



MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Held February 17, 1999, For the purpose of considering a County Proposal for Local Bus Service.

The meeting began at 8:25 p.m. It was held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull Thomas X. White and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; David E. Moran, City Clerk Celia Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development and Terri Hruby, Community Planner

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Jim Raszewski, Chief of the Transit Division for the County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT); Dee Allison, Consultant for DPWT; Fred Gasper, Sheldon Goldberg, Karl Hille, The Greenbelt Gazette and Luci Gorman, The News Review.

Mr. Raszewski began by summarizing the process used to develop a 5-year Transportation Master Plan. He reviewed the plan document with the Council.

Mr. Raszewski explained the rationale for proceeding with Route 14. He stressed that Routes 15 and 16 would be implemented as soon as additional funding was available.

Mr. Gasper asked about duplication with existing Metrobus routes. Mr. Raszewski responded that it was their intent to supplement Metro and avoid duplication. He stressed that this was not intended to replace the Metro service.

Mayor Davis asked about specific stops along routes. Mr. Raszewski indicated that efforts would be made to locate County bus stops at existing Metro stops.

Mr. Roberts asked about the size of the bus. Mr. Raszewski noted it is a medium sized bus. Mr. Roberts asked about natural gas vehicles. Mr. Raszewski responded that they had 5 natural gas buses, but had experienced problems with fuel capacity and maintenance.

Mr. Turnbull believed Route 14 would directly compete with Metro. Mr. Raszewski responded that the intent of the service was use smaller buses to penetrate into communities. Mr. Turnbull expressed concern about the frequency of the bus service and believed it would be beneficial to implement a more frequent service for a smaller area. Mr. Raszewski responded that with a limited number of buses and limited funding, the present proposal was an easier plan to implement.

Mr. White noted that Springhill Lake was not served by any of the proposed routes. Mr. Putens hoped that the smaller buses may be able to go into the shopping centers. Mr. Turnbull asked about costs. Mr. Raszewski indicated that the fare box recovered about 15 to 20% of cost. Mr. Turnbull expressed an interest in the city funding this portion of the service so it could be free to residents.

Mr. Roberts expressed concern about buses speeding. Mr. Raszewski responded that the bus was able to run the route without speeding. Ms. Craze reported that the routes were selected based on need.

Mr. McLaughlin requested that DPWT provide a map at the Public Hearing showing all of the bus routes in the City. Mr. Raszewski agreed to provide the map.

Mr. Goldberg asked about when the additional routes would be implemented. Council responded that it was the County's intent to implement the additional routes quickly, as soon as funding was available.

Ms. Likowski asked how the routes were determined. Ms. Craze responded that census data and a questionnaire were used to determine the routes. Ms. Likowski asked how Metro might respond. Mr. Raszewski responded that the County determines Metro service and would not anticipate a cutback in service. Ms. Likowski stated that the city's current Metro service was as good as it has ever been and did not want to see it cut back..

Mr. Gasper believed that this new service was competing with Metro service. Mr. Raszewski stated that local bus service was less expensive and in general when it was implemented, both systems benefited. Mr. Gasper hoped that one of the buses would go to Doctors Hospital. Ms. Craze responded that Route 16 would go to Doctors Hospital.

Ms. Likowski suggested that the city request additional stops along Cherrywood Lane. Mr. Gasper noted that Springhill Lake was the largest multi-family dwelling with the least amount of coverage. Mr. Turnbull agreed that more service needed to be provided to Springhill Lake. He suggested a continuous bus route that would run through Springhill Lake to the Metro station.

Mr. McLaughlin asked for Council direction on whether to hold the public hearing as part of a Council meeting or as a separate meeting. Council favored a stand alone public hearing.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

David E. Moran, CMC
City Clerk