

**PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING  
CITY OF REHOBOTH BEACH**

**July 9, 2010**

The Workshop Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Rehoboth Beach was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chairman Preston Littleton on Friday, July 9, 2010 in the Commissioners Room in City Hall, 229 Rehoboth Avenue, Rehoboth Beach, DE.

**ROLL CALL**

Mr. Timothy Spies called the roll:

Present:           Mr. Brian Patterson  
                      Mr. Harvey Shulman  
                      Mr. John Gauger  
                      Mr. David Mellen  
                      Chairman Preston Littleton  
                      Mr. Timothy Spies  
                      Mr. Francis Markert, Jr.  
                      Mr. Patrick Gossett

Absent:            Mr. Brian Patterson  
                      Mrs. Jan Konesey

A quorum was present.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no general correspondence.

**PRESENTATION** by Mr. Ralph Reeb, Director of Planning, Delaware Department of Transportation, of DeIDOT's plans relative to improvements of the Rehoboth Park and Ride facility and roadways, and the possible future development of a "Destination Station" at this location by the Rehoboth Beach/Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce under the terms of a signed memorandum of agreement with the State. Questions and discussion will be directed to anticipated positive or negative impact on the City of Rehoboth Beach and a means to ensure coordinated planning between the coastal municipalities, Sussex County and the State regarding transportation issues.

Chairman Littleton noted that the Planning Commission, at its June 11, 2010 meeting, learned of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the State relative to Park & Ride, and Destination Station. At that meeting, the Planning Commission passed a resolution which was then moved to the City Commissioners to get factual information about what is being proposed. Chairman Littleton had contacted the Director of Planning for Sussex County regarding Destination Station who reported that he knew nothing about this subject. Chairman Littleton noted that a meeting was held two weeks ago at the University of Delaware's Marine Studies Campus regarding collaborative planning at the beach community level. A strong recommendation from that meeting was that the planning people at the beach communities and the County need to strengthen their relationships so there is collaborative planning. Chairman Littleton then presented the procedures for this Workshop Meeting.

Mr. Ralph Reeb gave his presentation. Delaware Department of Transportation (DeIDOT) has been planning Route 1 and the surrounding area for many years. Regional plans have been done, and the results of some of those plans are currently being used, such as the bus lanes. One of the efforts that DeIDOT has collectively tried to undertake since the late 1980's is to get transit service working in this area and enhance it over time so people can visit and get around without using their cars. From his perspective this system is working alright, but more buses and more ability is needed for people to get around without their cars. Ridership is needed and it needs to be convenient. Over time, it has been realized that there is a need to continue to concentrate on the trip end with things close enough to a transit system so people will use it. The newly adopted Comprehensive Development Plan for the City talks about the need to enhance transit. Mr. Reeb presented a slide of what the property in the Park & Ride area currently looks like. The triangular property which the State owns is located between Shuttle and Country Club Roads, and Park & Ride is located on the property. The property adjacent to Route 1 is zoned commercial and is not owned by the State. A slide of the conceptual plan was presented with the proposed improvements to the State property. Currently, there are two buildings which are in need of being replaced, but monies are not available to replace them immediately.

There is a need to take buses out of the intersection because currently there are oversubscription challenges. DelDOT is proposing to take the monies which were afforded to it by Congress and make improvements to the two entrances and provide a space upon which Destination Station can be built when the monies are raised entirely from outside sources. The bottom floor will be split with new facilities in half of the downstairs for the bathhouse, ticket sales, etc. DelDOT is anticipating making the roadway entrance improvements and the overall physical improvement starting in Fall 2010, regardless of what happens or when it happens with Destination Station. A comparison of the circulation system was provided. Currently, buses come in on Shuttle Drive. DelDOT is proposing as part of the overall construction to have the shuttle buses come off of a newly renamed Shuttle Drive (currently named Country Club Road) and make Country Club Road (formerly Shuttle Drive) contiguous. Sidewalks will be provided. Currently, there are approximately 400 parking spaces; and as it is currently planned, approximately 20 automobile parking spaces will be lost. DelDOT is working on trying to regain those as interim spaces by providing gravel spaces. When everything has been completed and buildings have been moved and reconstructed, there will be a more efficient bus system with 25% more parking than there currently is. What DelDOT has tried to do with the design is to anticipate a way that Destination Station could be created, adding the overall capacity of the transit system and making it so that people who might come to Destination Station can get there without their car. DelDOT is anticipating, from what it has seen with feasibility studies, a very large number of people will come to Destination Station throughout the year on a bus. The rest of the people will be people who are currently living here and will be looking for something additional to do. It seems highly unlikely to DelDOT that very many people will be coming to the beach areas specifically to go to Destination Station, particularly in the summer. With the exhibits, etc. which are anticipated to be there, it is plausible that there will be teachers who are interested in bringing students to Destination Station. In the off-season, there will be plenty of places to park. When the building gets constructed, the property will be redesigned so that the parking is more efficient. When DelDOT originally did the Park & Ride project, there was significant controversy, and Park & Ride was challenged for several reasons. DelDOT is not interested in losing the capacity to handle cars that are currently parking there. DelDOT is working to enhance the overall transit system and the Park & Ride system. DelDOT has purchased the Wright Chrysler property which is north on Route 1, and that facility is ready to serve as a bus maintenance facility except for those maintenance activities that require lifting the buses off of the ground. A garage will be built to accommodate lifting of the buses. That facility will provide an opportunity to house the bicycle program which provides bicycles for students who are here, particularly in the summertime. The facility in the front will be a waiting area. The bus will leave from the Ferry terminal to go to that facility and down to the Destination Station facility and into the City. The work which needs to be done for the project can be accomplished from Fall 2010 to Spring 2011. Monies allocated for the entire project have been provided for in the Transportation Bill. This project has to be a transportation project managed by DelDOT, and it must improve the transportation system. This project will help to strengthen the Park & Ride system while providing an opportunity for Destination Station which was specifically called out in the Transportation Bill.

