Ms. Bergen commended Ms. Haldeman for her superb note taking for the minutes. The entire committee deeply appreciates Ms. Haldeman’s ability to capture all the details discussed at each meeting. recognizing that it is a challenging task!

Ms. Bergen reported that she, Ms. Damon, and Ms. Haldeman accompanied by Mr. Plummer had toured the high school site earlier in the week to see how the new building would line up with the existing transportation maintenance building. It appeared that though the distance between the new building and the facility would be much narrower, there should be room with some slight alteration of the road, to keep it there. This would be an advantage financially but it could also present some problems. At present, the transportation building is separated from the high school by a hill which serves as both as a visual and a sound barrier. It will be necessary to level the hill in order to erect the new school and therefore the maintenance building will be more visible to the school even though the elevation of the school itself will be much higher. Whether sound would be a problem is unknown.

It was also clear that the buses could not remain parked where they are now although the road would make it easy to bring a bus in for maintenance. There is an unused field toward the southwest corner of the property which could possibly accommodate the buses eventually and once construction is finished there are other possible spaces. The parking lot east of the current building is large enough but it is close to Brister's Hill. It was suggested that earth from the removal of the hill could be used to construct a landscaped barrier between the residences and the buses. It was noted that the parking lot in question is also the site of an old landfill and there might be very good reasons to not remove the pavement.

In concluding her report, Ms. Bergen suggested that any members who had not looked at the site do so being careful to avoid having an inadvertent quorum without proper public notification.

5. **Citizen Comments:** The citizens were all on vacation.

6. **Reports and Issues for Discussion:**

a. *Safety:* Mr. Bruttomesso is continuing his discussion with the Fire Chief regarding how the school buses figure into the town's emergency planning. While there have been very few incidents in which buses have been needed, the town has been able to rely on the fact that the buses are close by. Not having buses easily available could affect emergency planning.

Mr. Hanson is continuing to gather statistics from other communities to see how they handle transportation. He is particularly interested in communities of similar size and school layout. Towns whose schools are campus style may have different approaches from those whose buildings are spread out.

b. *Cost analysis of the options:* Ms. Damon has spoken with manufacturers of steel buildings in an effort to get an idea of what a replacement transportation facility would cost. She has specified a building which would include the maintenance facility with three bays, office space, a meeting room for the drivers, restroom facilities etc. She has one verbal estimate of roughly \$500-600k, but will be double checking what this includes. These are only estimates not bids and there are more to come. Ms. Damon will also be looking into the costs of additional components necessary to replace the depot.

Mr. Anderson and Ms. Bergen met with John Flaherty and Matt Wells this afternoon regarding the school budgets but have not had time to review.

Mr. Anderson pointed out that it will be important to consider costs in light of the total cost of the operation and Ms. Bergen stated that in conversation with school officials it was suggested that we look at a facility which has more bays in order to service some of the school's other vehicles.

This occasioned some lively discussion! The charge of the CTC does not include deciding how to take care of all the other vehicles belonging to the District. It was felt however that although this question has hitherto been ignored by the School Administration, it needs to be addressed and perhaps the CTC's research could be helpful. It is possible that addressing the maintenance needs of buses and other vehicles at the same time could save money. Even if the buses are outsourced, the school will still need its trucks and snow plows unless a separate contract is made to cover these service. The schools are responsible both at the district and at the public schools for snow plowing and lawn mowing as well as general school building maintenance. It was suggested that Ms. Damon ask for estimates on 2, 3 and 4 bay facilities.

c. *Measuring social factors:* Ms. Haldeman said that she hopes to find a way to rate various options in the light of the recognized social factors or intangibles. She will share her thoughts with Mr. Fisher.

- d. *Site update:* Ms. Bergen reported that the TAC is taking a close look at several school-owned sites but continues to exclude consideration of the high school site. They are also researching the Elks land on Baker Avenue and a parcel of state owned land adjacent to the Municipal Light Plant in which both the Town of Concord and the Light Plant might also be interested. This is a ten acre parcel and it is landlocked so the State might be happy to let it go. One difficulty, the land borders houses although it is large enough that buses could be kept well away from residents. Of greater concern is that the buses would always need to navigate the rotary. It is generally assumed that today's students will be grandparents before anything is done about the rotary.

The W R Grace land has been taken out of consideration as the Town does not yet own it. The landfill is still a possibility and Ms. Bergen will investigate further.

The CTC will continue to study using the high school site and will review the selections of the TAC as well as look at some of the other pieces of land mentioned in the Solar Siting Report.

7. Action Items:

Review Report and presentation information: The August 16th hearing is preliminary. The CTC will present the information it has obtained so far and will seek the input of the community. Based on the audience questions the CTC will then further its research before its final hearing on September 13. The CTC will present its full report to the School Committee on October 2. The overall report will be divided into five sections covering Safety, Social Factors, Level of Service, Cost Analysis, and Potential Sites. For the next committee meeting, Ms. Bergen has asked that each committee member develop 5-7 slides which can accompany the presentation. The committee aims for a program of approximately 45-60 minutes in order to allow an hour for questions. A notice of the hearing will be posted on the Town website, sent to the *Journal* and *Mosquito*, posted on discussion lists in both towns, the LWVCC website, and other venues available to the members. The committee hopes for a large attendance.

The committee adjourned at 9:30, no doubt a relief to the custodian.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise S. Haldeman, Clerk.