

MINUTES:
U. S. 2 Safety Coalition
January 29, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM

Attendees:

- Coalition Board Members:
 - Chief Fred Walser, Chairman
 - Monroe Mayor Donnetta Walser, Vice-Chairman
 - Loretta Storm, Secretary
 - Jeff Beeler, Treasurer
 - Board Member Josie Fallgatter
 - Board Member Mark Fallgatter
- Lorena Eng, Northwest Regional Manager, WSDOT
- Steve Lewis, H. W. Lochner (WSDOT Consultant on U. S. 2's RDP)
- Cathy George, WSDOT
- Pat McClain, City of Everett Govt. Affairs (arrived late)
- John Davis, Snohomish County Public Works
- Michelle Robles, City of Mountlake Terrace councilwoman
- Lonni Turner, Gold Bar Councilman
- Lorna Goebel, Town of Skykomish councilwoman
- Henry Sladek, Town of Skykomish Councilman
- Tom Hansen, City of Snohomish
- Kirk Rudeen, WSP trooper
- Harlan Johnson, WSP trooper
- Joe Bussman, WSP trooper
- Paul Tortorice, Sultan resident
- Joe Beavers, Gold Bar citizen
- Ray Coleman, Gold Bar citizen
- Dale Taylor, Citizen
- Joy Taylor, Citizen

I. SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

II. Approval of Minutes

Secretary storm reported that the December minutes are not yet complete. Action deferred to February meeting.

III. Finance Report

Treasurer Jeff Beeler reported \$2,785.29 in bank account. Received a \$500 donation from Ben Franklin in Monroe.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. RDP Update – WSDOT

Lorena Eng gave the report due to Richard Warren's absence. Briefly summarized the process by which 57 projects were identified and gave an explanation of the various project categories. They are working to create project pages, nine of which are being expedited at the request of Chairman Walser (for legislature). Eng urged caution re the planning cost estimates, which do not include design, environmental review or actual construction. Steve Lewis estimates another two more months will be needed to develop better cost estimates. Brief discussion re specifics of proposed Sultan intersections and how WSDOT/state would pay for growth improvements. Tom Hansen stated developers must directly address impacts caused as a result of their developments.

B. Fundraising efforts and current status – Chairman Fred Walser

Chairman stated some donations are starting to come in, but "We still need \$5,000-6,000 for a lobbyist." Michelle Robles of Mountlake Terrace said they only pay \$10,000 for a federal lobbyist who works D.C., so that sounded a bit high.

C. Bumper stickers, distribution efforts - do we need to purchase more?

Treasurer Beeler (tongue-in-cheek) asked Vice-Chair Donnetta Walser whether standing on street corners, handing out bumper stickers during gridlocked weekend traffic and/or during daily rush hours, would be a problem. She responded that she certainly wouldn't object.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Report on current legislative activities and lobbying efforts – Chairman Fred Walser & Vice-Chairman Donnetta Walser gave report of recent legislative activities in Olympia.

HB-1655 Rep. Kirk Pearson's bill to double traffic infraction fees in HAC of 40-miles or greater, which includes U. S. 2, and thus far has been favorably received. Monies from fines will be identified and distributed to the designated HAC highway from which they are collected, as follows: 60% to the WSDOT (into a pot of funds designated for safety improvements in that particular HAC area); 30% will go to the State Traffic Safety Commission to fund overtime enforcement programs on that stretch of highways, and 10% to the prosecuting attorneys of record for the increased costs of handling these notices. If members wish to support this bill, they should contact either Rep. Kirk Pearson or other legislators.

Chairman and Vice-Chair Walser have visited Olympia twice already this year, visiting Representatives Pearson, Kristiansen, Lovick, Mark Ericks, Chair of House Transportation Cliborne, but have not yet met with Senator Haugen and left legislative packets with them. Rep. Cliborne stated flat-out that no money is available, thus, no problems for U. S. 2. No money was ever allocated to U. S. 2 from the nickel gas tax funds. Legislators are aware of the problems, but they can do nothing at this point. The Coalition's goal, then, is to help them "find" funding, thus, the need for a lobbyist.

Another legislative issue is a push for a special allocation of funds to add a detachment of eight more WSP troopers and a sergeant to east Snohomish County. The growth has continued and population expanded, yet not one new trooper has been added. Vice-Chairman Donnetta Walser requested everyone contact their legislators, and others. All legislators along the U. S. 2 corridors are very supportive of the Coalition's activities, so she requested they be contacted.

As a graphic example of why more troopers and enforcement is so important, Chairman Walser read a letter he received from a resident of Index which stated, in part, "the alarming and increasing problem of trucks, mostly hauling gravel from the pits just east of Gold Bar on SR 2," and that driving U. S. 2 has become "a harrowing, grueling ordeal" and that it is "grossly negligent and totally unacceptable that the State has permitted this problem to deteriorate into a disastrous public safety issue."

Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be revisiting Olympia Feb. 14 and 15th, so please advise them if there's any new issues they'd like to have considered during their visits.

Another reason that new funding is so crucial is the \$1.5 million matching funds Snohomish County allocated to U. S. 2, which could be lost unless appropriate funding can be secured.

