

Outer Banks Transportation Task Force

Minutes of the meeting on July 28, 2005, Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce

Members present: Jody Crosswhite, Kermit Skinner, Erin Burke, Ray Davis, Cheryl Byrd, Nancy Bellantine, Gewnn Cruickshanks, Dan Scanlon, Carl Classen, Chris Layton, Pat Morrissey, Kevin Schwartz, Ralph Buxton, Lori London, Anna Sadler. Guests: Sharron Sanderson, Dare County Transportation; Gary O'Brien, O'Brien Bus Service; Rylan Walters, DaimlerChrysler; Scott Stroud, RIFP; Diane Sawyer, Currituck County.

1. Called to order at 8:40 a.m. by J. Crosswhite.
2. The minutes of the June 30 meeting were approved; meeting guests were introduced.
3. Van Pilot Project – S. Sanderson provided an update on the program, which had boarded 126 passengers through 7/26, logged 1,297 miles and 227 hours on the road. The vans now carry a sign denoting the service is free and pull through fire lanes at some stops to be more visible. The drivers are referring riders who want to go where the vans don't to the cab companies. The surveys of riders have shown that seasonal resident workers are riding the most, followed by permanent residents, followed by visitors.
4. Public transit projects – J. Crosswhite indicated he felt a full-time transit system manager would have to be hired to get such a project off the ground. C. Byrd said that would have to be under a TMA or Authority structure. D. Scanlon said that since ICPTA already existed, exploring a partnership with it should be explored. C. Byrd and S. Sanderson said that Dare's transit management could be reorganized to link up and work with ICPTA. Enabling legislation already existed, but at the time ICPTA organized Dare did not see the benefit geographically, but that now it made more sense especially with so many workers living out of the county. J. Crosswhite noted that DOT was pushing regionalism and would like to see us all come together. D. Scanlon said Currituck would like to see a system that did not cost the tourists anything, and that an anticipated increase of 1 percent to their occupancy tax was going to go to subsidize such a system.

The task force discussed the cost figures provided from ITRE regarding running a seasonal Dare County route. The numbers were generally considered to be too low, and D. Scanlon commented that a DOT feasibility study would still be necessary. Governments must realize such a system would never be profitable and would have to be subsidized from the beginning. The DOT funding formula would provide 90/10 matches on equipment with operational grants being 50/50. It was determined to pursue a joint TTF-TAB-ICPTA meeting with DOT public transit officials to take stock of where we are. K. Skinner noted that there would need to be a central authority to manage transportation funding because it could not be counted that eight different government boards, given their turnover, would provide consistent, constant funding. ITRE could be used as the contractor for the feasibility study.

A motion was reached that a DOT feasibility study should be pursued and that 2006 was not a reasonable time table for getting service on the ground in Dare County, and that we should pursue joining ICPTA or creating a system authority for transportation management, approach the Dare tourism board about being the fiscal agent for the study and that we should work to get the mayors on board. It was approved unanimously.

5. Oct. 12 Symposium – K. Schwartz updated on plans for the event and noted that sponsors were needed in the amount of \$1,500 to cover the costs.

6. Guest Speakers – G. O'Brien and R. Walters were given time to discuss vehicle specs and needs specific to the Outer Banks. R. Walters said he would be interested in filling the position of transit manager, should one ever come about.

7. Other Business – R. Buxton commented that the task force should keep its interim options open as it continues pursuit of transit options. C. Classen commented on S. Shores bicycle program with OBX Pathways.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.