

Route 9 Monitoring Committee Meeting Minutes

2/20/2018

An audio recording of this meeting is available at <http://www.wilmapco.org/Route9/>.

Attendees

- James Brunswick, DNREC
- Carrie Casey, New Castle County
- Lauren Devore, DNREC
- Ken Dryden, DCR4EJ, NAACP
- Penny Dryden, DCR4EJ
- Mike Hahn, DeIDOT
- Renae Held, DNREC
- Lee Jarmon, OVGGP Civic Association
- Philip McBride, New Castle County Land Use
- Pastor Louis McDuffy, Eden-Hamilton Park Civic Association
- Patti Miller, Nemours
- Steve Ottinger, Delaware Transit Corporation
- James Parker, Oakmont Civic Association
- Kyron Robinson, ProRank LLC
- Sandra Smithers, New Castle Prevention Coalition
- Bill Swiatek, WILMAPCO
- Jake Thompson, WILMAPCO

Minutes

- **[0:00:50 in recording]** The committee reviewed the previous meeting minutes.
 - Ken Dryden said that some statements were not completed, and he suggested having someone from the County attend the meeting and take minutes.
 - Lee Jarmon asked when the minutes are posted.
 - Bill Swiatek said that we share the minutes at least a week before the meeting by email. Carrie Casey said she would see if the county could support the note-taking, but she is not here yet to report. He asked if Ken Dryden had any specific changes to the minutes.
 - Ken Dryden said no.
 - The committee accepted the minutes.
- **[0:03:10 in recording]** Bill Swiatek gave an update on the Opportunity Zones Program. He said it is an initiative that comes from the federal tax bill. The governors of each state will be able to select Census tracts to designate as opportunity zones. The committee could communicate with the governor's office to suggest that the program would be beneficial to the Route 9 area. The discussion will continue later when Carrie Casey arrives.
 - Pastor McDuffy asked if there is a certain amount of money attached to the program.
 - Bill Swiatek said that the program is designed to take private investors' funding. The benefit to them is that they receive tax benefits on their funds. The benefit

to the community is that businesses and non-profits can use the pooled investor funds to help with growth and redevelopment.

- Penny Dryden asked if the committee could refrain from voting on the program before Carrie Casey is available at the meeting so that the group can ask questions.
 - Bill Swiatek agreed and said that everyone should be informed about the program, and we would only send a letter if everyone in the committee is comfortable with it. As a group, the committee may not take action, but individuals could.
- **[0:06:25 in recording]** Bill Swiatek shared the draft transportation project prioritization. Starting on page 10 in the packet is a list of the 20 projects recommended by the plan. On page 13 is a draft scoring scale, and on page 14 is a list of scoring factors in the prioritization system. He asked the committee if anyone has any thoughts or additions.
 - Ken Dryden asked if DeIDOT had receive any FAST Act funds, which may be used towards some of the listed projects.
 - Bill Swiatek said that FAST Act funds would probably be applicable to the projects.
 - Ken Dryden said that he would like to see which projects would receive funding from various programs, including CMAQ, FAST Act, and others.
 - Bill Swiatek said that there are many different federal funding pools that the projects may be eligible for. He said that the goal of this discussion is to help prioritize the listed projects.
 - Lee Jarmon suggested that committee members contact Bill with thoughts on the project prioritization in order to reduce discussion time during the meeting.
 - Ken Dryden said that while prioritization is important for the residents of the area, it is also important to know about funding and about the structure of the process going forward. He said that he is mainly concerned about the capital transportation program.
 - Patti Miller asked if we are discussing the technical prioritization process, rather than ranking the projects directly.
 - Bill Swiatek said that discussing the creation of an objective prioritization process is the goal, but he would also be open to the possibility of having the committee rank the projects directly if that's what they wanted to do.
 - Patti Miller said that she would be in favor of the objective scoring process rather than subjective opinions in order to avoid bias. She said that she feels that job growth should be weighted more heavily based on discussions at previous meetings, and suggested using more nuanced weighting for the factors, such as 1.5x rather than 2x.
 - Bill Swiatek said that we can take several months to fine-tune the process and get it right. He said that it does not have to be as complicated as DeIDOT's decision lens, and it should be understandable to the general public. He agreed that an objective prioritization system was best.
 - Bill Swiatek asked if there is anything missing from the list of scoring factors. He said that crime prevention was a new factor, and it was given double points because it was a top priority from the community.
 - Kyron Robinson asked if this process was for DeIDOT.
 - Bill Swiatek said that this is for the committee to discuss internally, and a final list could be given to DeIDOT to guide their implementation.

