



Steering Committee Meeting

Minutes
October 25th, 2023
6:30 PM

- I. **Welcome** – Councilmember Honeycutt
- II. **Previous Meeting Minutes** – Councilmember Honeycutt
Minutes from the September 23rd, 2023, Steering Committee meeting were approved unanimously.
- III. **Phase 1 Project Update – Sheila Parker**
Reported all engineering permits in hand for phase one. The DOT has approved the utility report. We are currently working with DOT to create a bid package which they must approve before we advertise the project. For ROW we did receive council authorization to move forward with eminent domain on the six tracts that we need ROW from. These are predominantly businesses, so we are currently filing those condemnations through the legal department. We must wait 30 days and then we can submit for ROW certification that SCDOT also must approve. The goal is still to advertise by the end of the year.

Councilmember Honeycutt asked for a reminder for the Public on what phase 1 includes. Mrs. Parker explained that phase one is from Ellis Creek Bridge to George Griffith Blvd. Councilmember Honeycutt asked if most ROW takings are strip takes along the front of parcels. Mrs. Parker confirmed that it is along the front of parcels just for constructing a sidewalk.

- IV. **Update on Grant Opportunity- Kyle James, BCDOG**

At the last meeting, Mrs. Cox presented a perfect grant funding opportunity for phases 2 and 3. There was a motion that carried to advance that application, but no action was taken.

Mr. James wanted to highlight one component of that grant that we could move forward with independently that focused on transit. There was a specific transit recommendation in the 2016 Complete Streets Study at the end of Route 31 (Harris Teeter) to get to the beach. The study specifically mentioned a need for an open-air vehicle that is easy to board and focuses on day-tripper traffic. This transit would operate as a park-and-ride and reallocate street space so it would not have to operate in mixed traffic. The BCDOG conducted a survey that showed a handful of design criteria necessary for a public trolley. Firstly, the trolley would need to



operate out of mixed traffic successfully. If citizens had to wait in the same traffic, then there would not be a benefit. Secondly, travel would need to be able to host entire families. Thirdly, people wanted to be able to carry beach equipment like surfboards, chairs, and coolers. Mr. James indicated that his presentation was for a micro-transit alternative. This idea would use smaller vehicles like 7-passenger golf carts with doors, windows that come down, and racks on top. The vehicles would be four feet wide and would operate on the shoulder of the road. Mr. James indicated this could be an interim solution to the long-term solution or a pathway or utilizing existing ROW. Mr. James stated that a company had offered to do a 3-day free trial along Folly Road next Memorial Day Weekend. He indicated that this would be an opportunity to evaluate a micro-transit program and see if it worked operationally as a pilot project. If the program were extended to include Friday, Saturday, and Sunday it would cost \$25,000.00 for next summer. This would include three vehicles operating in a continuous loop with less than a 10-minute wait. Major barriers to this project would include overnight storage for vehicles to recharge, identifying a good park-and-ride location, and operating on the shoulder. Mr. James indicated that the biggest barrier would be curb restrictions that would need an exception to test and gauge feedback on a transit component.

Representative Wetmore said she was excited to see a solution coming through. She asked if the bike lane and micro transit lane would be the same. Mr. James indicated that they would be operating in conjunction with the shoulder bike lanes. He reiterated that currently there is a restriction from the SCDOT that would be the biggest barrier to overcome. Councilwoman Parker stated that she loved the idea and similarly had thought about a bike share program. She stated that lime bikes were used downtown but they did not want to come to Folly Road due to safety and parking issues, but there were other companies in the area. She stated that the bike lanes run from Harris Teeter down to Folly Beach and a bike park-and-ride option may be useful since parking on Folly is so tough. Mrs. Parker mentioned a low parcel near Harris Teeter that may be a good procurement option for a park-and-ride location. She indicated she thought this would be a good option and asked Mrs. Zimmerman what she thought about the idea. Mr. Joseph Walters asked if the bridges had a shoulder for bikes at all and if there would be a slider merge. Mr. James clarified that the shoulder on the bridge is wider than the causeway. He indicated that any proposed gold cart vehicle would be required to share the ROW with bikes and would operate around the same speed. Ms. Zimmerman indicated that there were some issues with the park-and-ride bike idea. She explained that CARTA expressed concern since they were already using the Harris Teeter for park and ride. She indicated that another concern was the current condition of the bike lanes and stated that they were not well maintained. If you look at them now, they are technically 4' wide but aren't in most spaces. She stated that she was worried about opening bike infrastructure to micro transit.

Representative Wetmore asked if the need for traffic solutions down to Folly Beach could be looked at in the context of Kim Morganello's study of realigning the existing Road. Mr. James indicated that would be a possibility but that any situation where the breakdown shoulder was lost would be a hard tradeoff for the SCDOT. He reiterated that this is an interim solution.



The recommendation by the Complete Streets Study for Folly Road is still to realign the Road. Councilwoman Parker asked if we applied for the previously mentioned RCC grant. Mr. James clarified that there was a motion made at the last meeting, but no action was taken. The grant was due in September so there is nothing we can do. He recommended looking for interim solutions that are low-cost and focus on local funds.

V. Jurisdictional Updates– Various

Town of James Island – Kristen Crane

- No updates

City of Charleston –Councilwoman Parker

- Starbucks is no longer re-routing their drive-through. Councilwoman Parker is looking at alternatives with the Starbucks real estate team to explore a parking agreement with Planet Fitness.

BCDCOG/CARTA – Belen Vitello

- No updates

City of Folly Beach – Jenna Stephens

- No updates.

Charleston County – Emily Pigott

- No updates.

VI. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned