

METRO COUNCIL GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Monday, July 20, 1998

Council Annex

Members Present: Susan McLain (Chair), Ruth McFarland, Rod Monroe

Members Absent: None

Chair McLain called the meeting to order at 12:00 P.M.

Randy Ealy, Executive Analyst, attended for Executive Officer Mike Burton, who was unable to attend. Chair McLain said the next Governmental Affairs meeting will be on Monday, August 3, 1998.

2. WORK SESSION ON METRO AGENDA FOR 1999 OREGON LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. Ealy said the lobbyist will potentially start on September 8, the Tuesday after Labor Day.

Chair McLain distributed copies of Legislative Issues, a copy of which is included in the meeting record. She added the budget for the Civic Stadium rehabilitation to the list of legislative issues. She said Gary Conkling, Chair of Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission (MERC), met with one of the Governor's assistants, who indicated that if the City of Portland and Metro make stadium rehabilitation a top priority for state funding, the Governor's office is interested. She said the Council would need to write a letter to Governor John Kitzhaber stating its support.

Councilor Monroe said the Council should consider whether writing a letter is the strongest action it can take to impress upon the Governor that Metro is 100 percent behind the stadium rehabilitation.

Mr. Ealy said he spoke with Mark Williams, General Manager of MERC, and Mr. Williams was told by the Governor's Chief of Staff that the Governor will include stadium rehabilitation in his budget in September if the City of Portland and Metro demonstrate their support.

Councilor McFarland said a letter signed by Presiding Officer Kvistad, Chair McLain, and Executive Officer Burton does not represent the Council. She said a formal vote on a resolution would be the best way to send a strong message to the Governor.

Chair McLain agreed. She said the committee should introduce the legislation.

Councilor Monroe recommended that the committee vote at this meeting to draft the legislation, so that the resolution can come back to committee on August 3, and then to Council.

Chair McLain said she wants to look at the rest of the legislative issues first, and determine the committee's top priorities. She said she also wants to add watershed planning to the list of legislative issues. She said watershed planning relates to salmon recovery and other infrastructure issues, but is unique in its relationship to the Water Consortium and the Regional Framework Plan. She said the issue would be discussed further in the Water Resources Policy Advisory Committee (WRPAC).

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1. CONSIDERATION OF THE JULY 6, 1998, GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING

Motion:

Councilor McFarland moved to adopt the minutes of the July 6, 1998, Governmental Affairs Committee meeting.

Vote:

Councilors McFarland and McLain voted aye. Councilor Monroe abstained. The vote was 2/0/1 in favor and the motion passed.

Councilor Monroe abstained because he did not attend the meeting on July 6.

2. WORK SESSION ON METRO AGENDA FOR 1999 OREGON LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Meg Bushman, Council Analyst, reviewed the first item on the list of legislative issues, a statewide growth fund.

Chair McLain said two or three years ago, when the Council began talking about urban reserve planning and redevelopment, the cities and counties indicated that their greatest need was money for planning. She said the current work by the Boundary Commission Subcommittee and the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) Finance Subcommittee complements each other, and she recommended inviting both subcommittees to a Governmental Affairs Committee meeting so that Councilors can become more familiar with their work and give any opinions or suggestions. Councilors Monroe and McFarland agreed.

Chair McLain said transportation infrastructure is overwhelming by itself, and the Oregon Legislature has not passed a successful package in the last two or three sessions. She said there needs to be a balance between funding for transportation and growth planning. She said if Metro decides to lobby for a growth fund, it should target transportation infrastructure dollars and specific planning dollars, rather than request a lump sum.

Councilor Monroe said the Council is in a bind because the development community is pushing Metro to meet its deadline to add half the established need by the end of the year, but cities and counties do not have any money for planning. He said the development community has a stake in ensuring that the necessary planning dollars are available. He said in the past, the development community has been willing to support a very small real estate transfer tax if it is statewide, there is a prohibition against local increases, and it is dedicated to development-related items, such as planning. He said the development community needs to be included, because without its support, a growth fund is impossible.

Chair McLain said Metro has used grants in the last three to four years, and has some experience administering and being partners in grants. She suggested asking for grant money for specific projects, such as urban reserve planning or infill projects.

Councilor McFarland recommended both applying for grants and asking for money. Chair McLain agreed.

Councilor Monroe said he believes it will be extremely difficult to get money out of the State General Fund for growth infrastructure.

Chair McLain said the school board superintendents have asked Metro for help, and she wondered if Metro could offer to assist the school districts by competing for state funding, but then requiring local jurisdictions to work with their school districts in order to apply for grants.

Councilor Monroe said in politics, logic and reason seldom win. He said school superintendents would not agree to request less money for school funding, even though they would receive some benefit from a statewide growth fund.

Chair McLain said she would expect schools to support both school funding and a statewide growth fund. Councilor Monroe said the schools may support, and certainly would not oppose, the idea of a statewide growth fund, but their primary goal will be to secure as much money for schools as possible.

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Chair McLain said before the committee can be proactive and work toward its goals, it needs to think about the desired products and the necessary political process to attain those products.

Councilor McFarland said if Metro has a few legislators with some influence who are supportive of the idea and who are kept informed, the fund will have a much greater chance for success.

Chair McLain asked the committee if it would support having her and Ms. Bushman work on a package that would describe the grant approach or general fund dollars for both infill projects and regional urban reserve planning needs.

Councilor Monroe said the committee can ask for it, but it will be very difficult to get, even if Metro gets the Governor's strong support, it is included in the Governor's budget, and it has bipartisan support. He recommended a very limited, dedicated fund.

Chair McLain said Metro tried for that about four years ago without success. Councilor Monroe said the past attempt was regional, not statewide, and did not have the support of the development community.

