

CONNECT TRANSIT
Minutes of PUBLIC HEARING
BLOOMINGTON CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS
Revised Route Restructure
Public Hearing for Service Changes Effective August 2013

Public Hearing #2

Date: Thursday, July 30, 2013
Time: 4:30 pm
Location: Bloomington City Hall, Council Chambers
109 East Olive Street
Bloomington, IL 61701

Public Present

Janet Trotter, Lincoln Towers	Jerry Purkey, Clare House
Sherri Priese, Bloomington	Stephanie Purkey, Clare House
Gwen Burns, Bloomington	Julie E. North, ISU
Andrew Moore, ATU 752	Mary Jo Kocar, ISU
Bill Stone, ATU 752	Janet M. Shobe, CEFT
Jennifer Sicks, Regional Planning	Charles M. Smith, CEFT
Joan Fenton, Phoenix Towers	Marilyn J. Evans, CEFT
Jacqueline Jones, Anglers Manor	Kim Tarkowski, Life CIL
Shannon Fofar, Bloomington	Donna M. Toney, Bloomington
John Corey, State Farm	Regina Madison, Phoenix Towers
Orhan Brian Enata, ATU 752	David R. Calhoon, ATU 752
Haley Bemiller, ISU WGLT	Rickielee Benecke, Life CIL
Byron Blotcky, Commerce Bank	Mick Ferrell, ATU 758
Barry Mogk, Bloomington	Rachel Wells, Pantagraph
Haley BeMiller, WGLT	Zach Dietmeier, WJBC

Board Members Present

Judy Buchanan, Chairman
Mike McCurdy, Secretary
John Thomas
Ryan Whitehouse
John Bowman
Felicia Shaw
David Hales, Ex-Officio Member

Transit Staff Present

Andrew Johnson, General Manager
Tom Crouch, Maintenance Supervisor
Pat Keubrich, Finance Director
Ami Armitage, Executive Assistant
Jenifer Clark, Human Resource Director
Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director
Chris Wold, Operations Assistant
Roy Rickert, Operations Director
Dave White, Safety and Training Director
Trish Tilton, Administrative Assistant

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>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Okay. I appreciate everybody coming today for the Public Hearing on Connect Transit route restructuring.

Many of you are familiar faces and probably well acquainted with the changes that we have proposed.

I will tell you right off the bat we are as the Connect Transit staff making the recommendation in addition to what was published in the Public Hearing notice, we are making the recommendation to keep public Transit on GE road on the Teal J route. We're not making any changes to the Blue E at this point.

Also we are recommending that the Late Night Green A service be left intact.

So if anybody had any questions on that or were worried about those particular changes prior to us recommending these, rest assured those pieces of service will stay in place.

Now, just some housekeeping, we have had quite a long journey to get to this point, starting late last year where we brought out a route proposal that was the basis for getting the conversation started in our community. We had a lot of conversation on it. That prompted us to dial it back and revise what we had out there. This revised proposal is not as sweeping a change as what we had initially proposed.

We had numerous Listening Sessions. We had Open Houses that explained what we were planning on doing.

We had a lot of dialogue back and forth with the community, answering questions, taking concerns, and I think that's really been a process that's worked. Even at the Open House level where we had devised what the proposal was going to be, we still got feedback that prompted us to make some additional changes on top of that.

Right now we are in the Public Hearing phase, and just to clarify what that is, we are no longer in the dialogue phase, so what we want to hear now are comments from the public related to the route restructuring proposal. If we need to make a clarification just a point of order, we will, other than that we're not here as staff to answer questions or to debate the merits of the proposal.

That is what we were doing in the Listening Sessions and Open Houses.

So what we expect is those who wish to speak can do one of two things. You can come up to the podium and talk into the mic. If you are able. If you are not able to do that, don't think we have a -- I don't think we have a wireless mic, but we will sure our recorder is close by so you can be heard.

I would appreciate it if you give us your name and where you are from, just Normal or Bloomington. And other than that, I would like --

>> CITY HALL STAFF MEMBER: We're just going to shut these doors for a minute so if you can give us a few seconds.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: While we do that I will do introductions starting with Board Members in attendance. We have Ryan Whitehouse, Judy Buchanan, Mike McCurdy, John Thomas, and John Bowman.

Back there is ex-officio member David Hales.

I don't think I missed anybody. We have a number of staff members, Ami Armitage in the back, Jennifer Clark,

Chris Wold, Tom Crouch, Pat Kuebrich and Isaac Thorne.

With that I invite anybody and everybody to make their way up and enter a public comment for our route restructuring.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: I can't get up but have I a question. I would like to know what the bus drivers think about all these new changes.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Ma'am, once again we're not answering questions in this particular venue.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: Does that mean that no matter what is said or done in here, it is already a set schedule and the new route will be -- the new routes will all be the new routes?

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Absolutely not. What we're hearing is public comment on the route changes. We have been discussing these route changes for months and months and months.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: Right.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: We have discussed them with the drivers. And pretty much anyone else who wanted to discuss them.

It is up to our Board to vote on them, and it will be taking up that vote in the meeting following this.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: Is that meeting going to be a public meeting?

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: It will be right here.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: Okay.

>> REGINA MADISON: Are you saying -- okay, you are not going to answer questions but we can make statements?

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Correct. This is your time to make a statement.

>> REGINA MADISON: Okay. My name is Regina Madison, with the changes that are going on -- I live in Phoenix Towers. So it was a very big concern to find out that the buses would not come out there anymore. We have to come up to the street which doesn't seem big. For some people it is, though, because some of us have trouble walking. Some of us have trouble going up and down inclines.

One of the bigger things is, at this point we don't have a shelter that's going to be put up there at the street to protect the elderly and the disabled from the scorching heat or the very extreme cold temperatures and things like that.

