

TRANSIT ONE COALITION
MEETING
Florida Today Conference Room
Tuesday, March 8, 2016
3:00 p.m.

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. General overview of transit advocacy
 - a. Update from SCAT
 - b. Community Partnerships
3. Mission Statement
4. Forming Committees – Break-out Sessions for:
 - a. By-Laws
 - b. Cities Liaison – Rocky Randalls
5. Elect Officers / Secretary / Treasurer
6. Other

TRANSIT ONE COALITION MEETING

Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2016

Florida Today

1 Gannett Plaza

Melbourne

Present:

Steve Atlas
LaChant Barnett
Tom Bartosek
Bonnie Campion
Lisa Frazier
Jeanine Kainer
Bob Kamm
Bonnie King
Jim Liesenfelt
Brendan McMillin
Sandra Mickey
Cathy Musselman
Patrick O'Neill
John Pavlakos
Rocky Randels
Eva Rey
Debbie Thomas
Venetta Valdengo
Vince Wang
Dona Wayman
Tricia Whitton
Jeanine Kainer
Sandy Daughtry

Absent:

Matt Ashley
Jim Barfield
Courtney Barker
Alix Bernard
Almetia Britton
Holly Carver
Bruce Chesson
Sara Ann Condins
John Craig
William Crane
Tom DiBerardino
Bob Gabordi
Stu Glass
Karen Heird
Karen Henderson
Linda Howard
Conroy Jacobs
C J Johnson
Wendy Ellis
Laura Koursaris
Alison Lamkay
Pete Mack
Michelle Martindale
Mike McNees
Courtney Reynolds
Linda Seals
Erin Sterk
Bob Torres
Ed Wegerif
Felicia Wilson

The meeting began at 3:04 p.m. as Venetta Valdengo welcomed everyone and gave a quick recap of the earlier "Business of Transit" Kick-off that took place on January 14, 2016. Ms. Valdengo has agreed to work with this coalition and gave members a brief history of her background with Orange County, telling about how she watched the Lynx Bus System grow with bike shares and the rail system. Venetta related her recent observations of the Orange County Transit Rail System on Lake Mary Blvd. where the rail station was busy with buses going in and out picking up people off of the rail, as well as bikes coming on and off of the trail system. Some riders were being picked up by cars or arriving in cars to board the buses. She related how this transformation happened within a four year period and that it can happen here quickly as well!

Introductions ensued as Jim Liesenfelt, Director of Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT), recounted that this day has been the worst day he has experienced for keeping buses on time since he has been at SCAT since 1991 (he has been Director since 1997). In 1991 they carried about 113K people on fixed routes, in 2007 they expanded to evenings and weekends and topped 1 million passenger trips, and this past year there were at 2.374 million passenger trips.

Jim summarized that due to construction on Nasa Blvd. (affecting 4 routes); W bound Nasa (1 route); Wickham Road (2 routes); Eastern Florida State College entrance (reduced from 4 lanes to 2 lanes); Viera Blvd. construction and an I-95 accident – SCAT was unable to get customers to their destinations on time today and were 45 to 50 minutes late. They are now doing better at 3 p.m. They have 19 routes, 28 to 29 peak buses that are spread out 60 miles over the county. Jim went on to explain about headways and connections, relating that this was their worst day in 15 years as far as keeping busses on time. SCAT has been unable to grow to meet current demands due to budget constraints.

With the needs growing, no gas tax, problems with roads, and less than 20% local funding in its operating budget - this Transit One Coalition group is really about transportation advocacy to explore what can be done as a community, and to find ways to get others to “buy-in” in order to locate funds for transit. They need to look at options, speak to the Tourism Board in May to help with airport-to-port transportation, and to help others understand that transit is important for tourism, cities, large employers buying-in for their work force.

Members were encouraged to look at the great information that is available and to check the Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization website (SCTPO.org). SCTPO is a critical player and there is also a Sarasota study on the Space Coast TPO site that is very informative (also called SCAT).

Those present continued introducing themselves as follows:

Dona Wayman detailed that she is contracted by SCAT, as the Customer Care Specialist for the Vanpool Program. They have services going back and forth from the Kennedy Space Center (20 vehicles), along with some to the V A Clinic, and an agency program with 40 ADA equipped vehicles for some senior programs and others. Dona is very transit oriented. She has been with the Vanpool Program for 28 years and prior to that she was a Space Coast Area Transit bus driver, who also worked in dispatch.

