

MINUTES
STARTRAN ADVISORY BOARD SPECIAL MEETING
StarTran Conference Room 2
June 6, 2013

Members Present: Kim Phelps, Beatty Brasch, Mike DeKalb, Don Herz
Members Absent: John Baylor, Linda Carter, Stephen Speicher
Staff Present: Mike Davis, Miki Esposito, Mike Weston, Brian Praeuner, Kitty Elliott,
Connie Thoreson

I. SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Chairman Mike DeKalb opened the meeting noting the Open Meetings Act and Patron Conduct Notice posted on the north wall.

Mr. DeKalb mentioned the fact that this is a “special” meeting, therefore, patrons will not be heard, but they may speak at the regularly scheduled meeting on June 27, 2013.

A. Meeting and Discussion with New Transit Manager, Mike Davis

- Mike Davis introduced himself and noted his priorities as StarTran Transit Manager, number one being safety and quality of services. More generally he noted that he believes in an open door policy with staff, likes to listen and treat people equally, and also have transparency. On a personal note, Mr. Davis mentioned his hobbies and family.
- Ms. Beatty Brasch introduced herself noting that she operates the Center for People in Need. Ms. Brasch mentioned that one in five households in Lincoln live in poverty with a family of three trying to live on less than \$500 a month. Ms. Brasch felt that most StarTran patrons are of low income status.
- Mr. Don Herz, is a retired Finance Director with the City of Lincoln for 12 years. Mr. Herz brings to the board knowledge of City finances and government. He is also involved in the Haymarket and Arena projects, and formerly sat on the Police and Fire Pension Board. Mr. Herz also loves to golf.
- Mr. Kim Phelps stated he is the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Business and Finance with the University of Nebraska. Mr. Phelps has been on the StarTran Advisory Board for nine years. He noted that UNL makes up approximately 1/3 of StarTran ridership with the two routes between the City and East campuses. He feels that the UNL students appreciate StarTran services. Mr. Phelps noted that student fees make up approximately ½ of the contracted amount with StarTran. This is assessed through student fees of \$25 per semester. It was also mentioned that students may use their UNL pass to ride any StarTran route. Mr. Phelps indicated his appreciation of Mr. Davis’ priority being safety as he thinks it is important to be respectful of other on the road. In the past UNL operated the transportation service between campuses with it being a free bus pass program and costs covered by parking fees. Five to six years later UNL began assessing a student fee, which has increased from \$9 to most recently \$25 per semester. January, 2013 StarTran took over all transit services between campuses with a contracted amount paid by UNL.

Mr. Phelps also noted that UNL will be publicizing the phone application created by an independent contractor in order that students may gain knowledge of other StarTran routes and schedules.

- Mr. Mike DeKalb, Chair of the StarTran Advisory Board, introduced himself noting he is a retired City-County Planner for the City of Lincoln for 36 years. He was involved with the City's Comprehensive Plans and utilized StarTran services to and from his employment with the City of Lincoln for those 36 years.

Mr. DeKalb is a big fan of the StarTran system noting the great job StarTran does despite policy and budget restrictions. He would like to see the system grow, and feels that the entire City population pays taxes and should have transit services available to them and that it is a City obligation to operate transit services. He is aware that interested parties feel that transit doesn't pay their way, however he noted that most City services don't pay their way. It was noted that City Water, Wastewater and Building and Safety departments are able to fund their services. Mr. DeKalb feels that the City and bus system are very efficient and some citizen don't always appreciate the value of their tax dollar.

Mr. DeKalb mentioned an audit of StarTran in the recent past that indicated StarTran is a well run system. It was noted that certain City factions have StarTran under a microscope. Mr. DeKalb stated from a Planner's prospective that the City will eventually become more dense which would help boost transit ridership. The City of Lincoln manages where and how growth develops. There is a 1% increase in the City population each year and Lincoln is in the geographic center of Lancaster County.

Mr. Davis thanked the StarTran Advisory Board members for their service on the Board appreciating their input to make StarTran more effective and efficient.

StarTran staff and Director Esposito introduced themselves and their positions within StarTran.

Mr. Davis indicated interest in doing an all-staff training in the near future possible with Dan O'Connor, a Communications Trainer. This training may be expanded to include all of PW/U.

Mr. Davis handed out a survey to gather priorities of each Board Member and determine where their interests are with regard to StarTran services.

Mr. DeKalb indicated that in the recent past, the Board asked the Mayor for more authority and was denied.

B. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 27, 2013, 8:00 a.m. in the StarTran Conference Room #2.