MINUTES
TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD
Committee Business Meeting - A1F02
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS IN TRANSPORTATION

July 29, 2002

Prepared by:
Craig Casper

Submitted by:
Douglas Smith
Secretary A1F02

Douglas L. Smith
12/07/02
A1F02 COMMITTEE
Mid-Year Business Meeting
July 29, 2002
New England Center
Durham, New Hampshire

Minutes of the Business Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER
Carol Cutshall called the meeting to order at 2:03 and invited everyone to sit around the large group of tables.

II. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND GUESTS
Carol welcomed everyone and added Item IIIE (Directory of State Environmental Officers) to the agenda (see Attachments). Everyone in the room then introduced himself or herself and stated their professional position and status related to the committee. Thirty-four people signed the attendance list (attached as Appendix B).

III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY 14, 2002 BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
Page 2, Item V, paragraph 3; all references to Dave Wallace should be changed to Dan Wallace. Minutes were then approved as amended.

IV. REMARKS BY COMMITTEE CHAIR CAROL CUTSHALL

a) Environmental Research Needs Conference
The conference was very successful. John Fisher was co-chair. There were 15 groups, our groups’ report is in final review now and expected to be out in September.

b) January 2003 TRB Sessions
There will be fewer sessions this year than there were last year. Last year this committee sponsored six sessions; this year we will sponsor one presentation session and another paper session. We expect to co-sponsor several more.

c) Kim Fisher, New TRB Staff Liaison
Kim Fisher is the new TRB liaison for this committee. She is unable to attend because of conflicts with another committee. It was the consensus of those in attendance that she would have had more fun and eaten better if she had attended this committee meeting.

TRB has moved to new offices at 500 Fifth Street near the MCI center. They are now close to the Metro. The annual meeting will be held January 13-17, 2003.

d) A1F02 Membership
Membership rosters are now available on the website. This committee now has 33 total members composed of: 25 standard members, 4 Overseas members, 2 Under 30 members, and 2 Emeritus members.
Every three years the committee must turn over 1/3 of its standard membership. Eight new members will be welcomed after the January meeting. All current members will remain as such until February 2003. In order to determine who will leave the committee all members will receive a letter asking them if they wish to remain on the committee. If not, then do they have someone in mind as a replacement? A notice was posted in the last newsletter asking for interest in becoming a member of the committee. This generated four responses. Additional responses are expected. It is an aim of the committee to diversify its membership. A map at the back of a handout from the Liaison Subcommittee (attached as Appendix C) depicts geographic and sector (federal, state, academic, emeritus, consultant) affiliation. The committee is currently heavily east coast oriented and in need of some younger membership.

e) Directory of State Environmental Officers
Carol remarked that this committee was responsible for maintaining a directory of state environmental officers. Jon Williams at TRB had assumed those duties. Kim is unable to do this due to an increased load. Carol sought and received a volunteer (Craig Casper) to send out the form to state and federal agencies.

V. A1F02 STEERING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT
Kim Gambrill, chair of the subcommittee, stated that they are working on updating all nine subcommittee goals and objectives. Two sets of revised and 1 set of new goals and objectives were provided (Appendix C).

a) Review and Approve Mission Statement
The possibility of adding a specific mention of the private sector to the Committee statements was made. After discussion, it was decided that such a link was an inherent function of the committee and therefore did not need specific mention. The statement was approved.

b) Review and Approve subcommittee Goals and Objectives statements
The Liaison subcommittee Goals, Objectives, and Procedures reflect how business is currently conducted, such as more electronic and telephone interaction. Goals and Objectives were approved as provided.

The Publications subcommittee made a change to Section 1-C, items 3 and 4; adding “Examine recent and on-going litigation”. The amended Goals and Objectives were then approved.

The Community Impact Assessment subcommittee did not have a representative present. Discussion centered around the perceived lack of focus on research and apparent emphasis on advocacy. This is more an AASHTO function. It was also noted that the breadth of their mission seemed overly large. This subcommittee seemed to be suffering from its position as subcommittee to more than one committee and the traditional tension between the natural resource side and the people resource side of environmental analysis. The question was asked if they were getting feedback from other committees. It was also suggested that it be better to
get the subcommittee up and running and then tweak the goals and objectives on the fly. It was decided to table their goals and objectives until after a review by TRB staff (Kim).

