

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
January 21, 2010**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Charlie Hileman, Chair
Austin Brown
Heidi Perry
Seth LaJeunesse
Michael Krasnov
Robin Michler
Sammy Slade, Alderman

STAFF PRESENT

Jeff Brubaker

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Daniel Amoni

GUESTS PRESENT

Brendan Watson
Jonathan Michels

I. Call to Order

Charlie Hileman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM.

II. Introductions

Jonathan Michels introduced himself as a student writer with the Carolina Journalism Network, writing a story on the TAB meeting (if there is one). Brendan Watson, TAB applicant, introduced himself as a PhD student in the UNC School of Journalism and resident of Carrboro interested in environmental communication and alternative transportation. Hileman explained the next steps for appointing a TAB member: he will provide a summary of applications to the Board of Aldermen in accordance with the new advisory board guidelines. The new member's term would start Feb. 1.

III. Approval of minutes

MOTION (Perry, Michler second): TAB approved the January 7, 2010, meeting minutes. Ayes (6): Hileman, Brown, Perry, LaJeunesse, Krasnov, Michler. Nays (0). Abstain (0). Absent (1): Amoni.

IV. Land Use Ordinance Amendment – Street Separation Standards

Brubaker presented the proposed Town Code amendment – which was initiated by a request by the developer of Carolina Commons – and where it would apply: developments adjacent to and connected via the street in question to a Village Mixed Use district. He said that one benefit of street separation minimums is preventing “corner cutting”: diagonal vehicular movements that encroach on the oncoming traffic lane. Brown, Perry, and Krasnov asked how the Code

amendment would address this since it only pertains to two cross streets on the same side of the connecting street, and corner cutting is a problem mainly when the street approaches are on opposite sides, allowing cars to zigzag. Hileman asked why a Code amendment was necessary; why couldn't the developer just ask for an exception? Brown and Perry concurred. Perry wondered if the change would allow crazy street patterns. Slade asked what the benefits of street separation minimums were. Brubaker said it helps prevent vehicle queues from blocking left-turn movements at the preceding intersection, but that this was not a huge concern for local roads. Michler asked whether it made sense, assuming that the current 400-ft. minimum is too long, for every developer to ask for an exception. Krasnov confirmed with Brubaker that shorter block lengths were already allowed in VMUs. [See 2-4 staff report.] Several members agreed that an exception makes sense in this instance, but not necessarily for others. Hileman asked what other jurisdictions have done. Brubaker said that several other communities' codes he looked at do not have street separation minimums but rather have maximums. Michler said that having many streets close together (e.g. Main/Weaver/Roberson) can be an "engineer's nightmare" but at the same time can create focal points for communities. Brown asked why the developer is asking for the amendment. Brubaker said it was in part to protect a 100-year-old beech tree and provide a buffer to Bolin Creek. Perry wrote out a recommendation.

MOTION (Perry, LaJeunesse second): The Transportation Advisory Board recommends to the Board of Aldermen that Land Use Ordinance Sec. 15-218(c)(1) not be changed at this time. We would recommend that the developer ask for an exception to the LUO and justify the exception, with a review and approval by the Town Engineer. If an exception is not possible, before recommending that the LUO be changed, the TAB would like to hear from transportation professionals on how such a change could positively or negatively affect future developments.

VOTE: Ayes (6): Hileman, Brown, Perry, LaJeunesse, Krasnov, Michler. Nays (0). Abstain (0). Absent (1): Amoni.

After talking with Trish McGuire, Brubaker confirmed that the LUO did not provide an exception solely based on development type. [Follow-up: there is an exception for lot access. See 2-4 staff report.]

V. Long Range Transit Plan follow-up

Slade gave a summary of the Board of Alderman's discussion and recommended revisions, including on light rail, climate change, and parking/regional transit service. Hileman and Perry noted that UNC has yet to comment on the final plan. There will also be a commuter rail feasibility study conducted by NCRRT that will include the freight rail line. [See 2-4 staff update for more info on this study.] The next step will be for the Transit Partners to create a Short Range Transit Plan. Discussing the TAB's MLK road diet recommendation, Perry said that the

MLK corridor affects Carrboro because Carrboro contributed funding for the Plan and Carrboro taxes pay for transit service. Other topics of discussion included park-and-ride nodes and the NC-54 corridor. Slade suggested continuing the public input process and using it to inform the next plan from the beginning. He suggested looking at locally-created transit solutions and keeping light rail service under consideration in future plans. Perry said she would rather see tax dollars going to better evening/weekend service, but instead there have been reductions in service. She suggested evening bus service on Friday nights. Chapel Hill Transit should highlight changes on bus schedules when they make them. Michler said schedules should be posted at bus stops.

VI. Carfree days

At the end of the transit discussion, Hileman asked the TAB for solutions for promoting alternative transportation in Town. This sparked a discussion of pedestrian safety and carfree times on certain days on either Main St. or Weaver St. Perry suggested closing Weaver St. on Sundays. Hileman said that the businesses he talked to on Weaver did not have a problem with it. He said cost would be an issue and that ways to reduce costs should be researched. Krasnov suggested a woonerf on Weaver St. and Michler described traffic calming strategies used in Holland. The TAB went back and forth on specific days (Saturday or Sunday) and streets (Main or Weaver) that would work best for street closings. The discussion included how to link the closings with the farmer's market on Saturday or the crafts fair, what impact they would have on businesses and the fire station, and what NCDOT would think of closing Main St. Hileman suggested a survey of businesses, and Michler added that a before-after survey would show what the impacts were. Slade asked for ideas on how to encourage carpooling, and a brief discussion followed. Perry suggested talking to the Fire Department to see what they do for street closings.

MOTION (Perry, Brown second): The TAB recommends to the Board of Aldermen that the town consider closing a portion of the town's streets a minimum of once a month to promote car-free and pedestrian activity.

VOTE: Ayes (6): Hileman, Brown, Perry, LaJeunesse, Krasnov, Michler. Nays (0). Abstain (0). Absent (1): Amoni.

VII. Other business

The TAB discussed the Bolin Creek Greenway. Hileman said that several neighborhoods by the creek have limited connectivity, and that without a paved trail, there is less chance of residents, especially kids, getting to locations such as Estes Dr. and Umstead Dr. where the swimming pool is. Michler updated the TAB on recent op-ed columns in the *Chapel Hill News* on the greenway design. Without a paved surface, the cleared area is more problematic for transportation and more conducive to erosion. Hileman discussed giving people alternative transportation options to mitigate climate change. Krasnov said that the area was the ideal non-motorized

transportation corridor, especially for bicyclists and persons with disabilities. Slade said that the upland routes were not as accessible to creekside neighborhoods. The TAB had a brief discussion of the future public input process for the greenway alignment. The TAB will be kept informed when meetings will be occurring.

The TAB also discussed traffic calming on Oak Ave. The discussion involved the 2007 traffic calming request and subsequent speed table treatment, vehicle speeds, and residents not wanting a sidewalk on the street. It shifted to a brief debate about the impact of various street patterns (e.g. cul-de-sacs) on risk of crime.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 PM.