

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GEORGE WASHINGTON REGIONAL COMMISSION**

March 21, 2016
The Robert C. Gibbons Conference Room
406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg Virginia

MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING: Chair – Jim Howard **King George County; City of Fredericksburg:** Matt Kelly & Billy Withers; **Caroline County:** Jeff Black & Nancy Long; **King George County:** Ruby Brabo; **Spotsylvania County:** Greg Benton & Paul Trampe; **Stafford County:** Meg Bohmke & Laura Sellers

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Curry Roberts – FRA; & Chuck Steigerwald - PRTC

STAFF: Tim Ware, Executive Director; Paul Agnello, Danny Reese, & Nick Quint, FAMPO; Diana Utz, Leigh Anderson & JoAnna Roberson, GWRC

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Howard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with a quorum present; which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Howard welcomed the 3 new members who are serving this year: Ms. Nancy Long, Caroline County; Ms. Ruby Brabo, King George County; & Mr. Greg Benton, Spotsylvania County.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING AGENDA

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Sellers, with all in consensus, the agenda for the March 21st meeting was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING MINUTES (February 22, 2016) - (Action Item)

Upon motion by Ms. Sellers and seconded by Mr. Kelly, abstention by Ms. Brabo, and all others in consensus, the minutes from the February 22nd meeting were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - None

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Ware advised that the Financial Report was included in tonight's agenda packet. Mr. Ware stated that the Commission's revenues are over the expenditures and we are where we were expected to be at this time of the year.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ware advised back in March of 2015 the Virginia Department of Historic Resources named the birthplace of the 1973 Triple Crown champion, Secretariat, at the Meadows in Caroline County to the Virginia Landmark register. Mr. Ware stated that with considerable amount of efforts by Ms. Utz and other FAMPO/GWRC staff, that this request was then forwarded with the materials gathered to the National Park Service for nomination to the National Recognition of Historic Places. Mr. Ware advised that this nomination was accepted and the award recognition was presented to the George Washington Regional Commission.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS:

- a.) **Resolution No. 16-18, Endorsing the Fiscal year 2017 Rural Transportation Planning Work (RTW) Program** – Mr. Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello advised that the Rural Transportation Planning Work Program (RTW) is a required annual document that the MPO's need to complete. Mr. Agnello stated that the RTW for FY2017 is complete and included in tonight's agenda packet. Mr. Agnello stated that Resolution No. 16-18 is asking for endorsement of the RTW plan from the George Washington Regional Commission.

Upon motion by Ms. Brabo and seconded by Ms. Sellers, with all concurring, Resolution No. 16-18 was adopted by the George Washington Regional Commission.

- b.) **Resolution No. 16-19, Authorizing Staff to Apply for a Fiscal Year 2017 FASTLANE Grant Application for the I-95 Rappahannock River Crossings Projects** – Mr. Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello advised the FASTLANE grant application is a new federal transportation program that was made available the latter part of December. This program has \$800 million available for freight and rail projects. Mr. Agnello stated that the funding allocations will be available in FY2017 and can provide a minimum award of \$25 million for large projects that have a cost estimate of over \$100 million to complete. Mr. Agnello stated that the northbound Rappahannock River Crossing project within this region is a project that meets the criteria for FASTLANE funding considerations.

Mr. Agnello relayed that it was recommendation from Congressman Wittman for the FAMPO region to apply for this grant. Mr. Agnello stated that both FAMPO & GWRC are eligible entities that could pursue a grant application for funding considerations. Mr. Agnello stated that the application deadline is April 14th. Due to the fact that GWRC already has an account established, and FAMPO at this point does not (getting approval for FAMPO's account would more than likely exceed the application date deadline), the request is being made for the George Washington Regional Commission to endorse Resolution No. 16-19 that authorizes staff to apply for a FY2017 FASTLANE grant application for the I-95 Rappahannock River Crossings projects.

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Black, with all concurring, Resolution No. 16-19 was adopted by the George Washington Regional Commission.

c.) Harry Nice Bridge – Ms. Ruby Brabo, King George County Board of Supervisors

Ms. Brabo advised that the Hogan administration in Maryland has indicated that the Harry Nice Bridge will last another 30 years before any improvements are made. Ms. Brabo stated that this news is very concerning to both King George County residents and the residents of Charles County, Maryland.

Ms. Brabo stated that the Nice Bridge is currently being used as an alternative to I-95. Ms. Brabo stated that the increased traffic has resulted in choke points regularly occurring on the bridge. Currently the state of repair is presenting unsafe traffic conditions. There are no bridge shoulders; the truck traffic and regular traffic has increased consistently and provides for daily commuting access for employees at Dahlgren, Patuxent, etc.

Ms. Brabo stated that she was asking that the Commission consider sending a letter to both the Governor of Virginia and the Governor of Maryland asking that consideration is given to making safety repairs to the bridge within the time frame originally scheduled and that the project not be pushed further out before repairs and improvements are made. Ms. Brabo stated that she is requesting the letter of support ask that the Harry Nice Bridge remain a priority project and that the project dates remain on target.

