

Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway
Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC)
MINUTES

Regular Meeting at
URS Corporation
7th Floor Board Room
7650 West Courtney Campbell Causeway
Tampa, FL

April 20, 2012
10:00 a.m.

Attending:

Councilman Bill Jonson, Clearwater City Council
Holly East, Commissioner Kevin Beckner's Office, Hillsborough County BOCC
Jessica Lunsford, Senior Planner, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
C. J. Reynolds, USF/Coastal Cities Summit
Bob Clifford, President and CEO, Clearwater Regional Chamber
Chris Weber, Westshore Alliance

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2012 meeting. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Old Business:

1. Chair's Report - Letter to District Secretary on Trail Name

Councilman Jonson reviewed that at the last meeting the CAC had talked about the discussion they had regarding the renaming of the Trail. The Pinellas County MPO had suggested that "Dolphin Trail" be considered because it would tie in with Winter the dolphin and the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. Back in January, Ms. Marable had asked if the group had ever sent a communication to FDOT because it is FDOT's right-of-way. The CAC had not sent a letter and so one was composed and sent to District Secretary Don Skelton, with copies to the MPO Executive Director, as well as Commissioner Neil Brickfield. To date, no responses have been received. Councilman Jonson asked if anyone wished to comment.

New Business:

2. National Byways Assessment consolidated response and action.

Councilman Jonson called attention to the large document each member received and reiterated that the CAC has been asked by FDOT to fill this out. It had been decided that each member who wished to participate, complete the document and send it to Ms. Lunsford, who then scored it in the individual areas. He suggested that in the areas where there are differences that the group come up with a consolidated response. Ms. Reynolds suggested looking at questions that are of very high priority to future actions,

as well as the divergence between the perceptions of achievement and what has been done so far. Councilman Jonson explained that this will be going to the National Scenic Byways Center, which has been de-funded and will cease operations at the end of June, so, he didn't think the group needed to spend a lot of time on this, but rather look at it as something for the CAC. Ms. Lunsford stated she really didn't think the majority of the questions applied to their situation, since they are not like most groups. Also, the CAC has no budget, no money coming in or going out.

Item #4. Ms. Lunsford stated this appeared to be a mix between #2 and #3. Councilman Jonson agreed, but since only one box can be checked, he suggested checking #3, since the majority selected that one.

Finance and Fundraising. Councilman Jonson commented that this was the area Ms. Reynolds focused on, and he reiterated that the CAC really does not have a budget and that they do all of their work through others. He recalled that over time the CAC had probably collected about \$10,000 which they gave to the Regional Planning Council who used it for administrative support. He added that on the other hand, they have had \$400,000 and \$20 million come in through grants. The group agreed on box #2.

Councilman Jonson noted that on page 12 some people didn't vote. He stated he could see why some people would say the CCSH CAC doesn't have Visibility or Reputation, but they have been around for quite a while, and they have been in the papers some, so he would suggest box #2. Ms. Reynolds agreed and pointed out that having the money will ensure the CAC will become better known.

Maintenance and Operations of Capital Projects. Councilman Jonson pointed out the CAC does not do maintenance or operations, therefore this would not be applicable, but he asked the others for any thoughts. Ms. Reynolds indicated she was looking at box #2 since they have applied for grants that are just beginning that process, and their efforts have been focused on the final built project. Councilman Jonson agreed with choosing box #2.

Reserves. The group selected box #2.

Public Engagements. Ms. Lunsford suggested box #3 and the others agreed.

Looking through the document, Councilman Jonson noted that on pages 16, 17, 18 there is a majority, and then the group is split on Visibility. He asked Mr. Clifford what he thought about the visibility of people in the area thinking about the Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway. Mr. Clifford believed they are beginning to get some traction. This subject has been brought up at their Tech board meeting, and they've also shared it at a number of their networking events with their membership and a lot of people were not aware of the magnitude of the project that is being undertaken. He feels there is a lot of interest being generated and that people are really beginning to think about this now. The group decided on box #2.

