



Richland County
Transportation Ad Hoc Committee
March 23, 2021 – 3:00 PM
Zoom Meeting
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29201

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Overture Walker, Chair, Bill Malinowski, Yvonne McBride, Paul Livingston, and Jessica Mackey

OTHERS PRESENT: Gretchen Barron, Cheryl English, Michelle Onley, Angela Weathersby, Kyle Holsclaw, Tamar Black, Ashiya Myers, John Thompson, Brittany H. Terry, Lori Thomas, Virginia Goodson, Ali Eliadorani, Alex Burton, Michael Niermeier, Mohammed Al-Tofan, Allison Steele, Elizabeth McLean, Clayton Voignier, Leonardo Brown, Kellie Odom, Quinton Epps, James Hayes, Jeff McNesby, Michael Maloney, Jennifer Wladischkin, Alicia Pearson, Randy Pruitt, Rasheed Muwwakkil, Nathaniel Miller, Lauren Hogan, and Tanner Threatt.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Mr. O. Walker called the meeting to order at approximately 3:02 PM.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. **Regular Session: February 23, 2021**: Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. McBride, to approve the minutes as distributed.

Mr. Malinowski noted, on p. 3, it states it was in the best interest to hold a public information meeting in the next month. He inquired if the meeting was held.

Mr. Niermeier responded they had planned on having the public meeting, but they are looking to push it back. They have a meeting with the City tomorrow to discuss some details and planning. Once the meeting is held, they will have a better understanding of what is needed. They will update the committee, as well as Council, as the plans are firmed up.

In Favor: Malinowski, McBride, Livingston, O. Walker, and Mackey

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. Mackey moved, seconded by Ms. McBride, to approve the agenda as published.

In Favor: Malinowski, McBride, Livingston, O. Walker, and Mackey

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Budget Transfers** – Mr. Niermeier stated, per Council's directive a year ago, Transportation was

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given permission to do inter-project budget transfers, as necessary, without requiring the need to come back to Council for approval. The stipulation was to quarterly come back to the Transportation Ad Hoc Committee and update the committee on those actions. He noted, on p. 8 of the agenda, there are a number of budget transfers the Transportation Department initiated for a total of \$907,535, which supported three (3) separate projects. One was for the Bikeway IGA, which is before committee today. The other two (2) were for the Main Street Intersection Improvement the City of Columbia performed, as well as, the South Main Pedestrian Improvement Project the SCDOT is heading up. He noted, if there were any further inter-project transfers that do not require Council's attention, they will again brief Council.

- b. **Transportation Budget Process Update Mailings** – Mr. Niermeier noted at the last committee meeting they had a briefing document moved forward to get the committee and Council's insight on the budget process. The item is being withdrawn by the department. They had a meeting with Administration, the Budget Director, and Finance Director. They believe there is a solution that does not require Council action. There will be more details to follow, and it will maintain the transparency expected of us. This will be included in the next budget cycle.

Ms. Mackey inquired about the signage and postcards they discussed at the last meeting. She inquired if there was an update.

Mr. Niermeier responded, since the last meeting, he reached out to PIO to initiate conversation, but they have not move forward with any design. The lettering on new mock-up sign was made larger to emphasize "Richland County". We did not add a penny graphic to anything. We will continue with that path and ensure anything developed is brought back to committee.

Mr. Livingston requested to have an update on this at the next ad hoc committee meeting.

Mr. Niermeier responded in the affirmative.

5. **ITEMS FOR ACTION**

- a. **Clemson Road Phase I** – Mr. Niermeier stated staff is requesting Council approve the award of the Clemson Road Phase I Sidewalk Project to Tolleson Limited Company in the amount of \$269,900 and to approve a 10% construction contingency of \$26,990 for a total of \$296,890.

Mr. Malinowski noted, on p. 10 of the agenda, it indicates the amount is over the engineer's estimate, but the funding is going to come from the \$350,000 currently available. He inquired if this project is part of another widening project or is this a standalone sidewalk project.

Mr. Niermeier responded it is a standalone sidewalk project. He noted it is less than 10% over the engineer's estimate.

Mr. Malinowski inquired, if we do these approvals because they are less than 10%, at what point do we begin to run out of funds for projects that come down the line. They are going to start to add up after a while. Are we going to jeopardize other sidewalks projects that are at the end of the line.

Mr. Niermeier responded that is not the intent. He noted, when the sidewalk realignment was done, they reduced 56 sidewalks down to 50 sidewalks, which left around \$7.5M - \$8M within the sidewalk grouping of projects. They are not trying to dig into that at all. They will have to come back, at some point, and make a recommendation for other uses.

Mr. Malinowski noted he did not know how the small business enterprise certificates work, but Tolleson's certificate shows it is "certified for: highways, streets, bridge constructions, and engineering services". It does not say anything about sidewalks. He inquired if they are qualified to build sidewalks.

Mr. Niermeier responded, under Tolleson's business license, they have the ability, as professional engineers, to be general contractors for construction projects, which would include sidewalks.

Ms. McBride inquired when the engineer's estimate was done.

Ms. Steele responded she did not have the exact date, but it has been in the last 2 – 3 years.

Ms. McBride noted, given the length of time since the estimate, we should expect some changes.

Ms. Steele responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Livingston inquired if this was a bid.

Mr. Niermeier responded in the affirmative. It was bid out and was a sheltered market for SLBEs.

