

North Fort-Worth Alliance
Minutes, July 21, 2012

President Rusty Fuller was on vacation, so Vice- President, Jerry Betts, opened the meeting at 10:05.

Jerry introduced our 2 speakers for the day, Joel McElhany, Senior Landscape Architect with the FW Parks & Community Services, and Vic Suhm, Executive Director of the Tarrant Regional Transportation Coalition.

If there is time following the speakers, Jerry said he would like to talk about suggestions for speakers at future meetings (he will also be happy to take suggestions via email or facebook). Upcoming speakers will include Hillwood Development talking about the Town Center, a new office building, and the FAA building. We may also offer a candidates forum before the election in Nov. Please send any other speaker request/suggestions you have to Jerry.

Announcements:

Reminder – no meeting in August

Run off elections, July 31st – GO VOTE!

First speaker was Joel McElhany, Fort Worth Parks and Community Services.

A new park is being planned in the NFWA area. Property was purchased south of 287 on the west side of Blue Mound Road (it has a 25 acre lake.) The Lockridge family owned it – it has 245 acres, and was purchased in June 2011 to serve as community park.

At the same time the property was purchased, the City applied for a grant of \$1 mil from Tx Parks & Wildlife – it's a 50/50 match, and purchase cost went to the match.

Currently there are 2 driveways into the property and one single family home which will be used as a facility for meetings, banquets, classes, etc. The lake is spring fed and has substantial water, and the property has rolling meadows, tress, and flat area mix. A “Community” park is defined as 200+ acres, with hiking trails, sports facilities, etc. The lake will have a boat launch, and fishing pier.

The grant will fund:

- 1) reconstruction of a damn on the lake (half)
- 2) first phase development, including driveways/access roads; parking lot; hard/soft surface trails; practice field area (non lighted, non irrigated); Fishing pier/launch

Future plans:

- Need public involvement in figuring out what the park should be
- Will develop master plan with public meetings for input

Schedule:

- Consultant to do plan contracted in Sept.
- First master plan – October
- Design phase for phase 1 – Oct 13 complete
- Start construction Dec 2013 to Sept 2014 Open date

The City is looking at a bonding program for 2014 – which should be on our radar for public meetings. The Parks Dept. has listed their needs and put \$3 mil for this park in the bond request, to build out the master plan – if approved, we could see build out in 2014-2015 (Master plan won't sit on the shelf for 20 yrs)

The name of the Park will be “Northwest Community Park”.

The next speaker was Vic Suhm, with the Tarrant Regional Transportation Coalition

Vic explained that the TRTC provides the BIG picture perspective on transportation in Tarrant County. They try to help find resources to fund regional transportation projects. He says we are not currently achieving the basic goal of transportation – which is to move people and goods efficiently.

Current condition:

- Country in 1999 ranked 7th in quality of infrastructure. In 2010 it dropped to 30th (world wide)
- Need to invest \$225 billion annually over next 60 yrs nationally
- Texas 2030 committee did similar study – TX needs to invest \$215 billion over 20 yrs (3 times more than being invested now)
- If we continue what we're doing now – by 2025, 21% of roads will be in “good” or better condition (today – 80% of roads are in “good” or better condition)
- Traffic congestion causing problems
- Why? - We live in high growth region

Infrastructure is declining because:

- It requires a greater percentage of the budget to maintain the system each year
- Heavy truck traffic increasing – commercial Truck travel doubled over past 2 decades (pavement deteriorates faster under truck travel)
- GDP – trade was 13% in 1990, 20% in 2000 – more heavy trucks
- Transportation funded in dedicated revenue (gas tax, trans. funding) – is not enough to sustain current roads, let alone, fund future expansion.
- Two funding needs – maintenance and debt service: leaves nothing for expansion
- Costs increase continuously
- Next 20 yrs – vehicle miles traveled will increase 33% (gas tax revenue will decrease 22%)
- Per vehicle gas tax declining (more fuel efficient cars & use of public transportation)

- Vehicle registration fees – have not been raised in 20 yrs
- TX ranks 43rd out of 50 in level of transportation fees paid
- As a State, TX invests less in transportation as a part of the state budget than other states.

Challenges:

- Current political environment – driven by Fed government debt (high mis-trust of government)
- Compounded by hyper partisanship
- A lot of highway construction going on right now in our region – so perception is that transportation funding must be good
- Public's priority is not on transportation in general
- Need to inform and educate public so they understand that it takes resources
- Mantra for lower taxes and smaller government – not supportive of increasing transportation funding
- Typical driver pays 2.5 Cents per mile per month to drive on TX highways (except toll roads)
- US gas tax rate 38.4 cents (fed/st), 10% of price of product (it is much higher in other countries)

Consequences of not investing more

- Declining quality of infrastructure lowers the ability to compete economically with other States, or countries
- Quality of life – we travel less
- Condition of roadways will deteriorate – safety, comfort issues
- Delivery cost of goods will increase – takes longer, etc.
- Waste more gas (stop & go traffic increases cost of gas by \$1.65/gal)
- Health – ozone levels from vehicle emissions idling on roadways in traffic
- Economic growth will decline – businesses will choose to expand in areas w/good transportation
- As motorists, we will pay more individually
- Paying more in taxes & fees will lower the cost of using the vehicle year to year (maintenance costs)

What to do?

- Become informed
- Become involved
- Communicate w/ elected officials – be specific
- You get what you pay for
- We have to be careful about carrying less government, lower taxes idea to the extreme.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30.