

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by MPO Chair William Ribble.

The roll was called and recorded by MPO staff. There was a quorum. Those MEC members in attendance included City of Bonita Springs Councilmember Fred Forbes; Village of Estero Mayor/MPO Chair William Ribble; City of Fort Myers Councilmember Fred Burson; and City of Sanibel Councilmember Richard Johnson. Others in attendance included MPO Legal Counsel Derek Rooney; FDOT's Victoria Peters; Persides Zambrano with the City of Cape Coral; Chris Kessler with Clifton Larson Allen; Bill Spikowski; and MPO staff Don Scott and Calandra Barraco.

New Business

Agenda Item #1 - Public Comments on New Business Items

There were no public comments on New Business Items.

Agenda Item #2 - *Review and Approval of the February 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Fred Forbes made the motion to approve the February 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Councilmember Fred Burson seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #3 - *Review and Approve the Rails to Trails Contract with Volkert Inc.

Mr. Don Scott presented this agenda item for the review and approval of the Rails to Trails Contract with Volkert Inc. Mr. Scott noted the SUN Trail funding agreement for this project was approved by the MPO Board in November, and a selection committee chose Volkert to complete the study. Mr. Scott referenced the professional services agreement for approval. The agreement was attached to the agenda packet and posted to the MPO website. Chair Ribble commented that the appraisal was much higher than anticipated, and the city manager was not impressed with the results. Mr. Scott said there was a letter in the appraisal noting that the rail company did not agree with the appraisal and thought it should be thirty percent higher. He added that other alternatives will also be examined in the study. Councilmember Forbes questioned if funding would be available to purchase the land at such a high price. Mr. Scott replied no but comments from the communities are still being received. Chair Ribble mentioned Estero's CIP and the eighty projects currently funded in addition to the Rails to Trails. He asked if there were any other comments. Mr. Scott said approval was needed.

Councilmember Fred Forbes made the motion to approve the Rails to Trails Contract with Volkert. Councilmember Fred Burson seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #4 - +Review of the Year End Audit for FY 2019/2020

Mr. Chris Kessler with Clifton, Larson, Allen (CLA), the MPO's auditor, presented this agenda item for the review of the Year End Audit for FY 2019/2020. He provided background information on CLA and the firm's history with the MPO. He then explained the audit format and documents. He noted that due to the pandemic, all items were provided electronically. He added that the audit was finished

sooner than in prior years. He reviewed the highlights of the governance letter and the finding as the result of the audit adjustments. He also reviewed the financial statements, the COVID footnote, the compliance audit results, the single audit findings, and the recommendation. Chair Ribble asked who completed the audit last year. Mr. Scott said it was CLA and explained the history of the MPO accountants and transition from Goodwill to Carr, Riggs, and Ingram (CRI). Mr. Scott said the procedures will be cleaned up moving forward. Chair Ribble asked if there was any additional information. Mr. Kessler commented on the changeover from Goodwill to CRI and the resulting issue. He asked if there were any other comments or questions. There were none. Chair Ribble asked if a motion was needed. Mr. Scott replied yes.

Councilmember Fred Forbes made the motion to accept the Year End Audit for FY 2019/2020. Councilmember Richard Johnson seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Councilmember Johnson asked if safeguards were now in place so this doesn't happen again. Mr. Scott replied yes and added that MPO staff was working with CLA on items to look for. Councilmember Johnson suggested a pre-audit meeting to address any issues. Mr. Scott said that could be done. Councilmember Johnson asked if CLA was available to the MPO throughout the year. Mr. Kessler replied yes but added that once the documents are received by the auditor then it will result in a finding if there is still an issue. Mr. Kessler suggested meeting ahead, discussing the audit, and discovering what is missing.

