

METRO OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES OF THE METRO OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Council Chamber

Members Present: Ed Washington (Chair), Bill Atherton (Vice Chair), Jon Kvistad

Members Absent: None

Chair Washington called the meeting to order at 3:34 P.M.

1. Introductions

Chair Washington introduced Suzanne Myers, Council Assistant, as the new clerk of the Metro Operations Committee.

2. Citizen Communications

There were none.

3. Consideration of the Minutes of the September 8, and September 22, 1999, Meetings of the Metro Operations Committee Meetings

Motion: Councilor Kvistad moved to adopt the minutes of the September 8, 1999, Metro Operations Committee meeting.

Vote: Councilors Kvistad, Atherton, and Washington voted yes. The vote was 3/0 in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Kvistad noted that he was absent from the September 22, 1999, meeting, and would abstain from voting on the minutes. His absence was excused because he was riding a train to the Rail-Volution conference in Dallas, Texas.

Motion: Councilor Atherton moved to adopt the minutes of the September 22, 1999, Metro Operations Committee meeting.

Vote: Councilors Atherton and Washington voted yes. Councilor Kvistad abstained. The vote was 2/0/1 in favor and the motion passed.

4. Resolution No. 99-2840, for the Purpose of Confirming the Reappointment of Herbert S. Plep and the Appointment of Brian R. Williams and James C. Aalberg to the Investment Advisory Board

Howard Hansen, Investment Manager, presented Resolution No. 99-2840. A staff report to Resolution No. 99-2840 includes information presented by Mr. Hansen and is included in the meeting record.

Councilor Atherton asked if Metro compensated the members of the Investment Advisory Board.

Mr. Hansen said no, the members were strictly volunteers and were not compensated.

Councilor Atherton asked if it was common in Oregon to compensate advisory committees.

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Mr. Hansen said he could not speak for the state of Oregon as a whole, but he believed that at Metro, all the citizen committees were volunteers, and deeply appreciated.

Chair Washington said to his knowledge, no one on any committee at Metro received any type of compensation except for an occasional slice of pizza or a cookie. He said committees for the State of Oregon received compensation for mileage and a per diem for overnight meetings. He said he did not know how the cities or counties worked.

Councilor Atherton asked how the Investment Advisory Board functioned.

Mr. Hansen said the Investment Advisory Board met quarterly to review the report of the portfolio activity and status and look at any suggestions for future strategies. He said the Board's main responsibility is to review the nature of the investments he makes, and to verify that the portfolio and its components conform to the policy and the ordinance that governs that policy.

Motion: Councilor Atherton moved to recommend Council adoption of Resolution No. 99-2840.

Vote: Councilors Kvistad, Atherton, and Washington voted yes. The vote was 3/0 in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Atherton will carry Resolution No. 99-2840 to the full Metro Council.

Councilor Atherton asked Mr. Hansen if Metro was allowed to arbitrage its revenue bonds. For example, if Metro was paying out interest of 3% on current revenue bonds and made an income, could Metro invest that income.

Mr. Hansen said the general area referred to by Councilor Atherton is known as arbitrage rebate. He said in general terms, for most bonds, whether they were revenue bonds or general obligation bonds, when Metro received the bond proceeds, it could earn in excess of what the bond cost Metro. However, every five years Metro must make a report to the Internal Revenue Service that in essence says, Metro must rebate whatever amount is in excess of bond yield to the government Treasury Department. He said that process takes place every five years over the life of the bonds, until the bonds are either called or paid off. Once that happens, there is a final report so that any residual or remainder rebate is paid. He said there were some limited exceptions for construction bonds.

Councilor Atherton said he knew that this was the process for general obligation bonds, but he did not realize the same process applied to revenue bonds. Councilor Atherton asked if those rules also applied to land purchases, if Metro purchased land that then appreciated in value when resold.

Mr. Hansen said that was not a concern because the proceeds of the bond that fall within the arbitrage rebate regulation have then been spent, so are outside of those regulations. He said whatever happened with what the bond money was spent on was a different matter.

5. Resolution No. 99-2842, for the Purpose of Authorizing the Executive Officer to Extend the Termination Date of Existing Intergovernmental Agreements with Local Park Providers who are Implementing the Local Share Component of Metro's Open Spaces, Parks and Streams Bond Measure

Charlie Ciecko, Director, Regional Parks and Greenspaces, presented Resolution No. 99-2842. A staff report to the resolution includes information presented by Mr. Ciecko and is included in the meeting record.

