

FINAL

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
I-295/I-76/Rte 42 Interchange Reconstruction
Seventh Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
June 9, 2005 6pm - 8pm
Bellmawr Courtroom**

MEETING MINUTES SUMMARY

CAC Meeting Attendees

Diane Garcia (Mt. Ephraim resident)
Richard Middleton (Bellmawr Baseball, Inc.)
Robert Stokes (Mt. Ephraim Resident)
Robert Guerrieri (Diocese of Camden – Dept. of Real Estate)
Florence Korostynski (Bellmawr Senior Citizen Association)
Frank Meloni (Bellmawr Senior Citizen Association)
Michael Gaglianone (Mt. Ephraim resident)
Bernie Tetreault (Chamber of Commerce – Southern NJ)
Joseph Bloomer (Bellmawr resident)
Patricia Levins (Bellmawr Park resident)

Project Team Attendees

Jody Barankin (NJDOT)
Nick Caiazza, (NJ DOT)
Craig Johnson (Dewberry)
Ileana Ivanciu (Dewberry)
Patricia Saulino (Dewberry)

Sub-Consultant Attendees

Larry Smith (DredsnrRobin)

SUMMARY

Jody Barankin of NJDOT opened the meeting with all attendees introducing themselves and stating their respective affiliations. Jody went on to give a brief overview of the status of the Direct Connection Project and explained that the project had been designated as “hyperbuild”. Jody also discussed the timeframe for preferred alternative selection, project design and construction which is currently scheduled for completion in 2012.

Jody told the CAC group that we had spoken to Bellmawr Park residents and various property owners to advise them of the potential impacts to their property. At the present time, there are five alternatives in the environmental discipline process. A preferred alternative is scheduled to be selected in the summer of 2006. Jody then turned the meeting over to Craig Johnson of the Project Team.

- ❖ Craig did a thorough review of the five short listed alternatives (D, D-1, G-2, H-1 and K) using a Power Point presentation to illustrate the various alignments for proposed road work as well as impacted properties within the project limits for the five alternatives.
- ❖ Ileana Ivanciu then provided the group with a slide presentation of the Technical Environmental Studies (TES) status with explanatory narrative for each of the following disciplines:
 - Historic Architecture
 - Archaeology
 - Potential On-Site Wetlands Mitigation
 - Threatened & Endangered Species
 - Stormwater Management
 - Socioeconomics
 - Photo simulations of existing roadway conditions vs. proposed roadway improvements within the project limits
 - Air Quality
 - Noise Analysis
 - Hazardous Waste
- ❖ Craig ended the official presentation by reviewing the timeline of the various meetings and activities through the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) remaining in the Project Schedule.

At this point, the meeting was opened to group comments:

Diane Garcia, a resident of Mt. Ephraim lives in the vicinity of Al-Jo's curve and inquired about the process for removal of wetlands (whether legal or illegal). Nick Caiazza explained that we would meet with the partnering agencies of whom New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is one to obtain a coastal permit. One of NJDEP's policies is that we provide access to a waterway if possible. Nick feels it would be a good plan to provide a recreational area with public access and he reiterated that we are soliciting people's opinions.

Diane Garcia feels that providing an open area for recreation may be dangerous and may cause an increase in crime rate in the area. Additionally, Diane feels that open space without oversight is not necessarily a good thing.

The issue arose regarding the building of either a mulch walking path, bike path or fishing pier in the wetlands area contiguous to Al-Jo's curve. Bob Stokes doesn't feel there is much land that is usable certainly not habitable space for recreational purposes. He feels a fishing pier might work but the land is marshy as a result of tide changes and rainfall. Nick said any activity in this area will depend upon not only the practicality but also what works and makes sense.

Bob Stokes, who resides on Jefferson Avenue in Mt. Ephraim said that in and around his home he has seen a red-headed woodpecker, a snapping turtle and an owl. Ileana replied that according to our sub consultants who performed the environmental discipline investigations on endangered species, there were no sightings in areas that Dewberry was originally told there were.

Frank Meloni told the group that he does not want noise walls. Nick agreed that you either love them or hate them depending on your particular situation. Craig pointed out that the towns will need to pass a resolution that will approve noise walls as well as determine the numbers of noise walls allowed.

Bob Guerrieri of Camden Diocese asked if noise walls are made of concrete only or if there is an absorption material that can be manufactured into them to further reduce the sound impact. Nick said there is such a material. Nick said we will try to do architectural treatments as well as landscaping to make the concrete noise walls more aesthetically pleasing. Bob requested copies of the photo simulations near New St. Mary's Cemetery and they will be provided to him.

Bob Stokes inquired about the traffic and road closures during construction and Craig responded that we will have to maintain the roads during construction. However, traffic will generally slow down within a construction zone and there will be some impacts with which to deal.

Jody said we will be working with NJ Transit and other agencies to provide alternate ways to cope with the added congestion including additional bus stops to encourage people to take the bus during construction hopefully minimizing the congestion that will be caused by construction.

Diane Garcia asked about the potential flooding impact to Little Timber Creek during construction and Craig said the new roadway drainage will be collected in a closed drainage system. Craig said that our project will not increase the flooding in the Little Timber Creek area as there are currently existing flood conditions. Nick added that as we know the location of the flood plain, we have a good handle on the conditions.

Mike Gaglianone asked if Alternatives D1 and H1 have been eliminated and Jody responded they have not been eliminated from consideration. We must address each and every issue that exists for each of the five alternatives. According to federal and state regulations, we cannot eliminate any of the alternatives until the Initial Preferred Alternative (IPA) is selected at the completion of the investigations of the environmental disciplines. Jody went on to say that all alternatives are treated equally and that an IPA will emerge from the process we described. Everyone must remember that we have a choice to do nothing – to consider no alternatives.

Jody explained to the group that the project "Decision Matrix" will be updated with additional information in order to make a quantified decision on which alternative to advance to an IPA. Ileana added that the matrix will be updated to reflect current activities and will provide precise, information on all the alternatives.

Bob Stokes and Diane Garcia expressed surprise that Al-Jo's curve still remained in two of the alternatives. It was their understanding that Al-Jo's curve would be eliminated from any alternative consideration.

Jody and Ileana explained that the project team has previously met with the public groups such as the CAC, PIC; partnering agencies such as FHWA, USACOE, DEP, DVRPC etc.; local officials, etc. At the end of this process, the five alternatives that exist today were selected for further investigation

Craig explained that with the new alignments, I-295 southbound traffic on Al-Jo's curve would be diverted to the through movement thus resulting in much less traffic than exists today as Al-Jo's curve will only remain as a ramp.

Jody told the group that there are a lot of ways in which their opinion could make a difference in this project.

Jody asked the group when they felt we should meet again. The project team suggested we wait until after the FHWA review and when details on the technical studies are available which will provide more information. CAC members agreed that having additional information to share with them would be the right time for the next meeting which will probably be sometime in January or February, 2006.

Jody reminded the group to call Patricia Saulino at 856 802 0843 X 128 if they had any questions or needed to get in touch with anyone on the project team.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8 pm.

We believe the foregoing record to be an accurate summary of the meeting and related decisions. We would appreciate notification of exceptions or corrections to these Minutes within five (5) working days of receipt. Without notification, we will consider these Minutes to be a record of fact.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Saulino
Dewberry- Goodkind, Inc.