

Bus Riders of Saskatoon

Meeting Minutes

April 10, 2016 – 1:30 – 3:30 pm

Present: Michael and Cameron (facilitators), Stephan, Sarina, Robert E., Robert C. (note taker), Mylene

Guest: Randy Donauer, City Councilor

1:30 Meeting open

- Mission, vision, and group norms
- Introductions

1:35 Discussion and future activities

- CoS meeting report
 - Minutes of April meeting will be online soon (Cam, Robert, Sarina attended)
 - Cam will be become our designated permanent representative to attend these meetings beginning in May but good to have a back-up in case Cam can't attend
 - next meeting on April 18th at 4:00 – Sarina, Cam and Robert E
 - try to confirm a date for discussion of YXE Let's Talk.
- ATU negotiations - no one had anything to report regarding impact of the dispute on transit service

- YXE Let's Talk
 - tomorrow at the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre on Wall Street 1:00 to 3:00 and 5:00 to 8:00
 - Cam requested a float of cash to pay for the venue and to provide refreshments
 - Motion (Robert C./Sarina): to provide Cam with a cheque for \$120.00 to cover costs for this event
 - Cam and Mylene will be doing an interview with Global

- Liveable Saskatoon - Sarina will invite someone from Saskatoon Cycles to come and speak to this at our May meeting (Walking Saskatoon could be invited as well)

- Standing Policy Committee on Transportation (SPCOT)
 - Robert C. – three items on agenda for next meeting are to do with Transit
 - purchase of accessible supervisor vans
 - move to 8th Street high frequency service
 - refurbishing of existing buses

 - Sarina will draft e-mail to members of SPCOT to show BRS support of the 8th Street pilot

2:30 Guest: Randy Donauer - City Councilor

- Has represented Ward 5 - the north end on the west side - River Heights, Lawson Heights and Silverwood Heights and the North Industrial Area for six years
 - Randy noted that the North Industrial Area has reduced transit service and there are few sidewalks when you do get on or off the bus
 - transit is a major issue – contentious because the residents have a variety of different opinions on it
 - would like to hear our views on Jarrett Walker’s assertion that you can either provide good service or service to everyone but you can’t do both - not everything that works in other cities will work here.
 - Transit is an area that we need to improve but there are a lot of things in the city that need improvement and my job as Councilor is to weigh all of the matters that need to improve.
 - There are not a lot of transit users in Ward 5 other than University students and it has been frustrating to try to get transit improved in the rest of the ward.
 - The speed in which we can implement will be constrained by what the taxpayers are willing to pay for and the will to do so. We end up going slower than we want to.
 - There are some things that could be implemented that don’t require a total overhaul but a common message he has received from the public is to stop changing the routes.

- Question: What could be changed in our transit system? Answer:
 - Randy has learned about some possibilities through attending sessions on transit at Federation of Canadian Municipality meetings
 - Regional transit in some communities is partly funded by the province.
 - Technology can play a better role: e.g. having transponders on buses that communicate with all of the traffic lights – express buses never hit a red light. Here people are sitting on a bus watching cars go by – we need to get to a point where people are in a car letting the bus go by.
 - Moving to things like bus/car pool lanes, shuttle services to key
 - Randy is interested in hearing our views on what the bus rapid transit can do – will the high frequency pilot be a positive step forward towards BRT?
 - Has pushed for a north south route that would help serve the north end. Future growth will be to the north – towards Warman and Martinsville. We need to start taking suburbs into the fold.
 - Jarrett Walker presents two extremes - perhaps we can work to have a more moderate stance between frequency and coverage – may improve reputation of transit.

- Question (Cam): There never seems to be any change in Route 14 into the North Industrial Area. It is a long ride and a long walk to the bus stop. Answer:
 - The big answer is political will. My residents aren't calling me on this.
 - Route 14 is seen as an inefficient route and there are no sidewalks either in existing industrial area.
 - It can be an investment in potential although not picked up by data. North Industrial Area is the fastest growing employment area in the city – we need to have the courage to say, if we build it they will come
 - A lot of the proposed ideas have been put on the shelf while we wait for the report on the Growing Forward Saskatoon. We have been in a holding pattern for years.
 - We need to do some courageous things now in order to build public confidence on transit.
- Comment (Sarina): three of us attended a workshop with Jarrett Walker which put into perspective that we really can't have both – frequency and full coverage. Over time people who need service will gravitate towards areas with better service.
 - Randy: Jarrett Walker helped me to understand the problem – perhaps I was trying to deliver something unattainable - we need to decide where we are going to fall along the scale – can we provide some areas with high frequency service and still maintain some coverage to the city as a whole?

- Comment (Robert E.): All cities are different but where changes have occurred has been due to some reduction of capacity for cars.
Are we getting to the threshold for that to happen?
 - It is going to take political will – whether it is incentives or disincentives or both – that is going to take political courage.

- Randy:
 - has a lot of people who come into the ward every day just for work and so aren't able to vote for him.
 - One of transit's biggest allies is the Chamber of Commerce. A 'combined business group' met with Council and 90% of what they talked about was either transit or parking.
 - Doesn't like to see more regulation than needed or tell people what is good for them. But not all of the public is educated on the issues and at times there is need for better understanding of an issue.
 - Believes there is a need to invest in transit but believes that most of the public are not clamouring for this.

- Question (Sarina): We have had five or six other Councilors meet with us and we have posed this question: What does Randy see as a role for BRS? Answer:
 - Randy thinks it is best putting efforts into educating the public and Council on transit issues and our views on them.
 - there are other allies in the community that would be interested in what BRS has to say.
 - be careful about being too political – I don't mean not active in the public arena – there is a danger in as soon as you make a friend you can lose a friend.

- get your message out. Huge opportunity to influence Council and the Administration.
 - BRS can get the pulse and be the ear of the public on transit.
 - can also lead the way and help change the culture.
 - can keep Randy in the loop as to what the issues are with transit. In Ward 5 transit is favoured to the university crowd. It is hard to communicate with the workers in the north end. It is a bit of a deaf zone.
 - thinks BRS is approaching things in the right way.
- Question (Robert C.): Where is the City at with regards to elimination of level railway crossings on major arteries? Answer:
 - Randy: A report on costs will come to Council at budget time. A general report on removing the tracks is a waste of money.
- Randy: The 8th Street pilot is a quick, cheap win. I am on the page that this is incorporating some of the things we want to go forward with on a trial basis.
- Randy: Keep plugging away. Keep having meetings like this. I always value hearing from groups.

3:15 Committee updates

- External – Lila and Peter added to committee – met to discuss how the committee works and to discuss strategy for COS meetings
- ATP Stakeholder Advisory Committee – Sarina will send out an e-mail to the Bus Riders list

- Online – Marianne has left Saskatoon – Stephan and Taylor are the remaining members of the committee
- domain name registration is registered to Nicole but is not due until September (see Stephan’s e-mail of April 10). – renewal date is October 8th.
- when renewal comes, we need to get Nicole to transfer the domain name into Robert’s name
- Internal – nothing to report
- Finance - \$445.02 balance

3:25 Determine next meeting facilitators

- Meeting May 15th – Cam will facilitate
 - We should discuss changing the meeting date for at least the summer months

3:30 Meeting close