There was discussion from the members in regard to this project being endorsed by the region that could ultimately bump other large projects for the region. There was also discussion on where the funding would come from for the bridge repairs/improvements. After discussion, Mr. Kelly stated that he was not against the writing of the letters to the Governors simply requesting the project remain on target; however, he would not be in support of a letter asking that Virginia be responsible for the Maryland bridge repairs. It was consensus from the Commission that Mr. Ware compile a letter that will be forwarded to both the governors of Maryland & Virginia stating the safety concerns; the requested improvements, etc. of the Harry Nice Bridge and that the Commission requests that the bridge repairs remain a priority and remain on target and this be included within the April agenda packet for review by the members.

d.) Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail – Ms. Ruby Brabo, King George County Board of Supervisors

Ms. Brabo advised the King George Board of Supervisors passed a unanimous resolution at their meeting on the 16th of February, 2016 that supported the Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail and its incorporation into Caledon State Park by the Department of Conservation & Recreation.

Ms. Brabo stated that this includes a 16-mile stretch from the Dahlgren B Gate to the Stafford County line and would become an additional evacuation road if an emergency or national disaster was to come to the region.

Ms. Brabo stated that she was asking that the George Washington Regional Commission forward a letter to the Governor asking that the current MOU be amended and/or vetoed that dictates provisions to Caledon State Park.

Mr. Kelly stated that he personally felt that the Commission needed to be in receipt of the legislation decisions and documents surrounding the request before he would endorse sending correspondence to the Governor. It was consensus from the members that additional information be brought back for further review at the upcoming April meeting.

e.) Vanpool Alliance – Mr. Charles Steigerwald, PRTC

Mr. Steigerwald advised that the National Transit Database (NTD) began in December of 2013. The project is housed by PRTC. Mr. Steigerwald stated that the project collects transit data that earns federal formula funding being returned to a region.

Mr. Steigerwald stated that from December 2013 to December 2014, that 102 net vans were added to the data base – some old vans were deleted; some new vans were added but the overall net gain was 102 new vans and their connecting data were added to the NTD database. Mr. Steigerwald relayed that out of the 102 added, that 65 of these were brand new vanpool start-ups.

Mr. Steigerwald relayed that since the inception of the program that participants have logged in 101 million passenger miles; recorded over 2.1 million individual passenger trips; the program now has approximately 6,100 enrolled users; & that vans participating in this program have reduced single occupancy vehicular miles by 86 million since the program inception began in 2013.

Mr. Steigerwald stated that currently there are 510 vanpools enrolled in the program and the program has continued to demonstrate growth every month since the program was launched in December of 2013. Mr. Steigerwald relayed that this is the first time that quantitative data has been available for the region.

Mr. Steigerwald relayed that vanpool data is compiled from GWRC, NVTC, PRTC, & Other entities and that over 50% of the data is generated from the George Washington Regional Commission, with the counties of Spotsylvania & Stafford being the two largest participants.

Mr. Steigerwald stated that over 1 million passenger trips have been reported and there has been a steady increase in these trips since inception as well. The NTD program now consistently reports over 110,000 passenger trips per month. Most other NTD programs nation-wide utilize only 1-2 vendors; however, the Vanpool Alliance uses approximately 40 vendors.

Mr. Steigerwald relayed that this region will begin receiving an annual funding allocation of at least \$500,000 in FY2018. Mr. Steigerwald stated that the program takes 2 years before benefits are

available and that as NVTC & PRTC provided the local match initially to get the program up and running that it was an agreement in the MOU that for the first year of funding in FY2017 that their local matches would be paid back first. Mr. Steigerwald stated that this is the reason why the FAMPO region will not receive any funding in FY2017.

Mr. Steigerwald stated that based on the current projections, the program will stabilize and produce \$6 million in federal funding annually. The federal funds do require a 20% local match and the program believes this local match can come from the rolling stock expenses of the program participants. Mr. Steierwald stated that the earned funds will be divided based on the mileage that is travelled through each jurisdiction as per the MOU. Mr. Steigerwald stated that the MOU states that the money is split based on the miles accrued from the 3 regions.

Mr. Kelly stated that he feels that FAMPO is not considered an equal partner. He relayed that meetings are held with representatives from both PRTC & NVTC and FAMPO is not included in these meetings. Mr. Kelly stated that until the Haymarket VRE station is in place, that 50% of the VRE ridership comes from this region. Mr. Kelly stated that he does not think the region is fairly represented and for the mileage that is calculated into the generic category of "other" that for the funds applied here only being applicable to PRTC & NVTC is not right. Ms. Utz stated that this was never the intent for the system miles to be excluded from having the extra miles accounted for an equally dispersed to the FAMPO region and this reference is definitely an oversight. Mr. Steigerwald stated that staffs at both entities would review all requests made by letter citing the necessary amendments. Mr. Kelly stated that FAMPO representation needs to be established that ensures that FAMPO's best interests are at the table.

Mr. Kelly requested and received unanimous consensus from the Commission members, that FAMPO/GWRC provide documentation accordingly and compile a letter to be reviewed by the members and forwarded to both PRTC & NVTC requesting membership, participation & and equality to all 3 entities.

f.) Other New Business – None

ADJOURN

The March 21st meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m. The next meeting will be held on April 18, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Timothy Ware, Executive Director
(Draft minutes prepared by JoAnna Roberson)