Mr. O. Walker stated, for clarification, the estimate received 3 years ago was \$263,485.04.

Mr. Niermeier responded in the affirmative.

Mr. O. Walker inquired if that explains the reason the County has budgeted \$269,000 in anticipation of escalating construction costs.

Mr. Niermeier responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Malinowski inquired what the sidewalk would be constructed of.

Mr. Niermeier responded it would be made of concrete.

Mr. Malinowski noted it would cost about \$270,000 for half a mile of sidewalk. He inquired if there is a reason they cannot do it out of asphalt at a lesser cost.

Ms. Steele responded she believes the SCDOT would not maintain an asphalt sidewalk, as their standard is concrete. The budgeted amount would also include the concrete testing they are required to perform.

Mr. O. Walker inquired if this sidewalk was a County project, but would be owned by the SCDOT.

Ms. Steele responded in the affirmative.

Ms. McBride moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to approve this item.

In Favor: McBride, Livingston, O. Walker, and Mackey

Opposed: Malinowski

The vote in favor passed.

- b. **City of Columbia Bikeway IGA** – Mr. Niermeier stated on pp. 17 – 30 is an IGA that has been negotiated and drafted with the City of Columbia for several bikeway projects. Staff is recommending approve of the City of Columbia Bikeway IGA.

Mr. Livingston inquired if the City of Columbia is assuming responsibility for maintenance.

Mr. Niermeier responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Malinowski inquired what are “JLs”

Mr. Niermeier responded those are Job Ledgers. They are a part of the accounting system. Every job has a unique job ledger that gets tracked through the system.

Mr. Malinowski inquired why the previous IGA with the City of Columbia for North Main Street widening was provided to the committee.

Mr. Niermeier responded, in an attempt to be thorough, they showed previous actions Council has done that is similar to what they are proposing for approval.

Mr. Malinowski inquired as to the total mileage of the projects listed on p. 25.

Mr. Niermeier responded he did not have the information, but can provide it to the committee.

Mr. O Walker inquired about the benefit to the County for entering into this agreement with the City. He also inquired about this project, in general, being a benefit to the County.

Mr. Niermeier responded approximately 50 bike paths were listed in the ordinance referendum. All of these bike routes are within the City of Columbia. The City of Columbia, as part of their Compass: Envision 2036, has a section on active mobility transportation. The City wants to build these bike lanes. This is not anything new where we provide funding to a municipality or SCDOT to build these projects on behalf of the Penny Program. The City has been looking for years, through different greenways, Innovista Phase I and II projects to increase pedestrian access the town. This is the next phase ow what they are trying to achieve. They have up with 5 separate projects ranging from road dieting, restriping, or widening to install a bike lane.

Mr. O. Walker inquired if the \$824,332 is available in the FY21 budget.

Mr. Niermeier responded all of the funding is available in this budget. As soon as this signed, the City will issue an invoice, and we will provide the funding. The City will be responsible for updating the County on the progress and how the funding is spent. If an audit happens, and the money is not being spent properly, the City will have to repay the funding.

Mr. O. Walker inquired if the price could come under the budgeted amount.

Mr. Niermeier responded the City will not be getting any more or less money than what is budgeted. If something else comes in that would be discussed at the monthly meetings. The intent is if they do not spend it we would get it back and use it for other purposes.

Ms. McBride inquired if the amount of money was recommended in the referendum.

Mr. Niermeier responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. McBride, to approve this item.

In Favor: McBride, Livingston, O. Walker, and Mackey.

Opposed: Malinowski

The vote in favor passed.

- c. **Mitigation Bank Credit Sales** – Mr. Niermeier stated what is before the committee is a request for mitigation credit sale from the Mill Creek Mitigation Bank to SCDOT for the US 601 bridge replacement. An agreement of the sale would net \$376,834.30, which will be credited back to the Transportation Penny Program. Staff recommends the committee concur with recommendation and forward to Council for consideration.

Mr. Livingston inquired if this was consistent with the SCDOR guidelines.

Mr. Niermeier responded in the affirmative.

Ms. McBride inquired who negotiated the mitigation cost.

Mr. Niermeier responded we set a standard price for sale of both stream and wetlands credits. He noted he could not answer how or why they were set.

Mr. Epps responded the standard price for wetland credits is \$20,000 and \$200 for stream credits. When an agency wants to purchase a large amount of credits, typically there is a bulk rate, which was done in this case. The credit prices are negotiated.

Mr. Malinowski inquired who sets the standard prices.

Mr. Epps responded it was set by Richland County, based on the market value of the credit, and what they are selling for by other bankers around the State.

Mr. O Walker inquired about the benefit to the County.

Mr. Niermeier responded the origination of the mitigation bank was not to sell credits to others, but for the County to have credits for projects. For example, Shop Road Extension I and II encroached on wetlands. We had credits in our bank to use, which are required by the Army Corps of Engineers. If you impact the wetlands you have to have credit to restore wetlands in another place. The benefit is we do these widening projects, and we already have credits in the bank so we will not need to purchase wetland credits from other municipalities or organizations to do our projects. It saves money in the long run.

Mr. Epps noted we used to pay other counties hundreds of thousands of dollars for credits where conservation was supported. This is another benefit of this program that exists in our County.

Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Mackey, to approve this item.

In Favor: Malinowski, McBride, Livingston, O. Walker, and Mackey

The vote in favor was unanimous.

6. **ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:40 PM.