

MEETING MINUTES

Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Freight Roundtable (FRT)

3:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 16, 2016
Des Moines Area MPO Large Conference Room

The MPO Freight Roundtable (FRT) held a meeting at 3:00 p.m., on November 16, 2016, at the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Burnham Conference Room. Before the meeting, the MPO staff sent agenda packets to the MPO FRT representatives and posted the agenda at the MPO office on November 16, 2016.

Representatives Present:

Clifford Leonard, Citizen
Greg Dickinson, Merchants Distribution
Paul Kirpes, Merchants Distribution
Amanda Martin, Iowa Department of Transportation
Cheryl Rangel, Iowa Interstate Railroad
Ryan Carroll, Greater Des Moines Partnership
Ted Brackett, Neuman Brothers
Jack Sawyer, Des Moines Transportation Co
John Wahlert, Bridgestone

Staff Present:

R. Todd Ashby, Executive Director
Dylan Mullenix, Assistant Executive Director
Zach Young, Senior Transportation Planner
Andrew Collings, Associate Transportation Planner

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the November 16, 2016, meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

2. Welcome and Introductions

The group introduced themselves to one another.

3. Approval of Agenda

No issues were reported with the November 16, 2016 agenda. Item #7 was moved to before Item #5.

4. Approval of Minutes

No issues were reported with the July 20, 2016 meeting minutes.

5. Shipping Container Coordination

Representatives from CyBIZ lab were there present on the progress to date on the container project website.

6. Des Moines Rail Port Transload Facility Support Letter

Staff and the Chair provided the roundtable with an updated status of the Des Moines Rail Port Transload Facility and presented a proposed support letter from the roundtable to the City of Des Moines in support of the Transload Facility. Members were also asked to submit letters of support as well. Discussion ensued. A prepared statement was made and a copy is available at the end of the meeting minutes.

The roundtable approved an amended support letter to submit to the City of Des Moines. The change to the staff presented letter was to remove the sentence "And the best operator was identified to run the facility".

7. Des Moines Rail Port Transload Facility Fastlane Grant Application

Staff and the Chair provided the roundtable with a proposed letter of support from the Roundtable for the proposed Transload Facility Fastlane Grant Application. Discussion ensued.

The roundtable approved a letter of support for the Fastlane Grant Application.

8. Critical Urban Freight Corridors

Staff provided a review of the process to date by the MPO to select Critical Urban Freight Corridors within the Des Moines Urban Area. Staff asked for input from roundtable members.

9. Veterans Parkway

Staff provided an update on the Veterans Parkway project.

10. Legislative Agenda

Staff provided an update on the MPO's Legislative Agenda.

11. Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 16, 3:00 p.m.

12. Adjournment

The FRT meeting was adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

Statement Made by Greg Dickinson

I have prepared a statement to make to this group regarding Agenda Item 5. I ask you to hear me out to the end of my statement, and in exchange for you listening to me to the end, I promise not to make it a filibuster.

I represent one of the finalists for the Des Moines Railport project. We began with a letter of interest in 2013, followed through with submitting a Request for Qualifications (which was reviewed and accepted), and completed the Request for Proposal when invited to do so. We were selected for an interview after all of these submittals, and completed this process. At no time were we ever categorized as not meeting the project's requirements.

Imagine my shock when the first "notice" of not meeting the requirements came in the form of an agenda item for the MPO Freight Roundtable. I have not received any notice from the city, which I believe would have been prudent, if not in fact keeping with due process. In what respects have I failed to meet the requirements?

Now imagine my further amazement when the Freight Roundtable agenda also contains a letter of support for the other finalist rejected by the city. Do not let your lack of due diligence lead to a gross mistake in judgment. Just as I do not know the exact reason for my rejection, I do not know the specific reason the city rejected the other finalist. I can only speculate from these facts available from public records.

In 2015, the railcar cleaning service affiliated with the Nebraska transload site experienced a tank car explosion which took 2 lives and injured another. OSHA issued the largest safety violation fine ever in the state of Nebraska (nearly \$1M) as the result of its investigation (and as the result of no safety corrections from a previous investigation in 2013). Further, just recently, the EPA has issued an imminent endangerment citation at the same site for failure to properly handle and dispose of the hazardous waste generated there.

In addition, public records show numerous federal and state tax liens filed against the other finalist, as well as several court judgments. I will state that Merchants' record in all respects is clear.

The other finalist is not the type of corporate citizen I would want to welcome into our community, and I would hope that you investigate for yourself before doing so.

I am also disappointed that the FRT letter states "the trans-loading feature is currently missing in Central Iowa" So what is transloading? The consultants defined it this way: "Transloading is a combination of marrying three disparate industries and their operational characteristics: trucking, warehousing (or storage) and rail." Merchants definitely meets this definition in Central Iowa. In fact our operations here year to date have diverted 1400 long haul truckloads from our nation's highways through rail, storage, and short haul trucking.

So what is the bottom line? As I see it, there are a few options: 1) Do nothing; 2) Proceed as proposed in the agenda; or 3) Given the information I have disclosed and the new understanding of Merchants' qualification, endorse Merchants to the City to be the Railport Developer and Operator.