

COMMITTEE ON BORDER RELATIONS
MEETING MINUTES
MAYOR'S BOARD ROOM, CITY HALL, 10TH FLOOR
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2009 - 4:00 P.M.

The Committee on Border Relations met at the above place and date.

AGENDA:

1. Establish Quorum and Call to Order
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes for September 1, 2009
3. Approval of International Bridge Commission Meeting Minutes for September 15, 2009
4. Address by Mayor John Cook on Role of Committee and Focus Areas
5. Discussion and action regarding committee bylaws
6. Report on the Texas Border Coalition Conference and the Texas Border Coalition White Paper on Border Security by Said Larbi-Cherif
7. Bridge Management Report:
 - a. Traffic and Revenue Report
 - b. Update on Stanton and Santa Fe Port of Entry Improvement Projects
 - c. Update on New Commuter POE Project and funding for the Master Regional Ports of Entry Operations Plan
 - d. Pedestrian Toll Free Days
8. Update on International Rail Project by Sylvia Firth
9. Update on Universal Freight Shuttle by Rafael Aldrete-Sanchez of the Texas Transportation Institute
10. Discussion and action regarding 2010 meeting Schedule
11. Presentation regarding proposed federal legislation regarding border security and infrastructure by Taylor Moreno
12. Open Comment Period
13. Adjournment

Item 1: Establish Quorum and Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. Committee Chair, Evelina Ortega, present and presiding and the following members answered roll call:

Regular Members:

Evelina Ortega
Irasema Coronado
Thomas M Fullerton
Sergio Chiu
Oscar Baeza
Kathleen Walker
Late Arrival: Laird S Carmichael at 4:25 p.m.

At-Large Members:

Lilia Ruiz
Pete A. Ocegueda
Miguel A. Escoto

Other Present:

John Cook, Mayor
Jane K Shang, Deputy City manager for Mobility Services
Said Larbi-Cherif, Director of International Bridges
Sylvia Borunda Firth, Director of Governmental Affairs
Taylor Moreno, Intergovernmental Affairs Coordinator
Diana Nunez, Mayor's Office
Eddie Romero, International Bridges
Cecila Barros, Mexican Consulate
Estela Padilla, U.S. Consulate
Rafael Aldrete, Texas Transportation Institute

Item 2: Approval of Meeting Minutes for September 1, 2009

Taylor Moreno asked the committee members to help complete some missing information. Motion made by Ms. Walker, seconded by Ms. Ortega and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of September 1, 2009.

AYES: Ms. Ortega, Ms. Coronado, Mr. Fullerton, Mr. Chiu, Mr. Baeza, Mr. Carmichael, Ms. Walker, Mr. Ruiz, Mr. Ocegueda, Mr. Escoto

NAYS: None

Item 3: Approval of International Bridge Commission Meeting Minutes for Sep. 15, 2009

Motion made by Ms. Walker to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Escoto, and unanimously carried to accept the minutes.

AYES: Ms. Ortega, Ms. Coronado, Mr. Fullerton, Mr. Chiu, Mr. Baeza, Mr. Carmichael, Ms. Walker, Mr. Ruiz, Mr. Ocegueda, Mr. Escoto

NAYS: None

Item 4: Address by Mayor John Cook on Role of Committee and Focus Areas

The Mayor discussed the role and focus areas of the committee. The Mayor reminded everyone that the committee was advisory to the Mayor and Council and advice from the committee to the City Council should be in the form of a Resolution. The Mayor asked that the committee focuses on the following areas:

- Bridge Wait Times
- Infrastructure
- Trade and Economy
- Immigration and Immigration Reform
- Master Regional Ports of Entry Operational Plan
- Legislative Agenda

Ms. Walker indicated that she was very concerned about "Exit Control" and immigration processes such as "I-94" and would like the Committee to take a position on the issues.

Item 5: Discussion and action regarding committee bylaws

Sylvia Firth discussed the bylaws and the Mayor recommended that the bylaws be adopted and that possible changes could be made in the future. Motion made by Ms. Walker to accept the bylaws, seconded by Ms. Coronado, and unanimously carried to accept the bylaws.

AYES: Ms. Ortega, Ms. Coronado, Mr. Fullerton, Mr. Chiu, Mr. Baeza, Mr. Carmichael, Ms. Walker, Mr. Ruiz, Mr. Ocegueda, Mr. Escoto

NAYS: None

Item 6: Report on the Texas Border Coalition Conference and the Texas Border Coalition White Paper on Border Security by Said Larbi-Cherif

Mr. Said Larbi-Cherif reported on the Texas Border Coalition White Paper on Border Security that was unveiled November 13 at the Texas Border Coalition meeting. Ms. Walker recommended that Senator Cornyn's Bill be opposed and the Mayor recommended that if the committee could come up with a resolution, he would have legal put it on the Council Legislative Agenda.

Item 7: Bridge Management Report

Mr. Said Larbi-Cherif gave a report on the southbound bridge traffic at the City owned international bridges, toll revenue, parking meter revenue, an update on the status of the Stanton and Paso Del Norte improvement projects, an update on the proposed commuter port of entry and the Master Regional Ports of Entry Operational Plan, and on the Pedestrian Toll Free Days of September 14 and November 20. Sylvia Firth recommended that an item about the Master Regional Ports of Entry Operational Plan should be included in all future agendas.

Item 8: Update on International Rail Project by Sylvia Firth

Ms. Sylvia Firth gave update on the Joint El Paso – Ciudad Juarez Council Meeting of September 23 and the joint International Rail resolution that was approved by both Councils. Both councils resolved to continue to work together to create a commuter rail system and support the creation of a high speed rail corridor with service from Chihuahua, Mexico, to Denver, Colorado.

Item 9: Update on Universal Freight Shuttle by Rafael Aldrete-Sanchez of the Texas Transportation Institute

Mr. Rafael Aldrete of the Texas Transportation Institute made a presentation about the Universal Freight Shuttle (UFS), a grant to perform a feasibility study of the concept and possible pilot demonstration site. The UFS is designed to expedite cross border freight in a secure, efficient and environmentally friendly way.

Item 10: Discussion and action regarding 2010 meeting Schedule

Committee agreed to hold its meetings the first Monday of the Month at 4:00 PM.

Item 11: Presentation regarding proposed federal legislation regarding border security and infrastructure by Taylor Moreno

Ms. Taylor Moreno updated the committee on pending Federal legislation, namely HR 1655, Putting Our Resources Toward Security Act (PORTS Act) by U.S. Representative Silvestre Reyes, and S 2767, The Emergency Port of Entry Personnel and Infrastructure Funding Act of 2009 by Senator John Cornyn.

Item 12: Open Comment Period

There were no open comments.

- Mr. Baeza recommended that an agenda item to discuss the security situation in Ciudad Juarez be included in the next agenda.
- Ms. Walker also asked that an agenda item on the processing of “I-94” forms be included in next month’s agenda.
- Ms. Coronado asked that El Paso be proposed as a pilot site to demonstrate new technology for expediting cross border mobility.

Item 13: Adjournment

Motion made by Mr. Carmichael, seconded by Mr. Ocegueda and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Said Larbi-Cherif, P.E., Board Secretary