

MINUTES
TOWN OF CONCORD
CITIZENS TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
Wednesday October 4 2012
6-7 Pm at CCTV studio, CCHS
7:30 – 9:30 Clock Tower Room
Harvey Wheeler Center

Act1. CCTV Studio

Present:

Lisa Bergen, presiding
Rick Anderson
Kate Damon
Abe Fisher
Louise Haldeman
Mark Hanson

Absent: Ray Bruttomesso

At 6PM the meeting was called to order by Chair Lisa Bergen. The purpose of the studio session was to record the three separate break out sessions from the hearing held on September 19th. With considerable help from Sam Krueger of CCTV, the members repeated the information they had given at the September 19th hearing including the three breakout sessions which covered the topics of safety, social factors, and costs. The narratives will be coordinated with the relevant power point slides for later release on CCTV. Following the recordings, the session was adjourned to reconvene at 7:30 at Harvey Wheeler.

Act 2 Harvey Wheeler

Present:

Lisa Bergen, presiding
Rick Anderson
Kate Damon
Louise Haldeman
Mark Hanson

Absent: Ray Bruttomesso on active military duty and Abe Fisher attending back-to-school night.

Citizens present: Ray Hanselman and William Plummer were both present for Act 2.

1. **Call to order:**

The meeting was reconvened at 7:35 by Chair, Lisa Bergen

2. **The Minutes:**

The minutes of the meetings of September 10 and September 19 were approved.

3. **Correspondence:** None

4. **Chairs Report:** Ms. Bergen said that she had been asked if the CTC report could be aligned with that of the TAC. She has explained that while some parts may be similar, the two committees have entirely different charges and responsibilities. The CTC was set up by an act of the Concord Town meeting and has been charged with finding a

way to keep the buses in house. It is ultimately responsible to the voters of the Town of Concord. The TAC was appointed by the School Committee to look for ways to house the buses but it has been forbidden to look at high school property. The CTC is free to explore all possibilities.

The TAC has looked extensively at sites other than that currently in use. It had appeared that the old landfill, which is located across Route 2, might make a good site; however, it now appears that the Walden Woods project is again interested and that they would not want to have the bus depot there. Ms. Haldeman observed that Walden Woods has seldom been able to live up to its promises in the past but Ms. Damon said that there is considerable political support from people elsewhere.

The next best site according to TAC would be on the site of the Concord Municipal Light Plant. There would be room for buses, a maintenance building and a fuel tank even though there is some wet land. There would be no cost for the land although bringing in the necessary utilities and buildings would be an expense. Ms. Damon said that a five thousand gallon fuel tank would be required for the buses; it would probably not be difficult to get permission.

The primary objection to the site would be its distance and the fact that it would be on the far side of the rotary. Buses would need to navigate the rotary every day at times when the traffic is at its height. Furthermore, it is possible that the State will finally address the traffic problems at the rotary, (this has been under discussion for over 50 years), and should that happen it would cause further delays. It's possible that the redesign of the rotary could begin in 2014.

Discussion then turned to the proposed temporary site for the buses in Acton. Mr. Hanson had viewed the site and reported that it would take several minutes for the buses to come south on Rt. 27 and turn onto 2A.

Travelling down 2A will also be subject to heavy traffic and they will again need to go around the rotary. Mr. Hanson has had a conversation with Acton police who expressed great concern about the traffic. It did not appear that the Acton police had been consulted prior to the School Committee accepting the plan.

Mr. Hanson stated that when all the buses are standing end to end, they stretch for more than quarter of a mile.

5. **Citizens Comments:** Mr. Plummer expressed his continuing amazement that the Building Committee had absolutely refused to look at his proposal for a change in the driveway at the high school which would have allowed the bus depot to stay where it is. He is certain that the estimated cost of such a change would be far less than the cost involved with the other suggested sites and would not require any change in the building foot print.

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

A .Final research review: Most of the basic research has been done and subsequent investigation confirms the estimates already received.

B. The committee discussed its recommendations for placing the buses. All agreed that the optimum solution is to leave the buses right where they are now. Even though the Building Committee has declined to consider Mr. Plummer's proposal, it is not too late to reconsider it.

A second choice would be to look elsewhere on the high school grounds. Parking on the area now used for student parking might be possible. It is unclear what the prognosis is for that part of the campus that was once a dump site. It may take several years to determine its fate. In the meantime buses could be parked there.

As a third choice the committee would recommend looking at the land round Ripley school. There is good deal of land, some of it is wet and there would be neighborhood opposition however the land was purchased for school use and its location while not as good as the present site would avoid many of the traffic problems that would be associated with the Municipal Light Plant site.

The old land fill site seems to be out of the running but if something should happen to the proposed plans it would be preferable to the light plant because of distance etc. It was noted that there is land at Sanborn

however the area that could be a permanent site for a bus depot is the same land where a new middle school building might well be built in the future.

In addition to the obvious traffic problems generated by both the proposal for temporary siting in Acton and permanent siting at the light plant, there is the issue of costs. Each additional mile that a bus must travel to its destination adds to the expense. Moreover, while buses are indeed the safest way to travel, the possibility of traffic accidents will rise.

There was further discussion of the draft recommendations made by Mr. Fisher for inclusion in the final report. In the area of social factors should be included the value of recognizing the bus drivers as being an integral part of the school system. Ms. Damon expressed her concern that people in town forget that there are many different people in different jobs, which make up the organization and all are deserving of respect. Ms. Bergen had attended the memorial service for a Concord bus driver who was recently killed in an accident while walking his dog in Townsend. She stressed the outpouring of grief for his death and the esteem in which he was held not only by friends and his own family but also by the families in Concord for whom he was the bus driver.

In his recommendations Mr. Anderson intends to include some of the ways that the bus service could be made more economical such as by using buses which are of similar quality but have front engines instead of rear engines.

It was noted that since the Town of Concord through the CPS has the greater share of the costs of busing, moving buses off the high school will not result in much savings for the high school budget.

The committee will recommend strongly that the schools resume their practice of replacing buses on a regular schedule.

Ms. Bergen reminded the committee to get all their material in to Mr. Fisher ASAP as there are only two more meetings before Report Day. She also said that there had been some discussion that a long term transportation committee be set up which might include members of CTC and TAC. The committee members expressed some skepticism as to the intentions or effectiveness of such a committee in view of the lack of interest so far shown by the School Committee and Administration.

7. Citizens Comments:

Mr. Hanselman remarked that a committee could only be effective if it had some degree of independence.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise S. Haldeman