Chairman Littleton commented that the amount of bus traffic will be increased on Route 1 with the loop around and the distance the buses will travel. Mr. Reeb acknowledged that the amount of bus traffic on Route will be the same with the proposed bus route, and there will not be a traffic light at the proposed new entrance onto the newly named Shuttle Road. The buses will wait for a gap in traffic to enter onto Route 1. He also noted that DelDOT has plans to improve and relocate the bath facilities regardless if Destination Station is built. One of the reasons DelDOT has entered into the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is that the bath facilities need to be replaced; and DelDOT needs to pay attention to how fast the monies are being raised for Destination Station and how fast the building will be built.

Mr. Patrick Gossett said that in regard to the MOU there is a 30 month window from the date of the beginning until the final point that it is decided Destination Station will not happen, and he asked if the substandard building could stand there 2½ years. Mr. Reeb acknowledged that the substandard building could stand there at least 2½ years. He also noted that the current entrance on Shuttle Road will be open to cars. At some point in time there will be two entrance points for the public. The entrance on Country Club Road will be used only by buses for now.

Mr. Spies noted that in a newspaper article from April 2008, Senator Carper was indirectly quoted as saying that the money would not go toward the Destination Station building itself, but would provide funding for curbing and other road improvements to be done at the Station site. In looking at a 2008 newsletter from the Chamber of Commerce, the question was where the approved \$1,000,000.00 comes from and what it can be used for. Part of the answer was that this funding is dedicated to the plan, design and build of the exploratory including the surrounding street connections. Mr. Reeb said that the \$1,000,000.00 will be used for design of the Park & Ride facility which has been done and the construction of improvements plus continuing the

sidewalks. The change in the entrance will cost approximately \$780,000.00 and will be completed by Spring 2011.

Mr. Harvey Shulman said Mr. Reeb had commented to the effect that Destination Station was called out in the Transportation Bill. Mr. Reeb said that Destination Station was identified specifically with that name in the Federal Transportation Bill of 2005. That Federal Bill sets up the monies for the next six years of funding for the country, and there are things identified in that bill for each state, and this project was one of the things identified for the State of Delaware. The construction of Destination Station is not tied to the needed transportation improvements. All this does is take this space that is currently being used as a bus wash and bus storage, and DelDOT is providing the place where Destination Station can be built basically as the roof over what will be DelDOT's new facilities or as a place for the new facilities plus the waiting space in the event that Destination Station does not come to fruition. With or without Destination Station, DelDOT is grateful for the resources to make the improvements and to separate bus traffic from car traffic. In April 2008, a proposal for the exchange of State property for private property was aired at a public meeting in the form of a hearing. DelDOT had proposed to trade land in another area for other lands located on Route 24. The reason for doing this was that the difference in value was high enough so DelDOT could acquire many more parking spaces at the site and give people the opportunity to get on the bus before getting into traffic. DelDOT was not able to work out this proposal. Even if the land swap would have occurred, DelDOT's intention was to take the \$1,000,000.00 and make improvements to the Park & Ride site. Any money left over would have been used to make improvements at the other location. Mr. Shulman said that one of the comments made by the community was that the Wright Chrysler property should have been made the central transit point to board buses instead of the current site. Mr. Reeb said that both sites are being improved. DelDOT is fully expecting the Wright Chrysler facility site to be as much of a transit facility and bike facility as the current site. DelDOT has understood that Destination Station will be an added attraction for people who live here with the added feature that during the school season people will have a desire visit it. Ultimately DelDOT will need to study the traffic that will be generated by whatever proposal there is.