B. R.T.I.D. Status re Monroe Bypass /SR 522 Connector

Chairman Walser gave a brief summary of R.T.I.D. (Regional Transportation Investment District), which is a tri-county organization (created several years ago by the legislature) to raise funds for "local" transportation *capacity* improvements within King, Pierce and Snohomish counties via increases in sales taxes, vehicle licensing fees, truck weight fees and gas taxes. A recent wrinkle is that the legislature set a joint ballot for voters to decide on both the Sound Transit funding and road improvements initiatives. (Visit R.T.I.D.'s website – hwww.rtid.org -- for additional information, or listen to the audio of this discussion on our website, www.us2safetycoalition.org.) The bottom line is that the funds raised (via ballot vote) within a particular county must be used for improvements within that county. And because R.T.I.D.'s Snohomish County boundary extends through Monroe, only registered voters in Monroe can participate. This also means that capacity improvements east of Monroe, in Sultan, Gold Bar or beyond, will not be eligible for R.T.I.D. funding.

Mountlake Terrace Councilwoman Michele Robles, a member of the Cities and Towns organization spoke at length on this issue. She also raised the possibility of funding for U. S. 2 improvements because of its key relationship and importance transporting goods from Western Washington's ports to Eastern Washington and offered to check into that.

C. Report on Washington Good Roads Commission 1/25 Legislative Breakfast-
Chairman Fred Walser was unable to attend this meeting.

S.C.C.I.T. Legislative Agenda – Mentioned their legislative meeting (no breakfast) would be held next Tuesday, in case anyone wished to attend.

V. Discussion/Questions:

Possible Late summer/early Fall Sky Valley visit by Gov. Gregoire – Walser reported no word has yet been received from Governor Gregoire, and her budget message did not mention U. S. 2, not surprising since no projects now exist.

Loretta Storm requested input from Lorena Eng, asking her to comment on Transportation Secretary McDonald's testimony in an early January Transportation Committee meeting that the traffic over the pass [*Stevens*] on U. S. 2 has not changed much, that U. S. 2's problems are primarily due to growth. Ms. Eng stated she could not specifically comment on that statement (did not have info with her), but her recall is that Secretary McDonald was referencing all the increases in ADT's (Traffic volume counts) have been in Monroe and other areas where growth has occurred. General

discussion ensued. Chairman Walser read McDonald's statement (which was in response to a statement 39th Rep. Dan Kristiansen: *"The U. S. 2 Coalition has expressed the concern of people on the route that the situation is unique and needs, uh, attention beyond others. But the — we need to be on a very frank discussion about the numbers. We have to have frank discussion about the resources available. And we have to have a really frank discussion about some of the things that are causing the U. S. 2 situation to deteriorate even as we try to help it, and that has to do with the way traffic is building because of growth. There isn't very much additional traffic coming over the top of the pass. And so as the—as the U. S. 2 corridor study has developed, and as we've worked with citizens, I think we're really honing in on the difficulties we face of investment, uh, land use planning, and, uh, the, uh, competing needs of U. S. 2 and other needs across the—the state. And we're happy to talk about it. It's a very tough problem for us, too."* Further discussion and comments.

Chairman Walser stressed that Lonni Turner's eastern Washington contacts could be quite helpful in urging action by the legislature for future funding. Michelle Robles suggested that the Coalition consider adding Speaker of the House Frank Chopp to our distribution list. Walser stated that Bruce Chattem [*spelling uncertain*], Executive Director of the Washington Aggregate and Concrete Association and he's very supportive of the Coalition's activities and tried to make tonight's meeting. He has offered their lobbyist to assist us. Chair Walser has also spoken with Steve [*sounds like, "Corechester"*], who's the executive of TIB, Transportation Improvement Board, and he wishes to get together with the Coalition and look at some ways we might be able to move funding forward. Henry Sladek, Skykomish Town Councilman, suggested the Coalition might be able to be placed on AWC's Legislative Action Conference agenda to re-emphasize how important such improvements are to towns. Vice-Chair Walser stated it's one of Snohomish's Cities and Towns priorities.

Re McDonald's comment, someone mentioned that Stevens Pass "counts are down"; six years ago there were about 100 buses every Saturday, 80 on Sunday, now there's less than 10.

Dale Taylor asked if he could receive either the minutes or audio of tonight's minutes so he and Joy could "make a report" [*to unknown parties or organization*].

Board Member Seehuus motioned adjournment, seconded by Board Member Josie Fallgatter. All ayes.

8:32 PM Meeting Adjourned .

AGENDA
U. S. 2 Safety Coalition
7:00 PM Monday, January 29, 2007
319 Main Street, Sultan

I. Introductions

II. Approval of meeting minutes

III. Finance Report

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. RDP Update - Richard Warren, WSDOT
- B. Fundraising efforts and current status – Chairman Fred Walser
- C. Bumper stickers, distribution efforts - do we need to purchase more?

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Current Legislative activities and lobby efforts – Chairman Fred Walser & Vice-Chairman Donnetta Walser
- B. R.T.I.D. status re Monroe Bypass /SR 522 Connector
- C. Report on Washington Good Roads Commission Legislative breakfast Jan. 25th and SCCIT legislative agenda.—Chairman Fred Walser

V. Discussion/Questions:

- Possible Late summer/early Fall Sky Valley visit by Gov. Gregoire (Chairman Walser)

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Adjourn by 9:00 PM