

INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

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

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

Item 1: Chair Tanny Berg called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. He began the meeting by stating that the Commission was appointed by City Council and charged with gathering information, making recommendations to Mayor and Council, and improving matters affecting the aesthetics, appearance, safety, efficient flow of people and commerce across at all of the international bridges.

Introductions were made by all present:

Tanny Berg, Chair – D-1 (Rep. Ann Morgan Lilly)
Mike Dipp, Vice-Chair – (Mayor John Cook)
Daniel Barnes, D-4 (Rep. Melina Castro)
Mike Breitinger, D-7 (Rep. Steve Ortega)
Gerardo Camacho, D-3 (Rep. J. Alexandro Lozano)
Analisa Cordova, D-2 (Rep. Susie Byrd)
Blanca Dominguez, D-6 (Rep. Eddie Holguin, Jr.)
Saul Frank, D-8 (Rep. Beto O'Rourke)

ABSENT

Victor M. Aguirre, D-5 (Rep. Rachel Quintana)

OTHERS PRESENT

Daryl W. Cole, Streets Director
Richard Bristol, Street Department
Ray Mendoza, Bridges & Meters
Representative Alexandro Lozano
Bertha Ontiveros, Assistant City Attorney
Josette Flores, Assistant City Attorney
Alan Shubert, City Engineer
Jorge Castillo, Economic Development
Robert D. Andrade, Executive Assistant to the Mayor
Julie Baldwin, PIO for Development & Engineering Services
Christina J. Daly, Customs & Border Protection
Chad Davis, Parkhill, Smith & Cooper
Terry Bilderback, Parkhill, Smith & Cooper
George Salom, CBA
Martin Silva, Silva's Market
Troy Ainsworth, City Historic Preservation Officer, Arts & Culture Department
Lucio Glenn, Congressman Reyes's Office
Matt Carroll, Citizen
Veronica Callaghan, Kasco Ventures

Item 2: Motion made by Mr. Dipp, seconded by Mr. Camacho and carried to approve the Minutes for the meeting held on Tuesday, June 19, 2007.

AYES: Mr. Berg, Mr. Dipp, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Breitinger, Mr. Camacho, Ms. Cordova, Ms. Dominguez, Mr. Frank.

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Mr. Aguirre

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

Mr. Mendoza thanked everyone present for attending the meeting. He stated that Parkhill, Smith & Cooper (PSC) would be making a presentation on the Santa Fe Street Bridge Enhancement Project. PSC is the consultant in charge of all the facilities and the changes at the Paso del Norte Port of Entry outside of the Federal portion.

Mr. Mendoza announced that the FHWA will be conducting a Road Safety Assessment Training at the Zaragoza Bridge on August 6 and 7. He will send an invitation to any of the Board members that would like to attend. It will be held at the Mission Valley Command Center, 9011 Escobar, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Ms. Flores, Assistant City Attorney, stated that the Road Safety Assessment Training would have to be posted if more than half of the Commission attends. Chair Berg stated that it is possible that only one or two Commissioners would attend.

Mr. Cole then stated that he had a meeting earlier with the Mayor, Representative O'Rourke, City Manager, and Economic Development to see where the project is relating to the issues in Item 6. He also stated that he was appointed the contact person for international bridge issues on behalf of the Mayor and City Council, and the City Manager's Office. If there are any issues with the CBA, the DMD, or any other source on communications regarding the international bridges specifically, they are to be referred to him. Mr. Cole introduced Ms. Julie Baldwin who will be assisting with the minutes to the GSA Westag Meetings, and other meetings pertaining to the bridges. Ms. Baldwin will also be assisting Mr. Cole in responding to any bridge issues.

Chair Berg then pointed out that the Head House Project started on January 1, 2007, and that it will take 900 days for completion from that date. A schedule should come out shortly after the 95% drawings are received. Chair Berg made a formal request from Customs and Border Protection, and from Mr. Cole to get a set of drawings and an actual contract schedule, where he can disseminate to this Commission and other parties.

ITEM 4. Discussion and Action on Presentation by PSC on Current PDN City of El Paso Projects.

A presentation of the bridge project was made by Mr. Chad Davis, Landscape Architect for Parkhill, Smith & Cooper. The project includes pedestrian canopies, a toll collection facility, Lions Placita, and the pedestrian corridor that leads out to the project. There

was a lengthy discussion of where the canopy will stop, which will be right at the Border Highway, southern right of way line.

Chair Berg asked that Mr. Cole give us a better idea of the budget, and that maybe they can incorporate an extension of the canopy so that it goes to the middle of the bridge, and also to get an estimate of what today's cost would be vs. ten years from now. Discussion continued on the automatic public toilets that will be added, the water fountains, and the maintenance contract.

Chair Berg asked the Commission for their approval to discuss Item No. 7 before Items 5 and 6. Motion was made by Mr. Dipp, seconded by Ms. Dominguez and carried to move Item 7, the Discussion of the GSA (General Services Administration) Head House Project, before Items 5 and 6.

