

INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES
5th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2007 – 3:00 P.M.

The International Bridge Commission met at the above place and date.

Item 1: Vice Chair Mike Dipp called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. At this time Chair Berg arrived and Mr. Dipp released the meeting to Chair Berg. Present were:

Tanny Berg, Chair – D-1 (Rep. Ann Morgan Lilly)
Mike Dipp, Vice-Chair - Mayor John Cook's Appointee
Gerardo Camacho, D-3 (Rep. J. Alexandro Lozano)
Daniel Barnes, D-4 (Rep. Melina Castro)
Victor M. Aguirre, D-5 (Rep. Presi Ortega)
Mike Breitinger, D-7 (Rep. Steve Ortega)
Saul Frank, D-8 (Rep. Beto O'Rourke)

ABSENT

Vacancy - D-2
Blanca Dominguez, D-6 (Rep. Eddie Holguin, Jr.)

OTHERS PRESENT

Daryl W. Cole, Streets Director
Roberta B. Cross, Assistant City Attorney
Richard Bristol, Street Department
Edward Nunez, Street Department
Christine Bueno, Secretary - Bridges
Hector Castruita, Sun City Cab Company
Manuel Garza, Sun City Cab Company
Oliver Olivar, Border Taxi
Alfredo Carmona, Independent
Juan M. Ulloa, United Independent Cab
Mauro J. Pena, United Independent Cab
Pedro Raya
Arturo Cuellar, TRBI Company
Maria P. Vasquez
C. Sagredo, EPPD
D. Fuentes, EPPD
Patrick Maloney, EPPD
Jack Matthews, EPPD

Item 2: Motion made by Mr. Camacho, seconded by Mr. Barnes and carried to approve the Minutes for the meeting of Tuesday, March 20, 2007.

AYES: Mr. Aguirre, Mr. Berg, Mr. Dipp, Mr. Camacho, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Breitinger, Mr. Frank.

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Ms. Dominguez

Motion made by Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Breitinger and carried to move Item No. 4 to be discussed before Item No. 3.

AYES: Mr. Aguirre, Mr. Berg, Mr. Dipp, Mr. Camacho, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Breitinger, Mr. Frank.

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Ms. Dominguez

Item 4: Discussion and Presentation from Taxi Companies on Proposal for Placement of Taxi Stand at BOTA

Mr. Berg wanted those present from the taxi cab companies to know that this Commission does not have any authority on the taxi cabs, taxi stands, or where they would be located at the Bridge of the Americas (BOTA). The Commission can only listen to testimony and make recommendations but they have no authority outside of the bridges themselves.

He further stated that there is a Border Relations Committee appointed by the City Council that deals with busses coming over. Taxi cabs are more in their purview than in this Commission. This Commission works with the structure of the bridges, traffic moving across the bridges, engineering of the bridges, security on the bridges, making certain that the tolls are collected, and that there is accountability. Ms. Cross, Assistant City Attorney, stated that this is an advisory body, not an enforcing body.

Mr. Berg said that he understood that at this meeting they would give us a suggestion as to where they propose that a taxi accumulation area would be created. Mr. Olivar, Border Taxi Cab Company, stated that he thought he was here to hear options, and that he came unprepared to make a presentation.

Mr. Berg suggested that for the next meeting they get a map on what the bridge looks like, and that they propose to us where they would want to have a staging area, how many taxi cabs they propose to be accommodated, and how that would not interfere with the bridge traffic. A discussion continued with the taxi company representatives and El Paso Police Department representatives on the placement of taxi stands at the BOTA.

Motion was made by Mr. Breitinger, seconded by Mr. Dipp and carried to table Item No. 4 for one month, when the taxi cab companies bring the information that was requested by the Chair.

AYES: Mr. Aguirre, Mr. Berg, Mr. Dipp, Mr. Camacho, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Breitinger, Mr. Frank.

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Ms. Dominguez

The taxi cab representatives were asked to contact Mr. Edward Nunez, Street Department, at 621-6750 to convey to the Commission what the demand is as a group and for assistance to compile the information.

Chair Berg recommended that Mass Transit be added to next month's agenda to discuss international transit service.

Mr. Berg then invited the group to remain for the duration of the meeting, but they left at this time. Mr. Cole and Mr. Berg thanked them for their attendance.

Item 3: Discussion and Action on Presentation of Bridge Management Report.

