

CORONADO TUNNEL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, June 5, 2003
MINUTES

1. ROLL CALL:

Attendees: Sut Clark, Bill Huck, Betsy Gill, Steve Clarey and Al Hollingsworth

Absent: Art Osborne and Al Ovrom, Casey Tanaka

City Staff: Jim Benson, Gail Brydges and Ed Walton

Consultant: Brian Pearson, Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB)

2. MINUTES: The minutes of the April 10, 2003 meeting were approved as written.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Written Communication: Clarification of Navy Position: An email from Mike Petersen, Department of Navy, was distributed, clarifying the Navy's position on a lay down area.

Other Communications: Mr. Clark provided a short briefing on the Brown Act Workshop the City held for Commission/Committee members on May 29. There is a need to watch out for and avoid "serial meetings," where individual members talk to one another about an issue, leading to a collective concurrence. This also applies to emails. He said the City Attorney also referred to "awkward times" when people are chatting, which can occur after meetings are adjourned. If, at one of these times, for example, a quorum of Tunnel Commissioners were to discuss Tunnel Commission issues, it would be a violation of the Brown Act. Mr. Clark also asked Tunnel Commissioners not to stray from the agenda during the meetings.

It was decided to add "Major Traffic Study" to future agendas so that the Commission can get regular updates on the progress of the study.

Mr. Hollingsworth asked if the data on zip codes could be used to talk to representatives of the SANDAG communities to let them know how many of their voters could use the tunnel. Ms. Brydges said the data could be sorted to do that.

Mr. Clarey reported that his wife sat next to Tony Caserta of the FHWA on a plane going from Paris to New York City. When he learned she was from Coronado he said "you guys want to build a tunnel."

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Update

1. Major Investment Study (MIS) – Review and Discuss

- April 15, 2003 City Council Action: Mr. Pearson summed up the Council's decision at this meeting. Of the four candidate options, Strategy B, the trench, was dropped quickly due to disruption to the community and length of construction. Strategy A was dropped because it did not provide for growth. Strategy C was altered to incorporate a single-bore tunnel over the cut and cover method. Strategy D was adopted as the preferred alternative, but the revised Strategy C will also be advanced into the PSR phase. Mr. Huck inquired whether the single-bore tunnel would be bi-directional and Mr. Pearson replied that it is reversible, but not bidirectional.
- Update on Task 4.2 – Conceptual Design: Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) prepared an addendum to this report that covers the single bore option.
- Task 5 – Summary Report: This report is a condensation of the previous technical reports. It is one report to read as opposed to seven or eight.
- Update on Task 6 – Cost Estimate: Mr. Pearson will have a revised cost estimate for the next Tunnel Commission meeting.
- Update on Task 7 – Project Study Report (PSR): The City and PB met with Caltrans on May 22. The meeting was well-attended by Caltrans. PB wants to complete the PSR by the end of July. Caltrans wants to do a risk assessment and functional review of the engineering work and estimates to make sure they conform to Caltrans requirements. This means the work would need to be done in June. Caltrans requires everything to be converted to metric with English units in parentheses. Once the PSR is signed, the project has a whole new status with Caltrans.
- Task 8 – Financing Plan: Ms. Brydges said that this task is to develop a draft financing plan. Last week a meeting was convened of consultants and key advisors, including legislative, to look at how to access funds. Commissioner Huck was a key participant and brought in his expertise in bonding. The group spent a long time talking about local share. SANDAG is looking at extending the half-cent sales tax which expires in 2008; planning needs to start now if an extension is to happen. They are also asking local agencies to submit their projects for the Transnet renewal. This was a kick-off for developing finance plans. We will see preliminary plans in the summer. Mr. Pearson noted that PB has a branch called PB Consults. Mortimer Downey, former deputy director of the U.S. Department of Transportation for eight years, will be here on June 19 from 3:00-5:00 p.m. to talk about transportation issues. The meeting will take place in the Engineering Department.

- Task 9 – Public Outreach: Mr. Hollingsworth reported that the City Manager gave a presentation on the tunnel to MainStreet and was received very enthusiastically. This convinced Mr. Hollingsworth that the way to get support is to go to civic organizations, “captive audiences.” Ms. Brydges reported that similar presentations have been given to the Chamber of Commerce and Navy unions. Planned are presentations to the Board of Realtors, Lodging Association and Residential Association. Mr. Benson said that a professional firm will be conducting a public opinion survey and the City can tailor public outreach efforts based on this. It will be a 15-20 minute phone survey of 350-400 random voters in Coronado and will go to Council for approval on June 17. Ms. Gill would like the public to know how much effort the City is putting forth on the project.
- Next Steps with Navy: Mr. Pearson said the City needs to get a letter from the Navy that concurs with the 15' foot height limit of the tunnel that Caltrans is requiring. It would be good to include this in the PSR so it's not an issue.

2. Caltrans Environmental Process: Mr. Pearson said that PB initially prepared a Preliminary Environmental Study (PES), a Caltrans requirement. They will be setting up a field review, which is a formal step Caltrans needs to do. This will launch the project into the next phase.

3. Federal Legislation 2003 – \$750,000: Mr. Benson said that an RTIP amendment through SANDAG is needed to get us underway to signing a contract with FHWA. Minority provisions will be needed.

4. Federal Legislation 2004 – Request for \$1.5 Million: Susan Davis is looking for additional money.

5. Amendment to Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP): Mr. Benson said that SANDAG has delegated authority to approve RTIP amendments to its Transportation Committee. This means it does not need to go to the full SANDAG Board for approval.

6. Federal Legislation – TEA Reauthorization – Request Funding for Engineering Design and Permitting - \$20 Million (SAFETEA): Mr. Benson said SAFETEA is the new acronym for what had previously been called TEA-3, ISTEA and TEA-21. Ms. Brydges said that three members of the San Diego delegation are on board with the tunnel project. Those members include Davis, Issa and Filner. The City recently had other staff members here for a tour and briefing and they were able to witness the traffic back-up. They included Duke Cunningham's district office coordinator; Duncan Hunter's person, Wendell Cutting; and two of Susan Davis' staff members. Also discussed was the Third Street Gate project and how they could lend support to the project.

B. Reports and Discussion from Commission Members or Staff on Current Issues:

1. Third Street Gate Funding Status: Mr. Benson said that funding for design is now in hand. Construction funds for the project did not make it to the '03-'04 authorization bill. The Navy can't lobby directly for it, but the City has authorized PMA to look at any possibility to get this back in. The Navy will have most of the buildings out of the way this summer. This will be the number one priority for the region for '04-'05. As far as can be told, the design is still compatible with the S-curve of the tunnel.

C. Future Meeting Schedule: Due to a potential conflict with Fourth of July holiday plans, it was discussed whether the regularly scheduled July 3 meeting should be canceled and a special meeting held later in the month. It was decided to schedule a special meeting for July 24 because the City Council will only meet once in August (August 5) and this will give the Commission an opportunity to provide a report to the Council if they so desire.

5. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Approved:

Sut Clark, Chairman