I don't know what to do to see if we can even get a shelter up there. I don't know the procedures. I don't know what Phoenix Towers may or may not need to be.

But that's my biggest concern with the Purple C route.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you for your comments. I will tell you we are talking to Phoenix Towers management about that.

>> REGINA MADISON: Thank you.

>> JOAN FENTON: Yes, I would like to reiterate what this lady has said. And could you clarify for us several of us have heard, we thought from a good person who knew what they were talking about, that the Purple C was going to come down just for now, and we would like a clarification on that so we could know, is it August 1st that this --

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: It will be August 12th if it passes today.

>> JOAN FENTON: Okay. If you could give us a clarification on that what we've heard.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: I'm sorry. The clarification is on?

>> MICK FERRELL: Whether the bus is coming to Phoenix Towers or not, sir.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: The bus at this point as of August 12th will not be going into the driveway.

Yes, Ma'am?

>> REGINA MADISON: I have another concern about with that Lime I no longer going into Market Square, and I understand that to make the route run smoother, that it is very difficult to have the bus stopping at every corner. I know when years and years ago it was a much smaller city and it was able to do that.

But I do have concern about the elderly and disabled being able to walk those extra blocks that we may have to because of the set bus stop routes that you are going to have.

>> JOAN FENTON: Yes, one lady has asked, who do we contact about this very real problem that those of us who live at Phoenix Towers. Not just our manager, but do we need to go to who owns the place? Is that our correct way to handle this problem?

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: I think that's a conversation you and I can have offline after this meeting.

Is there anybody else who wishes to make a

statement?

Yes, Ma'am?

>> JACQUELINE JONES: My name is Jacqueline Jones I live at Anglers Manor. I moved there almost 3 years ago after my husband passed because it was more reasonable as far as rent wise goes and I like the bus route.

It is my understanding that now that we have to go up the street also, and that is a huge concern of mine because we have several ladies that take that bus route, they are in walkers, or they are in their 80s, or some early 90s, and that's going to be very difficult in the winter for them to go up there. And we have benches out there, yes, but we have no shelter.

One of my main concerns is to my understanding that we will catch the Teal J to go there, from there to the mall, and then on our way back we catch Purple C.

That's going to be very confusing to some of the elderly. I would hopefully say that I hope you keep that purposely the way -- Purple C the way it is.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Thank you for your comments.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: Sir, sit down.

>> TRISH TILTON: Barry, thank you.

>> BARRY MOGK: Sorry.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Are there any other individuals who have any comments?

Hearing none, then I believe -- oh, we have one. Charles?

>> CHARLES SMITH: Hi. My name is Charles Smith. I'm from Normal Illinois.

Now before I read our statement, the Committee to Ensure Fair Transit is a group that has at times opposed many of the changes that were originally proposed in the first proposal.

And we have had our time with the Transit System. However, for those of you, and this is for the record because we gave public support. We have attended nearly every Board Meeting, we have attended nearly every Listening Session, and we have attended the Open Houses. So they were available to the public to give their opinions and things and I do believe that they made a good faith effort to publicize these.

Having said that, I will paraphrase a statement which I made in our last Public Hearing. After a long consideration and study on the current bus routes, the

Committee to Ensure Fair Transit has voted to support them. We do recognize that the Transit System has gone a long way to work with the community.

Having said that, we do have a couple reservations and concerns and those are, one, not going through places such as Phoenix Towers and Wood Hill and other places, and we are hoping that through dialogue and work that the Transit System can work to accommodate the residents of those facilities to ensure their safety and ease of travel on the bus system.

Our second concern was and is Market Square. I understand that the Lime I will no longer go to there, and as stated in this hearing there are portions of the community who depend on that to get into and out of that facility where I believe there are several shops.

Thank you for your time.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Thank you, Charles.

Yes, Ma'am?

>> JANET TROTTER: Janet Trotter. I understand that the --

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Could you step up to the mic if you could? It.

>> JANET TROTTER: I understand the Brown F will go to Market Square, so -- Market Square, so there will be access to Market Square.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Yes.

Are there any other comments from the public?

>> KIM TARKOWSKI: I'm Kim Tarkowski I live in Normal. I was out of state when the public Open Houses were being held.

I consequently have gone to your website. I'm blind, I use a screen reader. And the PDF documents that referenced the changes in the routes are not accessible. They come off as images so they don't show up.

And I'm wanting to get some assurances that potentially that is going to be repaired and provided in accessible format for future use, please.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Yes, I was not aware that that wasn't accessible to you, so we will look into that right away.

>> KIM TARKOWSKI: Okay. I would appreciate that. I did talk to somebody last week and they didn't really know in terms of time elements and things like

that. But the best way to get the information on that is through the wide world consortium on disabilities or www.w3C.org I believe it is.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: I do appreciate you bringing that to our attention.

>> KIM TARKOWSKI: Thank you.

>> BARRY MOGK: Are you going to change like Red B, Yellow G. I thought I read that it is still going by IAA Drive where I live. I don't believe --

>> MICK FERRELL: Yes, Barry, it does. It will still go down there. We'll show you.

>> BARRY MOGK: Okay.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: I think you did a good job speaking, personally.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Thank you. John?

>> JOHN COREY: Hi, my name is John Corey, I live in Bloomington. I support the Transit service. I am familiar with the routes. Where I work people know I use the routes and get asked all the time to help people plan their route. What I see two times a month is we could sure use one hour earlier service in the mornings. Thank you.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Thank you.

Okay. Additional comments?

Okay. Hearing none, we will bring the public hearing to a close. We will take a brief break and set up for our Board of Trustee meetings. Thank you.

The Public Hearing concluded at 4:55 p.m.