VI. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Liaison Subcommittee
Chair, Jim Bednar asked that liaisons continue to attend meetings and share information and asked for reports from liaisons to other committees or groups. The National Association of Environmental Professionals’ Transportation Working Group elected a new chair, Lamar Smith from FHWA.

b) Website Development Subcommittee
Chair, Dan Wallace was not present, subcommittee member Craig Casper presented in his place. The subcommittee has made substantial changes to the appearance of the website and is working on changing the content. The bulletin board was eliminated and a link to the FHWA Re:NEPA site added. It was agreed that this site was an excellent resource. The Publications link was changed to Documents. Other changes include adding business meeting minutes, published papers sponsored by the committee, updating the membership list, subcommittee goals and objectives, other newsworthy announcements such as Carol’s book, and a link to research needs statements. The idea of a list-serve was presented, but no decision on how frequently the announcements should be distributed was given. It was stated that CTE (website host) can definitely continue to host for the next two years. They have been doing a great job, and have been very responsive to changes.

c) Natural Resources Subcommittee
Chair, Andy Fekete was not present. His term expires in January 2003.

d) Publications Subcommittee
Chair, Jim Bach, made a call for papers for this year’s theme Stewardship and Streamlining. Last year there were 12 papers, this year he has received 3 papers, but expects more by the deadline. It is traditional to get most papers around the deadline. The papers will be distributed for review the end of August. Reviewers are needed and appreciated.

e) Research Topics
Chair, Frank Pafko, was not present. The question was asked if papers should continue to be solicited with a theme, or if it is better to give authors a free hand. It was generally agreed that better focus and continuity is maintained if a theme is given. Different looks at the same issue add to the benefit of the conference. A theme for next year has not been selected; input is more than welcome.

f) Mid-Year Workshop Subcommittee
Chairs, Ron DeNadai & Bill Hauser, gave the date and location for next summers’ workshop. James Martin added details. The July 14-18 meeting will take place at the Hilton Riverside in Wilmington, North Carolina. Attempts to have the meeting along the coast failed because it is the high season, and
hotel costs were prohibitive. The meeting will be co-hosted by the A2F05 committee, *Landscape and Environmental Design*.

g) **Newsletter Subcommittee**  
Chair, Mark Kross, was not present. Carol read comments in his place. The most recent newsletter was the first one to go out completely electronically. The mailing list dropped from 300 snail mail addresses to 120 email addresses. Some efforts to add names should be made. The website will include a sign-up/address update for the newsletter.

h) **Community Impact Subcommittee**  
Chair, Brenda Kragh, was not present.

VII. **DISCUSSION OF NEW TASK FORCE ON ECOLOGY IN TRANSPORTATION**  
Tom Linkous, Ohio DOT made a presentation on the new Task Force. This task force has been talked about in some form since 2000. It is, to some extent, a revival of the 1994 Task Force. They are working on interfacing with several groups inside and outside TRB. They must recognize the intersection of the subcommittee and work out where the boundary between the two of them is. The most important thing is to move the Task Force forward. An endorsement of this new Task Force was approved.

VIII. **UPDATE FROM FHWA OFFICE OF NEPA FACILITATION**  
Fred Skaer, FHWA, spoke on three topics. The Reauthorization Bill is expected to be presented to Congress in February with the budget. There are a lot of ifs & ands between now and then so literally everything is up in the air and open for change. The money is not expected to be as rosy as in TEA-21, but that was an increase of 40% over the prior amounts. It may be that the money will keep up with inflation. They are hoping for an increase in the environment portions of the budget and steady funding for the Coop Research Program. Many projects need the independent Coop nature of studies to legitimize the results.

Some policies to make the environmental process more rational may be included in the bill or proposed beforehand. FHWA faces the dual needs of being good stewards of the environment and moving transportation projects forward. Some things that could happen include making 4(f) and 106 more common-sensical. There are some stand-alone bills being bandied about in the House. Nothing that would get opposition aligned against it, yet.