Brendon McMillian, newly elected City Council Member in Cape Canaveral, and gave his professional background which included a maritime related academy and mostly marine transportation. He is a currently a harbor pilot in Port Canaveral and is also focused on inter-modalism.

Rocky Randels, previous Mayor of Cape Canaveral, spoke about his desire to develop a common vision for Transit. He was on the Local Coordinating Board for two years and related that the greatest problem is obtaining the needed additional funding.

Pat O’Neal, Deputy Mayor of the City of Rockledge and Vice Chair of Transportation Planning Organization, is with the Space Coast League of Cities. He currently serves as treasurer on the Federal Action Strike Team and goes to Washington to lobby, as well as being a member of the Space Coast Advocacy Team, going to Tallahassee to lobby. Deputy Mayor O’Neal also takes every opportunity to lobby with elected local officials. He retired here in Brevard County as a District Lieutenant with the Florida Highway Patrol.

Tricia Whitton, Project Manager from Tindale Oliver, a general planning consultant for Space Coast Area Transit, commented that she had the opportunity to work on SCAT’s last transit development plan, along with their major update and their transportation disadvantaged service plan.

LaChant Barnett, Senior Project Manager from Tindale Oliver, shared that she has accomplished quite a few of SCAT's plans and federal compliance requirements, and has been able to work with the community and individuals that SCAT serves. She has had the pleasure of working with Rocky as well.

Vince Wang, Transit Planner at River to Sea TPO in Volusia County introduced himself, saying they haven't done any work here in Brevard, but he is here to learn, change, and experience with the group. Mr. Wang looks forward to collaborating in the future if any as opportunities are presented.

Sandy Daughtry, Venetta Valdengo's assistant was present to record and take meeting minutes.

Debbie Thomas, City Council Member from the City of Melbourne and member of the Airport Board, remarked that she is enjoying being an elected official and getting out to see what the needs are for the city and for Brevard County.

Steve Atlas, a writer with a specialty of doing public transportation advocacy marketing – has a column on the internet called Car Free Journey where every month he spotlights a different place that you can visit without driving. In 2013, Jim and his staff did an article about how people can visit Cocoa Beach without having to drive. Mr. Atlas also talked about livable communities and his article about Baltimore County Maryland Transit Administration off peak service being subsidized by companies. Before they had the light rail system In Tempe, AZ, they had mini-vans in neighborhoods to pick up people and take them to the bus stop – increasing mobility for a lot of transit users. These are some of the types of things that he hopes he can help with.

Sandie Mickie, Communication Specialist from Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) was present with Bob Kamm, Director of TPO. They are responsible for long range planning, planning and programming for the state and federal transportation dollars and not just for highways. The TPO is a multi-modal agency including ports, airports, rail, highway, seaport, and the spaceport. Bob Kamm related that at some point this group will need to touch on where the money comes from and some of the basic ground rules, as it is not simple and it is worth understanding in order for coalition members to be more productive.

Venetta Valdengo specified that, of those modes, this group will be focusing primarily on transit and connecting it with pedestrians, bicycles, other buses and possibly with vanpools, as well as connecting to the airport. Bob Kamm emphasized that there must be safe and convenient bus stops to connect with pedestrians – they must look at the whole trip. Venetta added that there are 850 bus stops, and that there are only 60 with shelters.

Kathy Musselman, Executive Director for Greater Titusville Renaissance, a non-profit in North Brevard County that focuses on the redevelopment of North Brevard, stated that an important issue for them is public transportation and covered bus stops. She wanted to be a part of this coalition to check out partnership and see how their community can play a part.

Lisa Frazier from MIRA advised that Merritt Island is the largest designated unincorporated area in Brevard County. MIRA covers 25% of the island and has 40 bus stops and 1 transfer at the mall. They are dedicated to helping SCAT fund bus shelters in the next two years and would like to get most of the 40 stops covered.

Tom Bartosek, Visitor Information and Sales Manager for Space Coast Office of Tourism, related that they are funded by Local Option Tourism Tax to promote Brevard as a tourism designation.

Bonnie King, was also present from the Office of Tourism.

John Pavlakos, spoke about his company, Response Digital Media, and how he works with Wendy Ellis of Space Coast Advertising who produces the website and commercials for SCAT.