Mr. Cole presented the budget management report.

He discussed the Ysleta P.O.E. opening of two new lanes, the addition of fiber work, wrought iron fence, and web server for on-line payments, etc. He announced that a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be held on April 30 at 10 a.m. Invitations will be mailed out, and an announcement will also be placed in the newspaper. Mr. Berg asked that they invite the following groups: Foreign Trade Association, Central Business Association, Border Trade Alliance, and Congressman Reyes.

Mr. Cole also discussed the palm trees donated by Customs and Border Protection, which were taken out of the Paso Del Norte Bridge (PDN) as part of the Head House Project. The 45 palm trees will be relocated on the median on Viscount from Gateway to Montwood.

He also stated that they are beginning the spring cleaning of the bridges at the end of the month. They will start with PDN and work from west to east at all the ports, other than the BOTA.

Discussion followed on continuing fights at the bridges, people getting injured; security on the bridges, and jurisdictional issues. Federal agencies need to reaffirm which agencies will be in charge of security in their areas or jurisdictional islands of responsibility, as the Paso del Norte Port of Entry occupies several agencies and it is unclear which agency is responsible for which area. We will continue to hold meetings to establish protocols for security at the Paso del Norte P.O.E.

Item 5: Discussion and Action Regarding the GSA Head House Project at the Paso Del Norte Bridge

Most of the Commissioners attended the Ribbon Cutting for the Head House Project. Mr. Berg stated that the Commission has not been a participant in the evolution of the design; therefore, we don't know the time table, or how long the project will take. Mr. Cole stated that there is a pedestrian issue and vehicles being exposed to the public. Mr. Berg stated that GSA has been invited to the meetings but they will not attend.

Discussion was held on routing the pedestrians, and the needs of the community. Mr. Berg stated that he personally felt that it is not a workable solution to release people onto Oregon Street into a residential neighborhood, as GSA is planning, as it will impact the residential neighborhood, the school, and the church. It is a totally unacceptable solution. Mr. Breitinger stated that we as a Commission could send an advisory letter to the Mayor and Council to let them know that we feel this issue is pertinent.

Motion was made by Mr. Barnes that further studies definitely need to be done as far as the impact on the community on Oregon Street when they release it to the pedestrians, and where they will have an influx of 6-7 million pedestrians and greater per year, and

asks that the Oregon Street release not be an option. That they need to consider the impact on that neighborhood with the potential of crime, and all others issues that could come from the change.

Discussion followed. A recommendation was made to present the item to City Council. The Commission recommended that we formally request that the GSA or Homeland Security and/or the group that is responsible, take a position so that they don't just release people where they want, and that they work with the community beforehand.

Mr. Barnes then made an amendment to the motion that it reads as an "advisory" **motion**. Mr. Breitinger said that the motion is still on the floor, and that if it passes or changes, that maybe the chair should present it at an upcoming Council meeting whether it's under public comment or as an agenda item. At this time Mr. Berg asked Staff to submit this item to City Council. The Commissioners will be notified to attend if they want, to let the Mayor and City Council know that it is on behalf of the whole Commission.

Mr. Frank seconded the motion with the amendment, and the motion carried. Mr. Berg asked that the record show that this was unanimous on the part of the Bridge Commission to pass this motion.

AYES: Mr. Aguirre, Mr. Berg, Mr. Dipp, Mr. Camacho, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Breitinger, Mr. Frank.

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Ms. Dominguez

Chair Berg also asked that the GSA Head House Project be a standing item on every International Bridge Commission meeting agenda, and that progress should be reported to the Commission every month.

Item 6: OPEN COMMENT PERIOD:

Mr. Arturo Cuellar, TRBI Company, the janitorial company contracted with GSA for janitorial services at the BOTA, and Mr. Pedro Raya, who used to work with another contractor, were here hoping to address some issues to the Commission. The discussion on the janitorial service is to be placed on the next International Bridge Commission meeting agenda.

A motion was made by Mr. Dipp, seconded by Mr. Barnes and carried to adjourn the meeting.

AYES: Mr. Aguirre, Mr. Berg, Mr. Dipp, Mr. Camacho, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Breitinger, Mr. Frank.

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Ms. Dominguez

Meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesday, May 15, 2007.

Approved as to form:

Rosemary G. Borrego

Department Head / **Board Secretary**