Public Comment:

1. Mr. Tony Pisotto, King Street, requested clarifications of the bus route.
2. Mr. Guy Martin, 87 Henlopen Avenue, asked if federal funding will be used for the Destination Station building and if there is any competition with what looks like a substantial benefit for a private party. Mr. Reeb said that DelDOT is not to include any federal funding in the building. There is no money budgeted at this time to relocate the two buildings. Congress did not entertain the thought of any competition with what looks like a substantial benefit for a private party. Congress provided the money for this entirely. It was DelDOT's understanding with the congressional delegation that the specific intention was to have this attraction with Destination Station. Congress provided the money for the road improvements, not the building.
3. Mr. Howard Menaker, 16 Dover Street, asked when DelDOT will be doing the traffic impact studies for Route 1 and the entrance to Rehoboth Beach; when the studies will be available to the public and governmental entities; and what role the Planning Commission and the County will have. Mr. Reeb said that this project will go through the County process when there is a specific proposal as to what the building will look like. At that point, DelDOT will engage in traffic impact studies. The County will consider DelDOT's recommendation as a result of the studies, and it will make a zoning decision.
4. Mr. Mike Tyler, President of Citizens Coalition, Lewes, suggested putting in a pedestrian activated traffic light for people to cross Shuttle Road, and he asked if there will be buses to serve the community year-round. Destination Station should be located in the City proper as opposed to out on Route 1. The Wright Chrysler should be expanded, and the current Park & Ride site could remain as is. This is a terrible misuse of funds. Not enough is being done for bicycles and mass transit. Mr. Reeb said that DelDOT is not including a change in the current service; but as this becomes less of a seasonal destination and more year-round, it will be considered.
5. Ms. Mable Granke, Scarborough Avenue Extended, resented total blocking out of the public in terms of this proposal. This is a public safety issue that goes directly to emergency response timing. A study needs to be done now in terms of that critical intersection known as Route 1 and Shuttle Road. Ms. Granke did not think that many from the audience understood the public process and the involvement of the County. If a site plan review comes before the County, it has to be DelDOT that requires a traffic impact study. She asked what guarantee there is if a site plan review with a proposal comes before the County Planning Commission, that DelDOT will require a traffic impact study. Mr. Reeb said that DelDOT has standards, and a traffic impact study is done after a certain amount of trips are made.
6. Mr. Will Derby, Kings Creek, voiced concern that the addition of Destination Station will cause the

residents of Kings Creek greater problems on Shuttle Road in getting out. It was hoped that a study had been done to show the traffic impact.

Chairman Littleton noted that people have been led to believe that this project is on a fast track and will occur regardless of any traffic impact study, this project will be move forward. Everyone is looking for reassurance that nothing is going to occur until the studies are done. Mr. Reeb said that DeIDOT's mission is to always figure out what needs to be done to make traffic flow safely and smoothly. It does not mean that everyone will get the level of service and exactly the configuration they want.

Mr. John Gauger noted that engineering proposals have already been submitted for Destination Station. Mr. Reeb said that there is no basis to build the building right now. It needs to go through the County process to get the ability to create it. Mr. Reeb has not seen an application proposing to build the building for this site.

Mr. Shulman said that all the facts need to be presented before the concept can be bought into. The MOU says that DeIDOT is committed to the concept, and the Federal Highway Administration has earmarked funds to be used in conjunction with the proposed construction and operation of Destination Station. This is different from saying the federal government has said that whether or not there is a Destination Station, there needs to be some improvement of the Park & Ride situation. That is one place in the MOU where Mr. Reeb described what the federal government has done with finding regarding the construction and operation of Destination Station. The MOU further says that DeIDOT shall use the earmarked funds which have been set aside in an account under the control of DeIDOT to improve and expand Park & Ride as a result of the public's increased use of Park & Ride and Destination Station. The MOU says that the earmarked funds are located in an account within DeIDOT to be used not just in conjunction with Park & Ride, but in conjunction with Park & Ride and Destination Station. The parties, DeIDOT and Destination Station, are entering into this MOU to facilitate Destination Station's fundraising efforts to confirm DeIDOT's commitment to this project and to set forth the major terms and conditions, etc. The MOU is basically saying that DeIDOT is committed to Destination Station. Mr. Shulman's copy of the MOU was signed by everyone, and timelines were also included. The effective date of the MOU was May 19, 2010.