- Patti Miller said she thinks that not all of the scoring factors should be weighted equally.
 - Kyron Robinson said that projects should be weighted based on location. For example, a project in a high crime location should be weighted more heavily in the crime prevention category.
 - Mike Hahn said that we could look at various layers on a map (such as DART transit routes) to help prioritize projects. The committee could then look at the proposed project locations relative to data layers to better understand the factors related to the projects.
 - Bill Swiatek said that DelDOT is looking at this committee to help prioritize the projects.
 - Kyron Robinson said he feels that transportation safety should be the highest priority, followed by crime prevention.
- Bill Swiatek suggested that the committee review the project prioritization after the meeting and contact him with thoughts.
 - Renae Held suggested having a spreadsheet for committee members to provide feedback on the project prioritization.
 - Bill Swiatek said that WILMAPCO will do the technical work of prioritization analysis, with close guidance from the group. He did not want to burden everyone with doing the actual draft scoring, which is sometimes rather technical.
 - Ken Dryden said that in the DelDOT prioritization process, system operating effectiveness was the most important factor, and safety was number two.
 - Sandra Smithers asked if committee members could take the draft project prioritization to community meetings in order to gather more input from the community.
 - Bill Swiatek said that is a good idea.
 - James Parker asked what a road diet is.
 - Bill Swiatek said that a road diet is taking travel lanes and repurposing them for other uses, with the end goal of keeping traffic moving at a slower, safer speed while also promoting walking, biking, and transit use.
- Bill Swiatek said that he will make adjustments based on feedback, and that this will continue to be a draft that will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Kyron Robinson asked if DelDOT has a selection process that will be used after the committee prioritizes the projects.
 - Mike Hahn said that the purpose of this process is to rank projects based on original public feedback so that DelDOT engineers will know how to best proceed on the projects when it is time to implement them.
 - Sandra Smithers said that there are trucking issues like truck parking and truck traffic. She suggested looking at projects based on existing issues and consider each of the areas of impact.
 - Bill Swiatek agreed that a classification/sorting system make sense.
- Penny Dryden asked if each of the projects would be eligible for DelDOT funding.
 - Mike Hahn said that transportation-related projects would be eligible for DelDOT funding, but not land use or air quality projects.
 - Bill Swiatek said that the air quality projects would be eligible for CMAQ funding, such as diesel retrofit projects.

- Carrie Casey said we need to get the best bang for the buck by seeing which projects are eligible for any funding programs.
- Ken Dryden said that DeIDOT's presentation on their project prioritization process explains details about various funding programs. He asked if DeIDOT has received any FAST Act funds for any of their projects.
 - Mike Hahn said that to his knowledge, DeIDOT has not received any FAST Act funds.
- Mike Hahn said that some of the projects could fall under the capital transportation program, but that is so far in the future that DeIDOT cannot know for sure what will be funded. He said that some projects may be eligible for CMAQ funding, and not all may be considered capital transportation investments.
- Sandra Smithers said that it's important to know what is funded and how in order to help prioritize the projects.
- Kyron Robinson asked if it is possible for DeIDOT to identify which of the 20 projects could be eligible for which funding programs.
 - Mike Hahn said that DeIDOT can do that. He said that most projects would fall under the capital improvement program.
 - Kyron Robinson said it would be helpful to have that information.
 - Mike Hahn said that he will work with Bill Swiatek and Tim Snow towards that.
- Ken Dryden asked for which projects the federal highway administration has dedicated funds, and which projects fall under the capital transportation program or other funding programs.
 - Mike Hahn said that is dependent on whether there is a new federal transportation bill in the next couple of years. He said that most of the projects would be 80% federally funded.
- Ken Dryden asked if projects with dedicated FHWA funds will have higher priority than projects with other funding sources.
 - Mike Hahn said that the federal government gives DeIDOT a certain amount of funds annually, and it is up to the state to determine how to use those funds.
- Ken Dryden said that DeIDOT's project prioritization process explains how projects would be funded from various sources.
 - Sandra Smithers said that FHWA funds are dedicated towards state projects once they are allocated.
 - Mike Hahn said that each fiscal year, DeIDOT might have a certain amount of money that can be spent on CMAQ projects.
- Kyron Robinson asked if after the committee ranks the projects, ultimately DeIDOT will be deciding the prioritization of the projects.
 - Mike Hahn said that that is true, as there might be other factors that would have to be considered, such as environmental factors.
- Sandra Smithers asked if DeIDOT makes the final determination.
 - Mike Hahn said that is an overall effort and that DeIDOT is not dictating the process. He said that ideally, it should be a collaborative effort.
- Sandra Smithers asked if there is a committee or board at DeIDOT that makes the final determination.
 - Mike Hahn said that DeIDOT's secretary and deputy secretary will make the final decision based on public feedback.
 - Sandra Smithers said that the public has an influence by contacting state officials.