Councilor Atherton asked why the time extensions were needed.

Mr. Ciecko said there were a variety of reasons. He said some projects had more than one funding source; for example, there were local funds which are no longer available due to the implications of Ballot Measure 50. In other cases, the sellers were not willing and the deal has not closed. He said generally, all of the local providers were committed to expediting completion, and Metro staff has been encouraging them to do that. He urged committee approval of Resolution No. 99-2842.

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Motion:

Councilor Atherton moved to recommend Council adoption of Resolution No. 99-2842.

Vote:

Councilors Atherton, Kvistad, and Washington voted yes. The vote was 3/0 in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Kvistad will carry Resolution No. 99-2842 to the full Metro Council.

5A. METRO REGIONAL CENTER SIGNAGE

Chair Washington asked Berit Stevenson, Property Services, to speak about the identifying signs on the Metro Regional Center building. He said several people have asked him about the use of this building, and have noted that there is no identification on Grand Avenue.

Ms. Stevenson gave a brief history of the Metro Regional Center building and its signage. She said Metro has been in its current location for about six and a half years. Originally, the building received one monument sign, which was placed on the north side of building. She said it was not a good sign, however, and was difficult to read, so it was removed. About that time, Metro hired a designer, and added some smaller signs around the building and a new monument sign at the south plaza. She said one of the problems with signage is that identifying the south side of the building, which is the first piece of the building people see as they are travelling up Grand Avenue, sends a wrong message because it is not the public entrance and is only accessible to employees. She said they have tried to place the monument sign at the north side of the building, near the public entrance, but the building has some difficulties in terms of sign placement.

Ms. Stevenson said in the meantime, Metro's Communication Team has worked together over the last two years, and has revisited signs and come up with an idea for new signage on Grand Avenue. A copy of one of the Communication Team's proposals is included in the meeting record. She said the Communication Team researched permitting and cost, and possibilities, but never hired a designer or pursued the suggestions because of budget constraints. She said on page 24 of the Metro Plan 1999-02, recently completed by the Communications Team, a master sign plan is proposed for implementing an integrated sign program for all of Metro's facilities. A copy of the Metro Plan is included in the meeting record. She suggested that the master plan for signage was a good approach and would help send a more unified message. She said at staff level, it has been suggested that signage for the Metro Regional Center building should be more subtle, and less eye-catching, than signage on Metro's other facilities such as the Convention Center, the Zoo and the parks.

Ms. Stevenson noted the many windows in the building, and said one option is a window treatment, which people could see through from the inside of the building, like Nike's new parking structure. She said the window treatment offers significant flexibility, but is expensive.

Chair Washington asked who on staff decided that Metro's building should be subtly signed.

Ms. Stevenson said it was not decision, it was just a comment made at the staff level that in light of budget constraints, the more elaborate and expensive signs were more appropriate for Metro's other facilities.

Chair Washington said his concern is that there is no identification of the building along Grand Avenue, which is the longest stretch of the building, and probably what people see the most. He said the small signs on each side of the Grand Avenue entrance are not sufficient.

Ms. Stevenson agreed, and said the only sign at Metro that is intended to catch a person's eye from a car is the monument sign at the south plaza.

Chair Washington said he would like staff to consider how to identify who is in the building. He noted that the building's address is also not very visible.

Ms. Stevenson asked if Chair Washington supported pursuing the signage master plan.

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Chair Washington said yes, but he did not think it should take two years to make a decision about putting some identifying mark on the building.

Councilor Kvistad suggested placing Metro's emblem at the top of the tower.

Ms. Stevenson noted that there is a lot of glass in the tower, so it would be possible to do something up there.

Chair Washington said he wanted a larger, more visible form of identification by the door on Grand Avenue.

Councilor Kvistad noted that any signs should make it clear that the Grand Avenue entrance is not the main entrance, because it is not handicap accessible.

