

KCTA MEETING WITH STAKEHOLDERS & AREA LEADERS

MEETING MINUTES

MAY 6, 2009

PRESENT:

- Dave Anderson-Community Mental Health
- Peter Battani-County Administrator
- Dennis Berkebile-Kalamazoo Area Transit Study Policy Chairperson
- David Burgess-Comstock Township
- Ken Collard-Kalamazoo City Manager
- Kurtis Fraaza-MRC
- Dave Gardiner-Kalamazoo Community Foundation
- Rob Heasley-City of Parchment Mayor
- Dale Hein-KCTA Project Manager
- Joan Keilin-Community Mental Health
- Diane Kempen-KCTA Board Member
- Adam Knott-Campaign Committee
- Terry Kuseske-KCTA Board Member
- Dan McGlenn-Millage Committee Co-Chair
- Jack Mekemson-KCTA Board Member
- Claudette Reid-Portage City Council
- Greg Rosine-KCTA Vice-Chair
- Steward Sandstrom-Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Scott Schrum-Residential Opportunities, Incorporated
- Judy Sivak-Area Agency on Aging
- Bill Schomisch-Metro Transit Director
- Jeff Sorensen-Cooper Township Supervisor
- Jon Start-Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Executive Director
- Pete Strazdas-Portage City Manager
- Char Sumney-KCTA Board Member
- Linda Teeter-KCTA Board Chair
- Don Ulsh-Schoolcraft Township
- Jack Urban-County Commissioner

WELCOME

Ms. Teeter welcomed the area leaders and recognized many individuals for their help during the months leading up to May 5th. A motion to excuse Mr. Ecklund, Ms. VanStratt, and Mr. Worthams was made by Mr. Kuseske, supported by Ms. Sumney, and approved.

COMMENTS FROM KCTA BOARD CHAIR, LINDA TEETER

Ms. Teeter gave an overview of the team effort, and said that over 150 volunteers did over 1,000 hours of work. She hoped the team would move forward for the city election and thanked those present individually for their support and effort to spread the word about the importance of public transit.

GUEST PERSPECTIVES AND COMMENTS

County Administrator Battani gave a heartfelt ‘thank you’ to everyone in the room, and said the community was beginning to see itself as one; he was thankful it was a ‘yes community’. The message made it through that the County needed the services, and the voters saw that the rate was doable. He ended by saying, “This is a great community!”

Mr. Sandstrom later commented that kudos were due all around; he also recognized Cooper Township for its fabulous leadership. He reiterated the Chamber’s desire to see a farebox increase, and asked what the City Commission needed from those in the room to get that passed.

Mr. Knott said that they had many first time volunteers; he commended the Federation of the Blind for their sustained efforts. The only negative feedback the campaign received was: -“Empty buses”, and

-“I just lost my job”, but even these people recognized “if we lose the bus system, the situation would only get worse.”

Mr. Urban noted that the two-tiered millage was important to the success. In four years it would be possible to change the law to allow two millage levels under one authority.

Mr. Strazdas recalled how the KCTA had mentioned fare increases and changes to P.A. 196, and he urged the KCTA to look into those issues.

The group commented that the following helped to pass the millage:

- Having the Care-A-Van ridership numbers emailed to the townships. Many hadn't known that their areas received that much usage.
- The grassroots effort was well received.
- The Portage faith-based groups had focused on this issue more than any other for a time. They had helped tremendously.
- Every precinct in Portage passed it which showed that it was willing to pay for essential services.
- Voters saw that the rate was fair, and that they could possibly need demand/respose service in the future.
- The citizens of Kalamazoo County were thanked for their willingness to support others in the community.
- The intergovernmental cooperation and sense of community county-wide helped tremendously.
- Having the right product was also key.

The group also mentioned several things to keep in mind as the KCTA moved forward:

- The media needed to be better educated; some television stations hinted that this millage went toward the line haul system.
- Enhanced services in Portage could be an item to focus on.
- It could be a challenge if city voters said, “didn't we just vote for this in May”. (To this, Chairperson Teeter stated that Kalamazoo City voters were told that the May vote would be the first of two.)
- It could be a good idea continue the public awareness effort (especially since the election was over), possibly focusing on the communities that were not supportive.
- Visioning for the future would be very important moving forward.

CITIZENS' TIME

There were not comments made.

MEMBERS' TIME

- Mr. Kuseske thought it was important to move forward with public awareness especially in non-election times; he was also impressed by the intergovernmental cooperation.
- Ms. Sumney was impressed at the team work and said the KCTA would be calling on the area leaders in the future.
- Ms. Kempen commended Ms. Teeter for excellent leadership.
- Secretary Mekemson recognized the Co-Chair of the Campaign Committee, Dan McGlenn, He then stated that when the Gazette asked about Plan B, he got nervous thinking about what would happen to Kalamazoo without the millage in place.
- Vice-Chair Rosine said that November saw difficult meetings, but the jurisdictional leaders had been honest; he was impressed that the leaders showed up at that morning's “good news” meeting.
- Chairperson Teeter stated the campaign was over, but the journey was just beginning.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 a.m.