Chair McLain asked Councilor Monroe if he would support forwarding both ideas for more work. Councilor Monroe said yes.

Chair McLain asked if the committee agrees to forward the idea of a limited fee idea.

Ms. Bushman said if Metro only requests money for planning, and not for infrastructure, the cost of a statewide growth fund will be significantly less than \$200 million, which would be very beneficial.

Chair McLain recommended that Metro ask for money for concept planning and for transportation infrastructure. She said she will bring a draft of the request to the next Governmental Affairs meeting in August.

Councilor Monroe said the \$200 million figure is unrealistic. He said he would prefer to scale the request back to something that would handle the needs for planning and maybe some very limited infrastructure acquisitions such as tying up school sites.

For the record, Chair McLain said the committee was discussing limited-dollar-amount grants for both urban reserve planning and infill project planning, and asking for infrastructure dollars for limited transportation or school-project ideas. She said the committee would continue its work at its next meeting.

Councilor Monroe said the fund would be statewide, supported by the League of Oregon Cities and the Association of Oregon Counties.

Chair McLain introduced the second legislative issue: transportation improvement package. She said she believes the public wants a transportation package, because it is one of the top three issues raised at every community meeting she has attended. She said in her opinion, the public has either not liked or not understood the packages that have been offered in the past.

Councilor Monroe said it is very easy for some people to believe the demagogues who claim the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) would have plenty of money for every project if it better utilized its funds.

Chair McLain said the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) has discussed the differences in the needs of the region's suburbs, urban reserves, and city centers. She said the transportation package needs to include something for everyone.

Councilor Monroe said he would rather make one small step forward than make no progress at all.

Chair McLain said it is important to make sure the light rail vote fits into the transportation improvement package. Councilor Monroe asked Chair McLain if she wants to wait until after the light rail vote before advocating for transportation package before the legislature.

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Chair McLain said no, but she believes it needs to be done carefully to avoid sending mixed messages. She said there are two crucial elements to the light rail vote: 1) the public's signal of support for light rail, and 2) that the region committed to this piece of the light rail system twenty years ago. Councilor Monroe said Chair McLain's points are part of the campaign message.

Councilor McFarland said support for light rail to Hillsboro was conditioned on the commitment to extend light rail to Clackamas next.

Chair McLain asked if the committee supports a package that is specific and complementary to the light rail support for the South/North system, and which will be completed through JPACT and the Council Transportation Planning Committee.

Councilor Monroe said he assumes that at some point JPACT and the Council will be asked to endorse the ballot measure. Chair McLain agreed.

Councilor McFarland asked how the Council should respond to people who say they can show facts and figures that it would be cheaper to drive automobiles than take light rail. She asked if Metro has figures that dispute those claims.

Chair McLain said yes, and asked Ms. Bushman to prepare a one-page fact sheet on light rail costs. She said the committee has agreed that the transportation package needs to be specific, direct, and coordinated with the light rail ballot measure.

Chair McLain reviewed salmon funding, and said the major issue is coordinating the many groups involved.

Michael Morrissey, Senior Council Analyst, said Metro, Chair McLain, or WRPAC could offer to take the lead if it wishes to be more proactive on the issue of salmon funding. Chair McLain agreed.

Councilor Monroe said the Council needs to go on record supporting the Governor's efforts, and needs to let him know that Metro is very concerned about protecting riparian areas within the Metro area and improving fish habitat.

Mr. Morrissey said the Governor has put forward a plan regarding fish on the Oregon Coast, but not the Coho listing.

Councilor McFarland said small, uncoordinated efforts and actions can make a difference. Chair McLain and Councilor Monroe agreed.

Chair McLain introduced the issue of election costs.

Mr. Ealy said the elections bill from Clackamas County bill was \$44,000. He said this brought the total cost of elections to \$318,000, compared to the \$200,000 which was budgeted for it. He said election costs are unpredictable, but would be less if the vote-by-mail initiative passes, because the cost of elections will be reduced. Mr. Ealy said Metro is charged for elections because it is a special district.

Chair McLain said Metro should look at changing its status so that the costs are divided fairly. She asked Ms. Bushman to find out how much money Metro would save if the vote-by-mail initiative passes.

Chair McLain directed Ms. Bushman to draft a resolution supporting the Civic Stadium rehabilitation fund. She asked Mr. Ealy for the Executive Officer's opinion on the resolution.

Mr. Ealy said Mr. Williams would prefer the Council states its support, but does not include a dollar amount in its resolution. Chair McLain agreed.

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Chair McLain asked the committee to consider Metro's past actions supporting watershed planning. She said WRPAC, Metro, and the Council have given lip service to the importance of watershed planning for a number of different reasons, and the agency needs to begin looking at the larger picture.

Councilor McFarland compared regional watershed planning to Metro's efforts to coordinate the trails system. She said smaller districts should do their own work improving water quality, but Metro should show them how their work fits into a regional plan.

Chair McLain said watershed planning fits into the greenspace master plan update. She asked Ms. Bushman to add the Civic Stadium rehabilitation and watershed planning to the list of legislative issues and prepare an updated version for the committee at its next meeting.

Chair McLain said on August 3, the committee would have an update on legislative issues. Councilor Monroe said he will be out of town. Chair McLain said she will invite all of the Councilors to the next meeting.

3. COUNCILOR COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

There being no further business before the committee, Chair McLain adjourned the meeting at 1:06 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Myers
Council Assistant

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ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF JULY 20, 1998

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

ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION	DOCUMENT DATE	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT No.
Metro Agenda for 1999 Oregon Legislative Session	7/20/98	Legislative Issues, written by Meg Bushman	072098ga-01