Aleta Woodruff, 2143 NE 95th Place, Portland, spoke first as a member of the Metro Committee for Citizen Involvement (MCCI). She said for four years, she has tried as a member of MCCI to determine whether or not Metro wants to take visual responsibility for its facilities. Previously, an MCCI subcommittee recommended that all properties owned or managed by Metro have large identification that says "Metro." She said she spoke on this topic with then Presiding Officer Kvistad and Councilor Washington, and suggested that there could even be a unifying banner with Metro's logo and name. She said the Council's response was that there was not much funds, and it was concerned about who would pay, and who would put the flags up and down if they were on poles. She said she suggested a true, triangular banner, but her suggestion did not fly. She said with some prodding from MCCI, two signs have been added in the parking structure that read "Metro Main Entrance" and "Not an Entrance." She agreed with Councilor Washington that Metro's building is not well identified. She said identification is important, for the Metro Regional Center, and for the other buildings and properties connected to Metro. She noted that the pioneer cemeteries and transfer stations are not identified as Metro properties. She said she supported the signage master plan, and felt it should be implemented in spite on any budget constraints.

As a private citizen, Ms. Woodruff said Metro is part of her life, because Portland is part of her life, because Multnomah County is part of her life, as is the State of Oregon. She said she wants to see Metro increase in its overall functions, and she wants to see the region's problems alleviated if possible. She wants to see the vacant buildings filled up, she wants the roads improved, and all of the things that everyone else wants. She said Metro can do that, but there has to be a little bit of advertising, a little bit of public relations work, and a little bit better overall coverage of what Metro does and how great an organization it is. She said she has a hard time personally when she goes to the different things with which she is involved, and she has to speak for Metro. Sometimes she is the only person out of 20 or 30 people who is in favor of Metro. She said her friends are older, their political persuasions are not the same as hers, and she has a hard time sometimes, but she tries to keep her cool and protect Metro as much as she can. She thanked the committee for its time.

Robert Pung, Sr., MCCI Vice Chair, 777 Northeast Eighth Street #101, Gresham, said the instructions for handicap entrance at the main door are written in white letters to the side of the door, and are neither noticeable nor easy to see. He said if he was a disabled citizen and did not know how to get into the Metro Regional Center, he may not be able to get into the building because there is no real direction. He said he appreciates the electric doors and the accessibility of Metro's building.

Chair Washington thanked Ms. Stevenson for her time, and asked for any closing comments.

Ms. Stevenson said she would like to look at the main entry and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) signage, and come up with some ideas. She said it should be possible to do this right away, and should not cost a significant amount. She said she would show any plans to Chair Washington and the Council before acting on them.

Chair Washington added that it is difficult for persons in wheelchairs to navigate the Council Chamber. He suggested that staff remove the chairs in the back two rows, and the first four chairs, of the Chamber.

Councilor Kvistad said three years ago staff marked the floor with the proper placement of the chairs, but they appear to no longer be using the guides.

Chair Washington requested that staff use the tape guides again.

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Mr. Pung suggested that rather than remove the back rows, staff could remove a few chairs on the north side of the Chamber, which would allow easy wheelchair access up the side of the room.

Chair Washington agreed and asked staff to follow Mr. Pung's suggestion on how to make the Council Chamber more wheelchair accessible.

Ms. Stevenson agreed.

6. Councilor Communications

Councilor Kvistad said he wanted to talk the Expo Center: first, the second and third building phases of the Expo Center expansion, and second, transportation in terms of the light rail siting. He said the Council's proposed budget includes about \$500,000 for the preliminary design and engineering work on the Phase 3 building, which would help with the landscaping issues. He said he spoke with Mark Williams, General Manager, Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission (MERC), and Mr. Williams was fairly confident that if Metro eliminated the excise tax on the enterprise revenue, it would generate enough revenue for Metro to finance the construction of the final phase of the Expo Center expansion without a bond measure. He said regardless, the first half million dollars is in the proposed budget for the preliminary design and engineering, and he asked Councilor Atherton and Chair Washington to consider supporting at least that part of the Council's proposed budget.

Councilor Kvistad next updated the committee on the status of discussions on where to locate the future Expo Center light rail stop. He said the Council has the ability to tell Tri-Met to curve the light rail line in order to locate the stop in front of the future Expo Center entrance in the third building, rather than at the far end of the parking lot as is currently proposed. He said he would speak with each of the Metro Councilors about his proposal. He said Tri-Met staff has already approached Metro and MERC staff and told them that placing the stop by the entrance would eliminate 300 parking spaces, which convinced MERC staff to lobby on the side of Tri-Met. He said the decision of where to place the stop should be a policy decision made by the Council, not by Tri-Met or staff. He said he firmly believes that the light rail needs to be curved so that the stop is at the Expo Center's front door. He said under the current proposal, there would also be no security oversight of the station, and people with disabilities would have to travel almost a quarter of a mile from the far end of the parking lot to the entrance.