Mr. Gossett was not clear about the fact that a portion of the building would be utilized for DeIDOT's operations and the second floor and another portion would be Destination Station. Destination Station has been established as a 5013C non-profit organization. He asked if the spaced to be utilized by DeIDOT will be given to or leased by DeIDOT. Mr. Reeb said that the land is leased to Destination Station at fair market value, and the space inside the building which will be provided to DeIDOT is incorporated into the lease agreement. Mr. Shulman said that the first five years of the lease is \$1.00 per year. After that, the lease payments are to be worked out.

Continued Public Comment:

7. Mr. Dale Lomas, Board of Director Member of Rehoboth Beach/Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce, said that Destination Station was located in this location primarily to utilize existing bus transportation. It is unknown how many people will attend and visit Destination Station. The bulk from the average traffic count will come from mass transportation, and the impact will be smaller than what people are expecting.
8. Mr. Dennis Barbour, 153 Columbia Avenue, said that there are two sets of issues involved: 1. Merits of the project. 2. Process and how the City has not been involved. This subject has been placed on the agenda for the Mayor and Commissioner Regular Meeting to be held on July 16, 2010. His concern is the process, and how this has not been handled properly. It was Mr. Barbour's belief that because of the way this has been handled, there has been a lot of secrecy. For the last ten days, he had attempted to contact Mr. Reeb to obtain a copy of the MOU and had received no response.
9. Ms. Kaye Wheatley, Board Member of Rehoboth Beach/Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce and Destination Station, clarified that the strategic plan is one that was done through the State tourism office many years ago, and it said that an attraction was needed in the general beach area in Sussex County. In the MOU, it refers to if the Destination Station Center goes dark, the parcel purchased by it would not automatically revert back to DeIDOT simply because DSC would have paid fair market value for it. Under the terms in the MOU, the first five years are at \$1.00 and when the next term is negotiated that will be taken into consideration. This allows startup, but it is not given to DSC in any way. Fair market value will always be maintained. One of the major rationales for traffic and why it was not proposed for DSC to go further out on Route 1, is that the day tripper coming in will hopefully stop out at the Wright Chrysler site and get off the road at that point. Public transit is trying to be enhanced at Destination Station and Park & Ride at the entrance to Rehoboth Beach for people once they are already here. Part of what is trying to be done in enhancing public transportation is not just the traffic flow, but to increase the use of public

transportation so that DeIDOT then is in a position to increase the usage of the buses more on a year-round basis and to make stops at other places to keep people out of their cars and using public transportation. Proposals were due in early June 2010. Destination Station is trying to put together a team from the very beginning. The MOU allows Destination Station to start fundraising. Requests for Proposals (RFP's) have been sent out for architectural/engineering/construction management firms. The proposals have been received. A short lists has been noted, and interviews will done to make a selection. DSC will be meeting with those that are selected to try to better quantify and qualify what exactly will be in the building. No part of the \$1,000,000.00 which was received from the Federal Transportation Department will go to the building of the Destination Station Center. It simply goes to the enhancement of the transportation and the roadways around DSC. The money for DSC will be raised mostly from corporate firms. Part of the due diligence is to get the studies done, make sure that the property will work, go through the entire process for fundraising and planning & zoning at the County level. Currently this is a concept, and Destination Station is not ready to break ground until it knows all of the things to be put in place.

10. Mr. Ron Paterson, 320 Munson Street, asked why the names of the roads are going to be switched. Approximately 10 years ago, the roads were named according to the proposed names. Mr. Reeb said that there are four properties that will be affected by the change. In conversations with people in the area, they wished that the names of the roads had never been changed from how they were originally named.

Chairman Littleton summarized that this project may be ideal to increase parking outside of the City. It could increase transportation access into the City with more people and less cars. It could be an attractive development and would make it more of a year-round usage. There are potentially positive things that can come out of this development. The situation is disappointing to planners as people did not feel that they were involved and did not have a chance to react to help build Destination Station. It would have been better with cooperative collegial planning at all levels. The disappointment from a planner's standpoint is that currently people are angry. The County's planning department seems to know nothing about this project. At the 2008, two representatives from the County did not perceive the meeting as a public hearing. A member of the public would never have been informed with the release of that notice. Chairman Littleton and the Planning Commission has felt betrayed regarding this project. As stated in its Comprehensive Development Plan, the City needs to collaboratively work with private industries and organizations to help in implementing things.

There being no further business, Chairman Littleton declared the meeting adjourned at 5:28p.m.

**RECORDED BY**

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**(Ann M. Womack, Recording Secretary)**

**MINUTES APPROVED ON  
NOVEMBER 12, 2010**

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**(Preston Littleton, Jr., Chairman)**