

THOMAS JEFFERSON PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
Draft Minutes October 1, 2009

City of Charlottesville

David E. Brown
Jason Pearson, Treasurer

Albemarle County

Sally H. Thomas
Ann H. Mallek

Fluvanna County

Charles W. Allbaugh, Vice Chair
Chris Fairchild

Greene County

Carl Schmitt, Chair
Andrea Wilkinson

Louisa County

Richard Havasy
Jackson Wright

Nelson County

Fred Boger
Connie Brennan

Executive Director

Stephen Williams

Commissioners Present:

Jason Pearson – Charlottesville
Sally Thomas – Albemarle County
Ann Mallek – Albemarle County
Carl Schmitt – Greene County
Andrea Wilkinson – Greene County
Jack Wright – Louisa County
Fred Boger – Nelson County

Guest Present:

Leslie Middleton, RRBC

Commissioners Absent:

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David Brown– Charlottesville
Charles Allbaugh – Fluvanna County
Chris Fairchild – Fluvanna County
Richard Havasy—Louisa County
Connie Brennan – Nelson County

Staff Present:

Steve Williams, Executive Director
Billie Campbell, COO
David Blount, Legislative Liaison

Call to Order: TJPDC Chair Carl Schmitt called the meeting to order.

Matters from the Public: There were no matters from the public.

Consent Agenda: There were several changes made to the Minutes of the September 10 meeting. It was noted that the description of the vote following the closed session should read, “Upon a unanimous roll call vote of the members, the motion passed.” On the Commissioner Roundtable it was asked that Albemarle County has a special business tax category for mail order or internet businesses even though this hurts store front retail.

On a motion by Fred Boger, seconded by Jack Wright, the Commission adopted the minutes of the September 10, 2009 meeting, with Ann Mallek abstaining.

Intergovernmental Reviews: On FY10-12 regarding the application for modification of the permit for Keswick Utilities, the Commission agreed to submit a comment requesting testing for copper on an annual basis. **On a motion by Sally Thomas, seconded by Ann Mallek, the Commission approved the IGRs, directing staff to submit a comment on FY10-12 for annual testing.**

Commissioner Roundtable Discussion: Commissioner Jason Pearson made a presentation on carbon trading and carbon tax concepts. The biosphere, just a few miles thick, and the atmosphere, 60 to 70 miles thick, maintain a delicate balance of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other gases regulate the temperature of the planet. Levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere have been increasing over the past 200 years due to the use of fossil fuels. In order to encourage market innovation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, there are two general policy approaches that have been suggested: 1) cap and trade and 2) carbon tax. Under cap and trade, the government would set a limit on the total amount of CO₂ that could be emitted. Companies and other groups would be

issued emission permits that allot them a certain number of carbon credits. Limits could be reduced over time to achieve carbon goals. Companies that can cheaply reduce their emissions can choose to do so, and could then sell or trade their excess carbon credits to other companies. The 1990 Clean Air Act was a successful cap and trade system for SO₂ (acid rain), with the actual cost of credits lower than the projected costs. Cap and trade requirements include: mandatory emissions caps, fixed number of allowances per entity, banking and trading, clear performance criteria, and flexibility. Some concerns that have been expressed regarding a cap and trade system are: price volatility, selective impact, international inequity, complexity and capacity, and special interest manipulation. Critics of the cap and trade system typically advocate for an alternate approach of carbon taxes, which are sometimes structured as “tax and dividend” even though both approaches can be structured with dividends. Advantages of a carbon tax system include: price stability, efficient implementation, international equity, transparency and simplicity, and applicability to all actions and sectors. Concerns about a carbon tax include: lack of a firm cap, difficulty in determining the tax rate, and the potential for political “watering down.” Both put a price on carbon, impose a “tax”, reduce emissions and have the potential to return dividends to consumers. Cap & trade is complex, but popular in the United States. Carbon tax is simple, but unpopular in the U.S. Jason compiled a listing of web site addresses, which he offered to distribute to the Commission by e-mail.

VDOT 2035 Surface Transportation Plan: Steve Williams reviewed the table and map of projects proposed to be included in the fiscally constrained VDOT 2035 Surface Transportation Plan. The Rural Technical Committee has reviewed the proposed list of projects and suggested several additions and clarifications, which Mr. Williams reviewed with the Commission:

- Add improvements to the remaining sections of Route 208 in Louisa County, to provide a consistent rural two lane cross-section with 24 foot pavement width
- Clarify the proposed project on Route 15 to indicate inclusion of intersection improvements at the I-64 ramps in Zions Crossroads
- Inclusion of intersection improvements at Route 15 and Route 6 in the Route 15 project in Fluvanna County

The Commission agreed with those recommendations and added the following:

- No support for the proposal to widen US 33 immediately east of the entrance to Shenandoah National Park, due to the cost and environmental impacts and limited benefits
- Extend the proposed improvement to Route 151 in northern Nelson County from Albemarle County to Route 664 due to local traffic conditions.

On a motion by Sally Thomas, seconded by Ann Mallek, the Commission directed staff to convey these comments to VDOT.

Letter of Support for Crozet Streetscape Project Phase 3: Albemarle County has requested a letter of support for a transportation enhancement grant application for Phase 3 of the Crozet Streetscape project. This would consist of the section from Crozet Corner to Jarmans Gap Road. The Commission provided letters of support for grant applications for earlier phases of the project. **On a motion by Andrea Wilkinson, seconded by Jack Wright, the Commission approved submission of a letter of support for the project.** Enhancement grant applications are due December 1, so any other requests for letters of support would need to be presented at the November 5 Commission meeting.

Profiles of Virginia PDCs: Steve Williams distributed results from the completed telephone surveys with PDC Executive Directors and verbally reviewed those results. This information is provided to the Commission for preparation for the planning retreat on Thursday, November 12.

Broadband Initiative: Steve Williams reported that the TJPDC received two proposals in response to the RFP: Nelson Cable and Digital Bridge. Nelson Cable indicated that they were willing to partner with Digital Bridge in their proposal. Meetings have been held with both of those companies. Applications for the second round of broadband stimulus funding are expected to be due on or about January 10, 2010. A third round is not anticipated. There are some concerns about areas not covered in the Digital Bridge proposal.

Energy Initiative: There has been a change in the eligibility of applicants since the memo in the meeting packet was written. PDCs can now submit applications. Based on the discussion at a September 9 meeting, representatives from each of the four counties (Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson) indicated that they intended to submit applications for local projects and supported a regional application for a project through the HOME Consortium. The application will be released soon and the Governor's office will be announcing a training session soon. There will be about a month between the release of the application and the due date for submissions.

Legislative Report: David Blount briefly reviewed the draft 2010 TJPDC Legislative Program. David has scheduled to meet with the governing bodies in each of the six localities in October to seek approval of the program. The Commission approved the draft by consensus. Carl Schmitt recommended a legislative "SWAT" team to increase localities' responsiveness and ability to mobilize on key issues during the General Assembly session. Sally Thomas mentioned an electronic alert system used by the High Growth Coalition. David also announced that the date of the legislative luncheon would be November 16, with the location to be confirmed.

Other Business: The next Commission meeting will be November 5, with the retreat scheduled for November 12. The retreat will start at 8:00 a.m. with continental breakfast, and conclude at 2:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.