Councilor Kvistad said the Land Use Final Order (LUFO) coming forward proposes siting the station at the far end of the parking lot, and he urged Metro Council to return the LUFO to Tri-Met and tell them to rewrite it to reflect the Council's wishes. He noted that while siting the station at the Expo entrance would cost an additional \$3 million, it was well within Tri-Met's contingency funds for the project. He said Metro is saving Tri-Met a minimum of \$500,000 on the stub that Tri-Met no longer needs to build on the south side of the building because it would cut off access to the parking lot. He added that Tri-Met usually overestimates expenses, and he did not believe it would actually cost an additional \$3 million. He said Tri-Met's other argument is that eventually there would be an unused stub. He said he did not agree: Metro could even keep the stub and still built a platform on the north, and Metro would still have the potential for an excursion where Tri-Met could run trains between the Oregon Convention Center (OCC) and the Expo Center, outside of the normal issues. He said Tri-Met has adopted a myopic view and is insisting that light rail is going north. His argument is that right now, Tri-Met is not going north, it is going to Expo, and he wants to maximize Metro's investment and make sure that the stop is located in a way that enhances Metro's ability to serve, that helps Metro build its third building, and makes Expo and OCC the world class duo of facilities that they can be.

Ms. Woodruff applauded in support of Councilor Kvistad's proposal.

Councilor Atherton asked about the 300 parking spaces that would be lost.

Councilor Kvistad said Tri-Met's argument is that the light rail could not make such a sharp turn, and therefore the line would have to cut through the middle of the parking lot. He noted, however, that light rail makes a hairpin turn at the top of Highway 217, and there is no reason why light rail cannot be built on the access way along Marine Drive. He said the Expo Center would only lose one exit onto Marine Drive, and the Port of Portland has already stated it does not want people coming in and out on Marine Drive because of the increase in freight traffic.

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Councilor Atherton asked about the purpose of the stub originally purposed at the south side of the facility.

Councilor Kvistad said the stub was intended to bring light rail right up to the facility, but if it was sited on the south side of the access road, it would be in a wetland, and Tri-Met would have to cut and fill to elevate the ground, which would be fairly expensive.

Councilor Atherton asked if the spur was planned originally, back when it was assumed that light rail would continue on to Vancouver, Washington.

Councilor Kvistad said yes.

Councilor Atherton asked Councilor Kvistad if he had any evidence that the extra cost would not be \$3 million.

Councilor Kvistad suggested that Councilor Atherton talk personally with Gary Conkling, MERC Commissioner, who used to be on the Tri-Met board, and could explain how Tri-Met uses its numbers to drive policy. He said even if the extra cost was \$3.4 million, the station should still be located by the Expo entrance for policy reasons. He added that Tri-Met is spending millions of dollars in Kenton to determine the direction of the light rail line at Kenton and the location of the ramps, yet it is telling Metro that it will locate the Expo station a quarter-mile from the entrance. He said the added expense is well within Tri-Met's budget, and would be a better policy choice.

Councilor Atherton asked what the utility of the spur would be, if light rail continued on to Vancouver.

Councilor Kvistad said currently, the spur would be the terminus. He said the potential future uses of the light rail are irrelevant to how it best works for the system under construction now. He said expansion of light rail to Vancouver is a minimum of five to ten years away, and for five to ten years, Metro's customers would stop in the middle of nowhere and have to travel across the enormous parking lot in the rain and mud. He encouraged the committee to talk with Mr. Conkling for an overview.

There being no more business to come before the committee, Chair Washington adjourned the meeting at 4:29 PM.

Prepared by,

Suzanne Myers
Council Assistant

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ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 6, 1999

The following have been included as part of the official public record.

TOPIC	DOCUMENT DATE	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT NUMBER
Resolution No. 99-2840	10/6/99	Corrected copy of Resolution No. 99-2840	100699mop-1
Metro Regional Center Signage	10/6/99	Communication Teams proposal for Metro Regional Center signage along Grand Avenue	100699mop-2
	September - October 1999	Metro Plan 1999-02: Planning that protects the nature of our region. A strategic three-year communications plan for Metro, Council Review Draft Sept. - Oct. 1999	100699mop-3