AYES: Mr. Berg, Mr. Dipp, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Breitinger, Mr. Camacho, Ms. Cordova, Ms. Dominguez, Mr. Frank.

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Mr. Aguirre

ITEM 7: Discussion and Action on the GSA Head House Project at the PDN Bridge.

Mr. Cole introduced Ms. Daly from Customs and Border Protection (CBP) who is in charge of facilities at the PDN. It was made clear that Ms. Daly represents CBP, not GSA. Ms. Daly reported on where the project is and the tentative completion schedule.

Chair Berg thanked Ms. Daly for her report and stated that he appreciates how hard they try to accommodate us.

ITEM 5: Discussion and Action Regarding the Proposed Bridge Fees, and ITEM 6: Discussion & Action on a Proposed Resolution Regarding GSA's Plan of Releasing the Pedestrians at the Base of the Bridge

Chair Berg discussed the diagram of the pedestrian route where the GSA intends to release the pedestrians from the base of the bridge onto Oregon Street, and not onto El Paso Street. He added that the stretch of street has very few lights and they are going to recommend that more lighting be placed on that street, and that there's virtually no additional security, sanitation, trash cans, or bathrooms on the five-block route. Mr. Cole pointed out on the screen that the distance in the travel difference of both routes is one block.

Chair Berg stated that their concern as Bridge Commission members is that it is their business to facilitate to the best of their ability the fluidity of traffic, and the mobility of traffic that comes north on this bridge. He then distributed draft copies of a resolution that addresses all these issues.

Mr. Cole stated that he understood that the CBA/DMD at one point had offered to build some shade or separation along that walkway, and asked if that offer is still open. Mr. Breitinger answered that he thought it was, but that he can't speak on behalf of either board.

Chair Berg stated that he and Mr. Breitinger as a sub-committee of this Commission have started to look at alternatives and contacted three transportation experts in pedestrian flowage from Albuquerque, Minneapolis and New York to look at the issues. Mr. Cole stated to Chair Berg that at the outcome of their study the City is willing to financially participate in building structures and willing to financially participate in the facilitation of this process, possibly in building a corridor with shade.

Chair Berg read aloud the resolution. He stated that he added the statement of "moratorium on bridge fees" after the City started talking about raising the fees. The resolution will be on the City Council Agenda for next Tuesday. On the draft copy of the resolution it reads that there are currently no facilities, no security, no sanitation, no lighting, no benches, and no attention to ADA concerns. Mr. Cole stated that all those issues are present on Oregon Street although they may not be adequate, and that as written on the resolution they are not fair and true statements. Chair Berg agreed and the wording will be changed to add the word "adequate" to the resolution.

Chair Berg asked that representatives from the CBA, the FTA and the Bridge Commission and a small committee meet with Streets to develop a master plan.

Motion was made by Mr. Camacho and seconded by Mr. Barnes, to adopt the resolution with the corrections discussed. Discussion followed. Chair Berg asked that the Commissioners make their representatives aware of this item on City Council Agenda next week. He then stated that we have a motion before us to adopt this resolution:

AYES: Mr. Berg, Mr. Dipp, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Breitinger, Mr. Camacho, Ms. Cordova, Ms. Dominguez, Mr. Frank.

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Mr. Aguirre

Chair Berg asked that the record stand that it is unanimous that the Bridge Commission wholeheartedly supports this resolution.

At this time a copy of the Schedule of Toll charges between Texas and Mexico international bridges was distributed. Mr. Cole stated that the issue on the toll charges is in the City Manager's proposed budget, and a copy of the bridge revenues showing the differences on the current fees and the proposed fees was also distributed.

Chair Berg stated that in the resolution they asked that there be a freeze put on raising the bridge fees at least as long as the bridge is under construction, or for the next 750 days.

Motion was made by Mr. Dipp, and seconded by Mr. Barnes to ask the City to freeze, not raise the fees for the time being, all fees relating to crossing between Juarez and El Paso until such time as the downtown bridge is completed. It was clarified that "freeze" meant not raising the fees, but to still charge the current fees. Discussion followed on the purpose of raising the fees. The motion passed as follows:

AYES: Mr. Berg, Mr. Dipp, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Breitinger, Mr. Camacho, Ms. Cordova, Ms. Dominguez, Mr. Frank.

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Mr. Aguirre

ITEM 8: Discussion on Regional Transportation Initiatives.

Chair Berg stated that the Regional Mobility Authority is considering one of their next projects to be the inclusion of the new bridge between the Bridge of the Americas and Zaragoza Bridge, which is now in the preliminary stages. He wanted the Commission to be aware of the fact that the creation of another bridge is on the agenda for the Regional Mobility Authority.

Chair Berg announced that we are now open to public discussion:

ITEM 9: OPEN COMMENT PERIOD. Mr. Matt Carroll made comments reference accommodations at the bridge for the cycling community, and the bathrooms discussed in the bridge project in Item 7.

Mr. Martin Silva discussed the toll schedule passed out earlier, and the basic needs for the pedestrians and tourists.

Motion was made by Mr. Barnes, seconded by Mr. Camacho and carried to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Approved as to form:

Department Head / Board Secretary