

Oxford - University Transit Meeting 11/12/08

Members Present: Jack Howard, George Price, Donna Gurley, Carol Haney, Jim Windham, Rebecca Bertrand

Others present: Tim Akers, Katrina Hourin, Tim Lett, Megan Taylor

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jack Howard.

The meeting agenda was approved.

The minutes for the October 8<sup>th</sup> and October 16<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved and submitted.

Report from Operational Supervisor

Ron Biggs, employee of OUT, presented a report on ridership and operation for the month of October.

Jim Windham asked about the demographics of the riders. Tim Lett explained that there had been a wide range of riders in both age and nationality. He noted that the University's international students seemed to be using the system quite frequently.

Route Comments, Modifications, and Expansion

Jack Howard asked that "expansion" be added to agenda item 5.

Tim Lett explained that most of the comments pertained to the bus stop signs. Initially, some citizens were not happy with the placement of signs near their homes. Since then, some of the same people have now made requests for a stop to be placed closer to their home.

Comments and requests were made regarding service to areas not currently on the routes. Some of these areas include Old Taylor Rd, more of N. Lamar and the northeast section of Oxford. Carol Haney and Jack Howard both emphasized the importance to have the routes service FNC.

Tim Lett distributed a modified route map for the Red Route. The modifications included hourly service to Azalea Gardens and NMRC. He noted that these modifications would exhaust the extent of the budget. Rebecca Bertrand noted the importance of making the modifications before the fare structure is implemented.

Carol Haney made a motion to approve the Red Route modifications as presented and implement the modified route December 1, 2008, noting that these modifications would include service to FNC.

George Price seconded the motion.

With all voting yes, the motion was passed.

Jack Howard will email the contact with the request from FNC.

Jack Howard asked Tim Akers to talk about possible service expansion.

Tim Akers told the commission that there had been requests from the Mayor and Board of Alderman to service the new athletic complex as well as requests from the University to expand service inside and outside of campus. He asked the commission if they would

be interested in considering the financial advantages and look at expanding the system and budget, which would include new routes and more, possibly larger, busses.

The commission discussed the possibility of support from area apartment complexes. Tim Lett explained that they are more likely to be a source of income from advertisement sales. Jack Howard expressed a desire for a study of University students' ridership trends.

Tim Akers asked for an understanding from the commission that expansion would mean a possible increase of 30-40% of the budget. This would be included in the application for the grant for the following fiscal year. He also requested that the commission grant permission for a study and proposal to be compiled by Tim Lett and him.

Carol Haney made a motion to permit Tim Lett and Tim Akers to proceed with a study and proposal for route expansion.

George Price Seconded the motion.

With all voting yes, the motion passed.

Tim Akers expressed a desire to have a preliminary draft study and proposal for review by mid-December. Once it has been presented to the OUT commission he will present it to the Mayor and Board of Alderman for approval in early January.

Tim Lett asked for contact information from the University to perform the needed studies.

### Brochures

Tim Akers asked if people had access to brochures and if more places could be made available.

Tim Lett explained that he ordered brochure holders and they should be in next week. He or his staff will take them to the library, both on campus and the county, as well as the student union. He noted that eventually there will need to be outlets where passes can be sold, and it would be good to have the maps placed in locations that could be used for that purpose.

Rebecca Bertrand suggested the information desk on campus, the dining hall and the Inn and Ole Miss. Donna Gurley suggested the residence hall desks and volunteered to email the director. Jim Windham suggested running an ad of the routes and schedule in the DM or stuffing the paper with the schedules.

Jack Howard asked that commission members make a list of suggested areas and submit them to Tim Lett. The OUT staff will be responsible for distributing and maintaining the brochure holders.

### Proposed Fare Structure

Jack Howard opened the discussion by clarifying that the action of a student showing their ID to board the bus was not a free ride.

Tim Lett introduced the proposed fare structure by explaining his method for calculating the numbers based on current ridership and budget demands. He explained that generally there is an approximate 30% drop in ridership after fares are introduced.

The fare structure proposed a daily rate, a monthly pass rate and a tentative fixed monthly rate for the University student, faculty, and staff. Tim Lett will also go to other area schools and businesses to offer an option for employers to purchase passes and offer them at a discounted rate as a benefit to their employees. Fares will include a free transfer to the other route.

George Price made the motion to take the proposed fare structure to a public hearing. Rebecca Bertrand seconded the motion. With all voting yes, the motion passed.

Tim Akers suggested that the public hearing be held in conjunction with the next regular meeting based on the previous two public hearings. Donna Gurley wanted to clarify that an increase in the fare structure would require another public hearing but a decrease in fares would not.

#### Discussion

Jack Howard recognized and thanked Tim Lett for all of his work thus far. He also thanked both Tim Lett and Tim Akers for their efforts in organizing the kick-off ceremony.

Tim Lett added that he is very pleased with his drivers and plans to hold a cookout for them Friday November 14<sup>th</sup>.

Rebecca Bertrand will include an article or information in the parent newsletter about OUT.

Tim Lett informed the commission that the buses would have a detour route on home game weekends. On Fridays before a home game, beginning in the afternoon, service on the Blue Route would discontinue on campus as well as all day Saturday. The service will still operate its normal time and stops along Jackson Ave.

There was discussion about visitor pass availability. Rebecca Bertrand suggested speaking with the Division of Outreach and Continuing Education as well as the Oxford Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Carole Haney made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Donna Gurley seconded the motion. With all voting yes, the meeting was adjourned.