- Bill Swiatek said that DelDOT also uses a technical scoring process and does not just make a final decision without data.
 - Bill Swiatek said that committee members should email him feedback on the project prioritization process, and there will be further discussion at a future meeting.
- Carrie Casey said that she does not have an update on having someone from the County do the notes, but she will look into it again.
 - Kyron Robinson asked if the audio recording could be uploaded and shared with the committee.
 - Bill Swiatek said that it is a good idea, and we will look into sharing the audio file.
- **[1:11:10 in recording]** Carrie Casey shared the Opportunity Zones Program. The program offers long-term investment funding for low- to moderate-income Census tracts. There are 80 eligible Census tracts in the state. The governor can select up to 25 Census tracts for the program. This could be a positive opportunity for projects in the Route 9 area. The entire Route 9 corridor is eligible. She said that she will share the map of eligible Census tracts in the area.
 - Sandra Smithers asked if the governor will make a determination, then submit an application to the treasury department.
 - Carrie Casey said that governors have until March 22nd to submit their Opportunity Zone designation, or request a 30-day extension.
 - Ken Dryden said that the community needs to see some return for what the community has done for Governor Carney. He said that the community is in need of opportunities, but the community has not received the opportunities it needs.
 - Mike Hahn asked if there is criteria for the governor to establish which 25 Census tracts should be selected.
 - Carrie Casey said that the governor asked for input on the 25 Census tracts.
 - Sandra Smithers said she wants to know what kind of investments would result from the Opportunity Zones program.
 - Carrie Casey said that the idea is to incentivize private investment. She said that a hometown overlay can help determine what investments would be made.
 - Mike Hahn asked if the governor needs a list by Friday (February 23).
 - Carrie Casey said that that is correct. She said that she received information about the program very recently and regrets that there is limited time to make a decision on the Census tracts that would be designated for the program.
 - Ken Dryden said that we would need to know more about the program in order to know for sure if it will benefit the community.
 - Bill Swiatek said that at a minimum, we could share an email stating what the governor said regarding the program. This was already shared with permission to Penny Dryden.
 - Steve Ottinger said that because the area is targeted for redevelopment in the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan, it is likely that the governor would designate the area for the program.
 - Carrie Casey suggested inviting Albert Shields to the next meeting to talk about the program.
 - Bill Swiatek said that he would email him to invite him to the next meeting. He said that he will also send links about the program to the committee.
- **[1:32:40 in recording]** Kyron Robinson shared an update on the on-the-job training (OJT) program subcommittee. The subcommittee is working to help generate a local OJT program for the Route 9 corridor. The goal is to get local residents training and develop skills. He said that it was difficult to draft contract language and that a better approach would be for this committee

to identify program parameters. DeIDOT has an existing OJT program, and there is no mechanism requiring prime contractors to hire locally. The goal of this program is to require prime contractors to hire locally. He said that he will talk to Ramon Ceballos, the DBE program manager, for guidance in developing program parameters and bring them back to the committee.

- Bill Swiatek said that when that funding becomes active in the 2020s, it will be a benefit to have Ramon Ceballos on our side.
- Kyron Robinson told the committee that in the meantime, if anyone could find examples of existing state DOT OJT programs, that would be helpful.
- Kyron Robinson said that he envisions using the Route 9 projects as a seed into the OJT program. If DeIDOT could incentivize companies to hire local residents, then bring them into the OJT program, they could possibly continue working on other DeIDOT projects with that company.
 - Mike Hahn said Ramon Ceballos will probably suggest speaking to the Delaware Contractors Association.
- Carrie Casey said OJT programs have specific requirements that contractors employ people from the area.
 - Kyron Robinson said that contractors, not DeIDOT, are providing the training. As part of the OJT program, DeIDOT will provide funding per hour for training.
- **[1:42:00 in recording]** Kyron Robinson gave an update on the hometown overlay discussion.
 - He asked if the intrinsic purpose of the hometown overlay was to preserve neighborhoods and villages as they were originally built.
 - Phil McBride said that when the hometown overlay program was originally implemented, it was intended for historic villages. He said that it is possible to make it work for other areas, such as the Route 9 area. The County has not implemented a hometown overlay for an area such as this. Changes may need to be made to the code in order to implement it here.
 - Penny Dryden asked for clarification if the hometown overlay applies to land or public spaces. Committee members said it applies to everything. She asked what the impact would be on homeowners after improvements are made in the area. She spoke of stronger enforcement of codes and higher taxes.
 - Bill Swiatek said that as part of the plan for the area surrounding the library, there was a recommendation for mixed-income housing. The goal of the plan is not to push people out who are not willing to go.
 - Kyron Robinson said that the hometown overlay should be a big help in preventing that from happening.
 - Bill Swiatek said that another option is the neighborhood preservation district.
 - Phil McBride said that the main difference is that the hometown overlay is guided by a committee while a neighborhood preservation district has set guidelines for development.
 - Kyron Robinson asked if there was any money set aside to clean up Hamilton Park and Eden Park.
 - James Brunswick said that there has been an ongoing, \$4 million project to clean up arsenic in Hamilton Park and Eden Park. He said that the project originated from a mapping error that incorrectly identified a tannery in the area. When testing was done, high arsenic levels were found in the area.

- **[1:56:15 in recording]** Bill Swiatek asked if there is any other business to discuss.
 - Mike Hahn asked if there is anything happening at the hotel location near the I-295 interchange. He said that businesses at the location are not open.
 - Carrie Casey suggested by the next meeting, the committee should find out if redevelopment is happening in the area.
 - Carrie Casey said that she will do some research on examples of relocation in other communities in Delaware. She said to let her know if anyone is interested in working with her.
- **[2:03:15 in recording]** The next meeting will be on March 20 at 4:30 pm, tentatively at the Garfield Park Recreation Center.