

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 18, 2001**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of November 20, 2001 were approved as mailed.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Patrick Starr, RCC Chair, reported on the DVRPC Board Retreat, held December 5, 2001 at The Mansion in Voorhees, NJ. Mr. Starr stated that the major action to come from the board meeting held that day was approval of the Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI), which is an opportunity for DVRPC to support local development and redevelopment efforts in the individual municipalities of the Delaware Valley that implement municipal, county, state and regional planning objectives. Grants stemming from the TCDI project will be distributed at DVRPC's first Annual Dinner, scheduled for June 5, 2002 at The Four Seasons Hotel.

Mr. Starr called upon Dennis Winters to provide a report on the meeting held December 12, 2001 to prioritize Transportation Enhancements (TE). Mr. Starr and Mr. Winters thanked those who had volunteered and spent their time on this endeavor, particularly Ernest Cohen who had visited the sites of each TE project in Delaware County. The group had ranked the projects high, medium or low. Mr. Winters reviewed the list of prioritized projects. (See attached list.)

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Ernest Cohen) to approve the TE Task Force's report and to authorize Dennis Winters to represent the RCC on this matter at the 1/8/02 RTC meeting

MOTION CARRIED.

CONTEXT SENSITIVE DESIGN:

Warren Strumpfer reviewed a report that he had prepared regarding the Context Sensitive Design Workshop he had attended in New Jersey. (See attached report.) Mr. Strumpfer asked that the RCC consider sending a letter of commendation to NJDOT in January. He will consider and submit wording for this letter at the next RCC meeting.

GUEST SPEAKER:

Richard Peltz, PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Local and Area Transportation, addressed the issue of statewide transportation, focusing on his annual budget which totals \$1.2 billion with \$860 million for public transit. He reviewed Acela train service and the rationale for the high-speed train, as well as the cost entailed in upgrading the existing rail lines.

Mr. Peltz then discussed the Keystone Corridor service, stating that he believes this corridor can compete with the automobile. The 104-mile long line is electrified and has a good ridership base. The Commonwealth has invested \$25 million in infrastructure along this corridor and approximately \$140 million in rolling stock, track and roadbed, stations, communications and signals, and program management.

Mr. Peltz then stated that he thought mag-lev trains could be feasible in this area. He is taking the lead in developing the service in the state. Mag-lev travels at more than 200 mph with no moving parts. Federal funding has been authorized at an amount of \$950 million for such a venture from Greensburg to Pittsburgh. Urban mag-lev could replace transit systems in the future.

In addressing the Schuylkill Valley Metro (SVM), Mr. Peltz stated that he is an advocate of public transit but the level of funding needed (@\$1.5 billion) for Metrorail is a concern. About 77% of his current budget goes to SEPTA already for operating costs. He does not know where the state and SEPTA can find this amount of money. Mr. Peltz stated that FTA new starts, in the past, required an 80/20 match. New legislation has changed that formula to 60/40, making it more difficult for a state/local match for the federal dollars. He believes that diesel (DMU's) and electric multiple units (EMU's) could be used along this line, lowering the costs significantly. He further stated that EMU's could be used in this corridor as far as Norristown, switching to DMU's for the remainder of the route. A connection of King of Prussia is crucial.

Discussion: The RCC talked about the vision of SEPTA for the SVM corridor; trackage; start-up frequency; costs; Philadelphia-Lehigh Valley rail service; and who would own the SVM service.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Don Nigro stated that the RCC had submitted additional questions to DVRPC in October regarding the SVM. He again asked about the status of this response. Discussion of this matter will be referred to the Transportation Subcommittee for review in January.

