

Bus Riders of Saskatoon

Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2016 – 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Present: Cam and Lila – co-chairs, Stephan, Mandy, Peter, Stephan, Marianne, Robert , Mylyne, Michael

Guest: Sherri Benson, MP – Saskatoon West

1. Meeting open

- Mission, vision, and group norms – reviewed by Cam
- Agenda – reviewed with additions and order changes

2. Introductions – Round table

3. Guest: Sheri Benson, MP – Saskatoon West

- Sheri has attended meetings of Bus Riders in the past but today she was with us in her new capacity as Member of Parliament
- Sheri is seeking input into the role of the federal government in the funding of public urban transit and where this might fit in to the expected new infrastructure program
- she hopes to see designated funding for urban transit in the budget – it is to be seen how this will be meted out – there has been some concern about the possible need for municipalities to match funds

- she discussed the role of an opposition MP in the government process
- she invited ideas / questions from the group contributions from the group included:
 - we would like to see designated funding for transit and with the completion of the city's Growth Plan including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), this is an opportune time it will take political will at City Council to implement BRT.
- the City seems to have been expecting public transit to be a part of these funds – the Province currently doesn't target dollars for urban transit
- transit is an operational cost – it is important that there is more than just capital funding another aspect is the problem with grade separation on 22nd Street and Idylwyld railway crossings
- the Railway Act limits blocking by railways to 4 minutes but it isn't enforced
- agriculture and other industry have transportation needs that compete with other needs within the City
- Sheri – noted that there is a timeline by which Railways need to respond to the Lac Megantic report – Railways have a lot of power and not a lot of competition. Sheri will look into the issue of longer trains and enforcement of street blocking times
- a concern was expressed that infrastructure money designated for transportation could move towards roads – this money should go towards non-car transportation problems
- Sheri – commented that the issue is to have money designated for transit and to have revenue predictable over four years

- notes deficit is going to be much bigger than was anticipated and this could influence the amount of money available
- the question was posed as to whether this money is going to be seen as an investment as opposed to simple stimulus
- Sheri responded that the government seems to be talking about investment but speaks of stimulus as well
- feels that predictable funding is going to be important – the big city mayors are good advocates for urban issues and that might be helpful to smaller cities with less clout with the government
- recommends looking at - 2016 – Alternate Federal Budget from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- “Shovel worthy rather than shovel ready” seemed to capture the feeling of the group.

4. City of Saskatoon Transit - meeting report

- review of last meeting - Leila and Mylyne attended
- Growth Plan to be presented to City Council at the Governance and Priorities Committee on March 14th Mandy will be presenting for Bus Riders
- March 16th - public engagement on the BRT pilot for 8th Street – at TCU - see BRS Facebook page and website for details
- now that a Community Engagement Person has been hired it is likely that he will be attending our meetings in place of Jim McDonald
- March 21st meeting – Sarina, Cam, Mylyne can attend
- questions suggested for the next meeting (March 21):

- why is there no priority right of way bylaw for buses
- what is the rationale used for the electronic signage on the front of bus signage
- Sarina was able to respond to other questions which were discussed at previous meetings:
 - Q. Transit information: Transit will be following up with their service provider but for now they encourage use of Transit App and Google
 - Q. “Transit on tap” public information sessions – when are these happening?
 - Q. Light priority at intersections: this has not proved to be helpful as we don’t have designated lanes
- Sarina indicated that someone else should step into the role of the ‘constant representative.’ to the meetings with Saskatoon Transit. Cam expressed interest in being the point person
- it was suggested that we form a sub-committee to plan these meetings
- a sub-committee would prepare material well in advance so it could be brought forward to the large group prior to the meeting
- agreed that we need some way to organize what has already been talked about so we aren’t relying on the memory of one person
- concerned was expressed about not having the resources to do this
- Peter expressed a willingness to do the ground work but wondered if others are interested in participating in such a sub-committee

- Sarina is willing to assist a new committee or subcommittee to get off the ground
- after considerable discussion it was agreed that Peter would be added to the External Committee to pursue the idea and begin the work – additional members can be recruited at future meetings and/or the Facebook page

5. Liveable Saskatoon:

- An e-mail was received from Saskatoon Cycles wondering if Bus Riders would be interested in joining an alliance to engage Saskatoon candidates in the civic election and asked the following:
 - 1) Does BRS want to be part of this as an ally?
 - 2) Are we planning independent action around the fall election?
 - 3) Do we have specific issues that we want to engage candidates on?
- it was agreed that we need more information before we can decide whether we want to be part of this broader coalition
- an invitation will be extended to Liveable Saskatoon to attend our next meeting to discuss this concept with us before we make a decision

6. YXE Let's Talk – Mylene

- a forum was held at the University
 - lots of good feedback, mainly from students
 - security at bus mall a common item of concern
 - Transit management was present and participated
- a second community forum is being planned to involve a wider demographic, hopefully happening within the next few weeks
 - Can BRS provide BRS flyers/pamphlets for next forum?
- the long term plan is to gather all the feedback from the forums, analyze and compile the data, then have a discussion between BRS, Saskatoon Transit and Saskatoon Police Services
- BRS will consider assisting YXE Talks financially if they make a request.

7. Potential ATU job action

- BRS will continue to remain neutral and advocate for Transit users.
- “Fare strike” proposed on social media will not be supported or advocated by BRS. Individuals can make their own decision whether to participate or not.
- Also noted that not swiping passes/fare cards impedes data collection. Denies Transit of data on ridership.

8. Workshop with Jarrett Walker

- BRS was invited to workshop with transit consultant Jarrett Walker. Stephan, Robert, and Sarina were able to attend.
- Besides BRS and City employees there were several other representatives of invited stakeholders.

9. Election activities

- Discussed above with Livable Saskatoon item.

10. Domain name

- Brief discussion. Robert had to leave before this item was discussed. Steering committee will discuss via email regarding transfer of registration for domain name.

11. Committee updates

- Most committee updates were items discussed above. Due to time constraints no other updates were discussed.

12. Determine next meeting facilitators

- Next meeting April 10, 2016. Mandy and Michael volunteered to facilitate. Marianne will ask if room is available to book for that date.

13. Meeting close