On page 19, #4, the decision was made to select box #2. On the next page they split the difference in box #2, as well.

Portfolio of Marketing Materials. Councilman Jonson stated the website is mainly where they have it. Box #3 was decided upon.

Pages 21 and 22 there is a majority. Page 23, Intrinsic Qualities. Ms. Reynolds liked box #2, where three people indicated “yes.” Councilman Jonson stated the intrinsic qualities are basically protected by the different groups that have responsibilities along the corridor. Sign codes are from the cities, water quality is the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, some of the cities are doing NPDES. Ms. Reynolds suggested box #3 in that case, since there is clarity in the roles. Councilman Jonson agreed. Pages 24 and 25 there is a majority. On page 26, they are split. Councilman Jonson stated they don’t have an information center. Ms. Lunsford added that they don’t have restrooms. They do have hotels and motels, parking areas and turnouts. The group agreed on box #1.

Market Analysis. Ms. Reynolds asked what has been done, and Councilman Jonson replied that they really have not done much. The group chose box #1.

3. Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway Community Outreach (emphasizing regional approach)

Councilman Jonson expressed appreciation to Mr. Clifford for attending the CAC meeting and talking about outreach to the Chamber and getting that started. The CAC has met with the Westshore Alliance Transportation Committee in March and they are on that agenda again in May to talk primarily about the amenities along the Trail. Councilman Jonson explained that he put this on the agenda because he had a conversation with Commissioner Karen Seel and she had been talking to Commissioner Mark Sharpe and discovered he was totally unaware of the trail project. As a result of these conversations, the Courtney Campbell got two articles in the Tampa paper. Before everyone arrived today, Councilman Jonson told the group he had asked Ms. East if she would talk to Commissioner Kevin Beckner to see what kind of communications he thought might be best to the Hillsborough County Commission. They had talked about the Westshore Alliance possibly going to the hotel/motel/restaurant committee after getting through the Transportation Committee. Mr. Weber stated the hotel/motel committee is only two or three people and they don’t meet on a regular basis, so he didn’t think that would be too helpful. He indicated that the Transportation Committee is really the major committee for the Westshore Alliance. Councilman Jonson asked if the Westshore Alliance has a general meeting? Mr. Weber replied that they have a Board of Directors meeting, but normally they don’t have outside presentations, but they could ask the questions. He asked if it would be to bring them up to speed on the Trail project? Councilman Jonson replied that it would include the Trail project, but in general, the Scenic Highway. They could help by putting the Courtney Campbell on their websites, they could promote the fact that they are located in this area. Mr. Weber suggested he talk to their marketing person to learn what they think is best, because the Board knows about the Trail, they are kept updated on that. Ms. Reynolds asked if the group had discussed previously what specific goals they may want? Would there be a general communication or would there be a specific call to action for the different groups? Councilman Jonson replied that one of the groups they had talked about was homeowners groups. The typical scenic highway is trying to enhance tourism and economic development in the area through both encouraging people to visit because of its resources and also to promote economic development in the area. Ms. Reynolds asked what the group wanted to do to support its specific outreach, what specific economic development goals support does the group want that can further achieve whatever additional development goals it desires? Mr. Clifford said they would probably run this through their government affairs group first. He referred to