There are three Vital Few Goals from USDOT: Congestion, Safety, Streamlining and Stewardship. They are having discussion about them now, and coming up with a set of strategies as an agency for the next 5 years.

In stewardship and streamlining, the are looking to improve the quality of decisions with context sensitive solutions (not *design*) and by better integrating the processes in both vertical (transportation planning, design, construction, and maintenance) and horizontal (transportation, recreation, economics, watersheds and environment) directions. Vertical processes include recognizing and giving credit when there has been good project hand-off.
They also hope to improve the timeliness of project delivery using a web-based environmental tracking database. They are working towards eliminating CE’s (90% of projects) from federal review, leaving it for states.

They are hoping to grow the number of exemplary processes that look at bigger systems, not just at 1 specific species. They want to work towards sustainable systems by partnering with financial and idea people. They are looking towards 30 big-ticket projects to build momentum. They are also promoting a new website, *Successes in Streamlining*.

The FHWA just got a full-time person at the US Fish and Wildlife Service, dedicated to transportation projects. They want to get the no-brainer decisions off the table so that people can devote time to projects with interesting issues.

The FHWA Eastern Resource Center will have a 4(f) CDROM training guide finished in late summer.

**IX. CTE ACTIVITIES**

James Martin stated that CTE has funding available for 2 years at a slightly reduced level. There are 13 summer scholars present at the meeting. They are publicly unveiling their new website *CONVERGE*. This website chronicles the relationship between transportation and the environment throughout American history, overviews the top 21 topics in the transportation/environmental field, contains current events and provides a virtual library. [www.converge.ncsu.edu](http://www.converge.ncsu.edu)

**X. AASHTO CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE**

Kris Hoellen handed out a brochure (and gave a brief presentation on the web-based clearinghouse center. They have developed a 4-level system. Their goal is to complement other efforts to build the capacity for DOT to do good projects.

**XI. OPEN DISCUSSION**

Carol asked for any other issues. None were presented. She stated that during the winter meeting she would seek more than the two hours that was given last January.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40.
TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS IN TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
A1F02 BUSINESS MEETING
Monday, July 29, 2002
2:00 PM-5:00 PM
New England Center
Durham, New Hampshire
AGENDA

I. Call to Order

II. Introduction of Members and Guests

III. Review and Approve Minutes of January 14, 2002 Business Meeting Minutes

IV. Remarks by the Chair - Carol Cutshall
   A. Environmental Research Needs Conference
   B. January 2003 TRB Annual Meeting Sessions Proposed by A1F02
   C. Kirn Fisher, new TRB staff
   D. A1F02 Membership

V. A1F02 Steering Sub-Committee Report- Kim Gambrill, Chair, Steering Committee
   A. Review and Approve Mission Statement
   B. Review and Approve Sub-Committee Goals and Objectives

VI. Sub-Committee Reports
   A. Liaison Sub-Committee - Chair, Jim Bednar
   B. Web-site Development Sub-Committee - Chair, Dan Wallace or Designee
   C. Natural Resources Sub-Committee - Andy Fekete, Chair
   D. Publications Sub-Committee - Chair, Jim Bach
   E. Research Topics Sub-Committee - Chair, Frank Pafko
   F. Mid-Year Workshop Sub-Committee - Chair, Ron DeNadai & Bill Hauser, Host for the 2002 Mid-Year Workshop in New Hampshire; James Martin, CTE, Co-Host with NCDOT for the 2003 Mid-Year Workshop in North Carolina with A2A05, Landscape & Environmental Design
   G. Newsletter Sub-Committee - Chair, Mark Kross
   H. Community Impact Analysis Subcommittee (Conference in Madison, WI, Aug.19-21)

VII. Discussion of New Task Force on Ecology in Transportation - Tom Linkous, Ohio DOT

VIII. Update from FHWA Office of NEPA Facilitation - Fred Skaer

IX. CTE Activities – James Martin

X. AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence – Kris Hoellen

XI. Open Discussion
List of Attendees

(included on website pdf version)
Steering Subcommittee Business Meeting Discussion Topics

(included on website pdf version)
Committee Goals and Objectives

Subcommittee Goals and Objectives Status Report

A1F02 Member Affiliation

(included on website pdf version)