

Minutes
Planning, Development and Real Estate Committee
September 13, 2007
9 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. Present were:

Committee Members:

Mr. Christopher Zimmerman (Chair)
Ms. Elizabeth Hewlett
Mr. Jim Graham
Mr. Peter Benjamin
Mr. Dana Kauffman
Mr. Emeka Moneme
Mr. Marcell Solomon
Mr. Gordon Linton
Mrs. Catherine Hudgins
Mr. Anthony Giancola

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 12, 2007 meeting were approved as submitted.

Action Items

A. Southeastern Bus Garage: Approval to Reassign Buses

Mr. Requa sought Committee approval and forwarding to the Board, the temporary reassignment of buses from the current Southeastern Bus Garage to other garages until a replacement facility opens in 2010.

Mr. Requa requested approval in time to take the appropriate actions before the beginning of the 2008 Washington Nationals baseball season, as game day crowds present a significant pedestrian safety hazard for operations at the Southeastern Bus Garage.

Mr. Benjamin asked for an explanation of the action and what portion of the reassignment would occur in FY08 since it will affect subsidies. This action will require a budget amendment for FY08 and FY09 to allow for the operation of these buses from other facilities until 2010. Staff proposes the reassignment occur in late March, just prior to the start of the baseball season.

Mr. Benjamin requested all future items being presented to the Committees include impacts to jurisdictional subsidies. The \$4.2M cost is divided as follows: \$2.0M District, \$1.2M Maryland and \$1M Virginia. Only one quarter of these expenses would be incurred in FY08.

Mr. Zimmerman asked why not build a new facility prior to closing the current one. Mr. Catoe explained that funds to build the new facility will be generated by the sale of the current one. Estimates for leasing back the facility while constructing a new one far exceed the cost of reassigning the buses.

Ms. Hewlett inquired if the District had explored other options for financing, adding that the jurisdictional assessment is problematic for Maryland and Virginia. Mr. Graham stated that in order to have a new facility that better serves the regional interest, the existing building has to be sold, and a period of time is required to construct a new garage before consolidation of routes under a new structure.

Mr. Moneme moved to approve the recommendation, with Mr. Graham seconding. The chair was in doubt after calling for a voice vote. After a show of hands, the motion failed.

Mr. Graham requested consideration of the ramifications of this decision. Staying in the current facility would mean \$1M facility rental fees, \$1.7M operating expenses and restricted use of streets before and after baseball games.

Mr. Catoe interjected that with the stadium being built, there would be further parking constraints placed on WMATA employees, there would be major disruptions to operations from the facility and that he is very concerned from a safety standpoint. This is why he supports taking this accelerated action. The Request for Proposal is to be discussed in Executive Session. He then stressed that a decision concerning the operations based out of this facility will need to be made very soon, as even now this is not a safe operation.

Mr. Zimmerman recommended that this matter be forwarded to the Board without recommendation. Mr. Kauffman made a motion to rescind the prior action that was seconded by Mr. Solomon and unanimously passed. Mr. Linton then moved to forward staff's recommendation to the Board without the Committee's instruction. The motion was seconded by Mr. Moneme and passed with Mr. Graham dissenting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 p.m.