

City of Lawrence
Public Transit Advisory Committee
City Commission Room, First Floor of City Hall
September 11, 2017 minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alan Black, Heather Thies, Mark Hurt, John Augusto,
Lance Fahy, James Pavision, Sarah Trumble
MEMBERS ABSENT: Zachary Kelsay
STAFF PRESENT: Robert Nugent, Wendy Koerner, Mike Sweeten, Serena
Pearson, Danny Kaiser, Ashley Myers
PUBLIC PRESENT: None

1. Call to Order

Alan Black, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:10. Quorum met.

2. Approval of Minutes (Action Item)

Minutes from the July 10, 2017 PTAC meeting were presented to PTAC members for approval. There was a motion from Heather Thies to approve the minutes, Mark Hurt seconded, all in favor, no opposed.

3. Recent Recognitions and Awards – Heather Thies stated that Cottonwood received a recognition award from KPTA for zero deficiencies on an FTA audit through KDOT. Cottonwood is having an award ceremony recognizing people in the community, and this year they would like to recognize MV Transportation and Lawrence Transit. This will be on September 25th from 7:00 – 9:00 in the Free State High School auditorium. Anyone is welcome to come.

Bob Nugent stated that Lawrence Transit received the award for the highest increase in ridership in the state of Kansas from the Federal Transit Administration at the Kansas Public Transit Association conference in Garden City Kansas on August 15th. This was the third year in a row that Lawrence Transit received this award.

4. Bus Chairs – Bob Nugent explained that there are decorated, recycled chairs and benches that have shown up at various bus stops around Lawrence. Most of them are in the City right-of-way. Some of them are at bus stops that are not utilized very frequently. They could present a liability issue if someone falls out of chair or gets a splinter, and this could pose a problem for both the City and for the property owner.

There was some discussion in the group about engaging this energy and creativity in a positive way the community - perhaps an "adopt a stop" program. But this would involve creating some guidelines and requiring upkeep of the bus stops. The city would need to be involved to see what can and cannot be done. It would be best to wait to find out about the transit center study and referendum first.

Jim Pavision stated that from a legal standpoint, you would have to be very careful. Perhaps there should be a committee to approve content. There should be certain guidelines that should be met, such as not allowing any benches that include anything about politics or religion.

5. Student Summer Bus Pass Project – Serena Pearson gave an update on the program. There were approximately 680 summer bus passes this year, which is about a 26% increase from the previous year. It could be due to an increase in social media, or the fact that the pass was increased to four months from three months. The K-12 Student Semester Pass went on sale and the passes are good starting September 1.

6. Junior Olympics - Bob Nugent gave an update on the Junior Olympics from July 23 – 30 at Rock Chalk Park.

The City and community wanted to make sure people attending the event had access to restaurants and other services in the community so there were two additional buses added on Route 6 during that week. It rained heavily on Wednesday 7/26, therefore a decision was made to park cars at Free State High School (since the turf lots at Rock Chalk Park were flooded), and buses would shuttle people back and forth from the event. Public Works responded immediately and put out illuminated signage to direct people to Free State High School. A bus was pulled off Route 6, KU provided a bus, and the event coordinators provided school buses. The next day, the turf was still too wet, so the park and ride service continued, although some people jumped the curb and parked in the turf lots anyway.

The MV supervisors did a great job in coordinating the buses, and even though it was very stressful, everything appeared to run very smoothly. Overall, Lawrence received favorable feedback on the Junior Olympics.

7. Updates:

a. Transit Center – Bob Nugent stated that the study is going well – we have been through a public event and the consultants have met with the Commissioners. There is another meeting this week. The commissioners suggested showing what a transit center will look like and what it will do. It will be more functional, with canopies, and amenities. We will also give a visual of secondary locations with amenities. There will be another survey in October. We will continue to be engaged with the City Commission on this.

b. Tax Referendum – Bob Nugent explained that since the election for the transit sales tax is coming up soon, there will be outreach events being done, educating the community on how continuing the funding helps the community. Lance Fahy thinks that we need to communicate effectively that this is a continuation of an existing tax, not a new tax. We are actually asking for less this time, since the .05 will be going for affordable housing. Bob explained that if the transit tax does not pass, routes could be cut very quickly. If there is only enough money to run T Lift service, it will become general transportation for anyone in the community to use. It would make it extremely difficult for paratransit riders to get a ride if there were no fixed-route service and only T Lift service.

7. Public Comment– No public comment

8. Next Meeting – October 9, 2017

11. Adjournment - 5:30 pm

-Submitted by Serena Pearson