the news article, stating what a great article it is and that he would really like to speak to their contacts at the Times and see if they couldn't get a similar article published. They have about 200 people in their tourism group, and he thought the message would be different from talking to their government affairs group, who would be looking more at how did this all come about, what are the outcomes going to be, what is the impact of it, whereas their tourism group would be looking at this as an amenity. He added that, surprisingly, they are getting a lot more tourists who are looking for more ecotour-type things such as hiking, biking, kayaking, etc. Councilman Jonson indicated that he didn't know if the Hillsborough MPO is up to speed on this or not and he planned to contact them to inquire. He asked if anyone else had some ideas. Mr. Clifford asked if anyone had engaged the Sierra Club? Councilman Jonson replied that at one time the CAC had a contact member from the Sierra Club, and also a representative from Keep Hillsborough County Beautiful and Keep Pinellas Beautiful. Ms. Lunsford said she would attempt to contact those people once again. Ms. Reynolds reported that she has been in contact with the Sierra Club person, since he will be attending the Coastal Cities Summit. She also added that there is a new group called the Florida Outdoor Recreational Coalition created by a man who used to work for Parks. The state level is creating a new coalition of all of the recreational businesses that are interested in land use, i.e. the kayak business owners, the cyclists, etc. His name is John Waldron and their focus is on not only economic development but also wise use, land management, environmental management, so avoiding degradation of the natural spaces to enhance recreational usage. Ms. East reported that the organizers of the Friendship Trail Bridge are working on corporate sponsorships and have some really interested investors who want to do event planning, and she has heard some of the CAC members say they would actually like to have both of them, so she thought perhaps the CAC and this other group might be able to help each other. She offered to call the two main organizers to ask if they would be willing to share their phone numbers.

7. Update to be given at the Westshore Alliance Transportation Committee meeting on May 16, 2012.

Councilman Jonson indicated that from the minutes he could see they are going to address the Westshore Alliance Transportation Committee to raise the issue of amenities for the Trail and public art. He wasn't sure if they are still on the agenda for that. Mr. Weber indicated the main meeting has been overtaken by the Airport Master Plan and he asked if they could possibly do it in July. He said he would check with Ron Gregory and get back to them. Mr. Clifford asked if anyone has discussed this with their FDOT representative as far as the amenities, in addition to the Trail? Councilman Jonson replied that Ms. Leonard had suggested the CAC send an official letter to FDOT requesting amenities and public art considerations, if possible, funded through another source. She had drafted a letter to that extent which he has seen and was waiting for her presentation. Ms. Lunsford asked if that was the letter she had with her at the last meeting? She added that she felt the amenities issue is a huge issue and she can't imagine putting in a trail without those things. Mr. Clifford asked what other trails have as far as amenities? Ms. Lunsford replied that most of the trails she has visited in the Tampa Bay region have had restrooms and water fountains. He responded by saying if it's a restroom like at Ben T Davis Beach, it's the city they should be talking to. Ms. Lunsford said the city was supposed to be putting in restrooms last year, but they kept having problems with water quality. Councilman Jonson stated if there is a problem with water quality they should want to be putting in restroom facilities. Ms. Lunsford asked who owns the old Visitor Center that is now closed? Councilman Jonson replied that it's

been demolished. Mr. Clifford indicated that they owned it, and one of the reasons they closed it was because it was turning into a bathroom stop versus a visitor center and was costing about \$75,000 per year to operate the facility. Mr. Weber asked if these amenities were something that have to be put into the design right away? Councilman Jonson said that the infrastructure must be installed if you're planning to put restrooms out there. There needs to be a waste line that can be hooked up to a lift station. Ms. Reynolds asked if there is a mega design for the visualization of the path and other amenities and so forth, has that been created? Councilman Jonson replied that it is there for the Trail, but not for the amenities. He felt they should be able to get enhancement grants for the construction, but the ongoing maintenance would be the issue.

Councilman Jonson suggested he send a letter to Ms. Marable and copy the cities, stating that this issue came up again for discussion during the committee meeting and we are seeking guidance. Mr. Weber asked if Ms. Marable might recommend they go directly to Don Skelton? Councilman Jonson replied that Mr. Skelton has given guidance in the past and he likes to see the letter directly. Ms. Lunsford suggested sending the letter to Mr. Skelton and copy Ms. Marable. Councilman Jonson indicated when he said Ms. Marable he was going bottoms up, that his original thought was not to include Mr. Skelton. After some discussion, Ms. Lunsford suggested asking Ms. Marable who they should send the letter to.

Councilman Jonson asked if there was any other business, questions or comments anyone may have. Ms. Reynolds said that she has some thoughts, but there a quite a few, so in the interest of time she will e-mail Councilman Jonson.

There being no further business, Councilman Jonson adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: Friday, May 18, 2012 in the URS conference room at 10:00 a.m.