Bonnie Campion works with Space Coast Advertising and Wendy Ellis. Bonnie, who formerly worked for Florida Today, has had the opportunity to work with SCAT thru Wendy for many years, including being involved with designing the maps that are currently out.

Jeanine Kainer, Officer of Space Coast Melbourne Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind, revealed that there are 5,000 blind people in Brevard County. Their desire is for the blind to be more mobile and they will do anything that they can, including lobbying, in order to get funding for Paratransit.

Venetta Valdengo added that they should seek a Veterans Representative to join the coalition.

Eva Rey, Director of Community Management for the Viera Co. and President of the Viera Transportation Management Association, an organization created to educate and find alternative transportation modes and getting people off the roadways was present. She related that they also have a park and ride lot. Ms. Rey recently moved to Brevard County from the Sarasota County Area and she is very passionate about transportation. Eva hopes to remain and contribute to the group.

Continuing on, two draft mission statements were used as a starting point to develop the following mission statement: "The mission of Transit One is to expand and strengthen public transportation and mobility options in Brevard County." The group decided they would meet monthly and will formulate a vision statement during the April meeting. It was thought that having By-Laws and officers would be a good idea. The officers can head up sub-committees of this group if needed.

This group will not be under Brevard County Government or any one agency – the idea is to bring together key players and community support - all being advocates to all groups. Similar to Friends of Libraries or Friends of the Animal Shelters – this group will support Space Coast Area Transit. The following people volunteered for the positions listed:

Chairman - Venetta Valdengo

Secretary – Eva Rey

Board Member – Bonnie King / Tom Bartosek - Alternate

Board Member - Cathy Musselman

Board Member - Rocky Randels

Board Member - Jeanine Kainer

Technical Advisor - Jim Liesenfelt

It was noted that this smaller board member group may meet more often.

The goals of the Transit One Coalition were determined to be the following:

FINDING KEY PARTNERS

The main issues:

- Handicapped accessibility – Brail?
- FUNDING
- Shorter headway
- Technology for customers

- Basics of funding
- Surveys
- Review summary of existing routes by community
- Bus shelters

The 5 top bus uses:

- 1) Home to work
- 2) Work to home
- 3) Home to social
- 4) Home to shopping
- 5) Work to work

The group went on to talk about how far people have to walk to get to the bus and their destination, the potential of bike share program, transporting vets, disabled, special needs and tourists for Fields of Dreams and Promise Brevard, and how much there is to talk about to improve the community.

Jim Liesenfelt related the need for local operating funding and other topics touched upon included: the City of Melbourne providing for three routes in Melbourne, the Cape Canaveral bus riders going to and from hotel to work and back, the trolley buses, checking with Harris, Rockwell and other large companies with regard to their # of employees riding the buses, and vanpooling.

Jim also reported that they will be accomplishing their next transit development 10 year plan, including a survey of the passengers and a portion that will include talking with stakeholders. They need shorter headways, technology for riders, and the basics of funding. The new survey should be complete by the end of year and will help to determine who the riders are, whether seniors, welfare to work, medical trips, or others. Making connections is the most important thing for people going from work to work and for high school riders. There doesn't seem to be a typical rider.

Venetta suggested that members should go see the Space Coast Area Transit site. Bob Kamm emphasized the importance of looking at the economic benefit that Transit Services brings to the community, saying "SCAT is essential!"

Debbie Thomas, City of Melbourne Council Member commented that lots of people are coming from large cities and are used to using the bus service. They are looking for it.

Jim Liesenfelt will bring Route maps, a summary of stops, and ADA accessibility information. He will also bring recommendations from staff identifying where they are lacking stops, and recommendations from SCAT. He will bring the Citizen's Academy information (SCAT 101 & Funding 101) to the next meeting.

Rocky Randels affirmed that the appearance of bus shelters is important, saying that the City of Cape Canaveral will be the first city to have covered shelters for every stop. They get people to adopt the shelters to clean them.

Conversation ensued pertaining to meeting monthly, and dates and locations for the next meeting. Some suggestions for meeting locations included Career Source or the City of Rockledge Council Chambers and it was decided the 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. time-frame is good. A Doodle Pole will be sent out to determine the best date for everyone.

Members were encouraged to look at transportation advocates that are out there. The meeting ended at 4:33 p.m.