Agenda Item #5 - Provide Input on the Proposed Safety Outreach Activities

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item for input on the proposed safety outreach activities. He gave a brief Power Point presentation that included slides with information on safety performance measures, crash dashboard, 2021 Dangerous by Design Report, MPO Budget task for scoping, partner discussions for outreach, and FDOT emphasis areas. He asked if there were any ideas from the committee. He said after ideas were received, the item would be scoped out and sent to FHWA for approval to ensure reimbursement. Councilmember Johnson questioned the level of distracted driving in this area compared with other areas our size. Mr. Scott said that all areas across the state are rising. He added that even though volumes are down, fatalities are up. Councilmember Johnson commented that aggressive driving seems to be the most prevalent. Mr. Scott mentioned a news interview he had just done that brought up excessive speed as an issue. He also commented that there should be a better way to collect distracted driving data. Councilmember Johnson said there was new technology that enabled the collection of that type of data. Mr. Scott mentioned drivers sitting at lights after they turn green and the impact that has on traffic. He said he will bring more ideas back. He referred to the Dangerous by Design report and said that some of the ideas they pose will not work in Florida, for example redesigning the streets would be too costly. He provided the example of Cape Coral sidewalks and the billion dollar estimate for constructing them on only one side of the road. Ms. Peters asked if the population increase in our area was taken into account in the Dangerous by Design report. Mr. Scott said they may use the population of the Cape Coral MSA which is less than the actual population of Lee County. Mr. Scott explained the boundaries of the Cape Coral Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Ms. Peters said that they may use the updated census numbers when they come out. Mr. Scott commented that his hope was that fatalities would decrease, but he wasn't sure how to keep people from getting hit. He said the Dangerous by Design report comes out every two years. His presentation can be accessed here: <https://leempo.com/wp-content/uploads/Agenda-Item-5-Safety-outreach.pdf>

Agenda Item #6 - Information on the Congestion Analysis in the Urban Analysis Dashboard

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item on the Congestion Analysis in the Urban Analysis Dashboard. He reviewed the interactive map that can be found at the following link:

<https://tableau.tamu.edu/t/TTI/views/SUMAForidaFreightPerformance/PrimaryDashboard?:s howAppB&:isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&:embed=y> He referred to the screen shot from the dashboard, that was attached to the agenda packet and posted to the MPO website, that shows the number one ranked bottleneck in Lee County for delay per mile in the 4th quarter of 2019 being Colonial Boulevard westbound at I-75. He then mentioned, using the same criteria during the season of 2019, 1st quarter from January to March, indicated that US 41 at Six Mile Cypress was the number one ranked location. This map was also attached to the agenda packet and posted to the MPO website. He said this tool could be useful for providing backup data including truck data. He then reviewed the statistics available on the website. He said he was providing the dashboard information to all of the committees as it is more realistic than previous sources.

Agenda Item #7 - Overview of the March 19th MPO Board Meeting Agenda

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item as an overview of the March 19 MPO Board meeting agenda. He reviewed the upcoming meeting agenda items including a CAC appointment, TIP amendments, UPWP amendments, public transportation grant agreement, Caloosahatchee bridge sidewalk discussion, Lee County goods movement study, and the freight project priorities. Chair Ribble asked when the agenda would be out. Mr. Scott replied tomorrow, Thursday, March 11.

Other Business

Agenda Item #8 - Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no public comments on items not on the agenda.

Agenda Item #9 – Announcements

Mr. Scott announced the SR 31 public hearing on March 11 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. He said the meeting would be held in-person at the Lee Civic Center and also virtually. Mr. Scott also noted there was no MEC meeting in April, and the next MEC meeting would be held in May with a location to be determined.

Agenda Item #10 - Information and Distribution Items

The information and distribution items included the MPOAC Legislative Update and Guidance from FHWA on the Coronavirus Related Infrastructure Funding.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:44 p.m.

The full meeting audio can be accessed here: <https://soundcloud.com/user-390911534/03-10-2021-tmocwma>

*** Action Items + May Require Action**

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