

**SILVER LINE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2020
7:00 PM
REMOTE MEETING**

MISSION: The goal of the Silver Line Task Force is to recommend a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the CATS Lynx Silver Line project. The recommendation will be presented to the Board of Commissioners in late 2020 for its consideration.

The regular meeting of the Matthews Silver Line Task Force will be conducted remotely using the Zoom virtual meeting platform.

TO WATCH LIVE: Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device: <https://zoom.us/j/99161231764>

TO LISTEN LIVE: Dial 877 853 5247 (Toll Free) or 888 788 0099 (Toll Free) Webinar ID: 991 6123 1764

- I. **Introduction and Minutes (10 minutes)**.....Vice Chair Lamson
- II. **Project History Overview and Q/A (45 minutes)**.....CJ O'Neill,
Public Works Director
- III. **Decision Making Criteria (30 minutes)**.....Vice Chair Lamson
Dana Stoogenke
- IV. **Upcoming Meetings**.....Vice Chair Lamson
Silver Line Task Force:
 - September 16, 2020 (additional meeting) via Zoom
 - October 7, 2020 (Zoom or In-person TBD)CATS Public Meetings:
 - September 24, 2020 5:30pm (Matthews Portion)
 - September 29, 2020 5:30 (Union County Portion)

**PUBLIC NOTICE OF POTENTIAL QUORUM PLANNING
BOARD September 2, 2020 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm**

Notice is hereby given that a potential quorum of the Matthews Planning Board will be present at the Matthews Silver Line Task Force public meeting on Wednesday, September 2, 2020 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

**MINUTES
SILVER LINE TASK FORCE
WEDNESDAY,
AUGUST 19, 2020 7:00 PM ZOOM
REMOTE MEETING**

PRESENT: Chairman Bill Stevens; Members Lou Abernathy, David Blackley, Wyatt Dixon, Natasha Edwards, Chris Hough, Jim Johnson, Kerry Lamson, Lynn Lewis, Jana Reeve, Jennifer Saunders; Town Manager Hazen Blodgett; Town Engineer Susan Habina-Woolard; Transportation Planner Dana Stoogenke; Senior Administrative Specialist/Deputy Town Clerk Shana Robertson

ABSENT: Members Fred Baylor, Bo Hulseay, Scott Phillips and Walter Wright

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bill Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

WELCOME

Mr. Stevens reviewed the information that CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) provided at the August 5, 2020 meeting of the Silver Line Task Force. Mr. Stevens said that emails and feedback had been received about the Task Force's objective going forward. Transportation Planner Dana Stoogenke sent out a survey to members to examine the understanding of the information that was presented by staff and CATS. Mr. Stevens said that this would focus discussions and explanations further so that a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners could be made.

Town Manager Hazen Blodgett was introduced to the members of the Silver Line Task Force and was speaking on behalf of Mayor Higdon whom had a prior engagement. Mr. Blodgett thanked the members for their time and efforts. Mr. Blodgett said that he wanted to confirm the group's comfort with the mission and the purpose of the Task Force so discussions could be focused on a decision. Mr. Blodgett said the intention was to look at the three alignments and determine if they are acceptable or if there were refinements necessary. Mr. Blodgett said that in years past the alignments had been vetted through a complicated and significant charrette process that resulted in an approved LPA (locally Preferred Alternative) in 2016. Mr. Blodgett reminded members that this was intended to be a light rail system with a number of destination stations. Mr. Blodgett said that members needed to focus recommendation efforts on the three alternative routes, including improvement suggestions, to best help the Board of Commissioners in their determination.

Mr. Stevens said that he had a positive status meeting with the Mayor, Mr. Blodgett, and Ms. Stoogenke. Mr. Stevens said that the group had gone through a process of gathering information and now it was time to share ideas, concerns, and preferences for the Silver Line.

Mr. Stevens motioned to approve the minutes from the August 5, 2020 meeting as submitted. Chris Hough seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

SURVEY RESULTS

Ms. Stoogenke presented the survey results (Exhibit A attached and made part of these minutes). She said that she would be sending the full survey results out to the Task Force for review.

Discussion was had on scheduling a tour for members to ride the Lynx Blue Line Extension.

Wyatt Dixon said that with proper social distancing, the light rail tour would be beneficial to members. Lou Abernathy said that there were also online videos of the tour.

Mr. Hough asked about the downtown station and asked if the residence of Matthews or the Town Board wanted the station to be a neighborhood station and not a commuter station. Town Engineer Susan Habina-Woolard said that in 2016 there was public involvement on the LPA and a downtown station was something that was always talked about during the public engagement process. Ms. Habina-Woolard said that staff would get that information to the Silver Line Task Force August 19, 2020 Task Force. Mr. Hough said that from a decision-making process it would help to know feedback and where it came from.

ALIGNMENT SECTIONS

Ms. Stoogenke said that based on the survey, the alignment at W Matthews Street was the least understood. Ms. Stoogenke reviewed the CATS Alignment Map (Exhibit B attached and made part of these minutes).

Ms. Stoogenke started on the map at E10-3 and said the green line on the map represented the LPA. Ms. Stoogenke reviewed that route briefly. On the northside of the CSX line Ms. Stoogenke reviewed E10-2 that ran under Matthews Township Parkway, through Matthews Building Supply, and along W Matthews Street.

Mr. Stevens asked about the sections that border the CSX right of way. Ms. Stoogenke said those alignments are based on using the CSX right of way closer to the Galleria Shopping Center. If not using CSX right of way, the route would travel in the center of Monroe Road and cross over to Industrial Drive. Mr. Stevens reminded members that the bold green line on the map was the current LPA and all other route options that the Task Force is being asked to consider.

Mr. Abernathy asked about the red lines where the E10-2 route moved through CSX right of way. He said that the drawing seemed to be incorrect and he thought that was going to be a tunnel not a bridge. Ms. Habina-Woolard clarified that the drawings were correct, there would be a new bridge on Matthews Township Parkway with the light rail going under the bridge and vehicle traffic on the bridge.

Kerry Lamson asked if the four station locations in Matthews were Monroe Road/Galleria, Downtown, Entertainment District, and CPCC. Ms. Stoogenke said that was correct. Mr. Lamson asked if the task force could review the CSX option or was it not a viable option. Mr. Lamson said that the CSX option was the route of least disruptions. Ms. Stoogenke said the only section on the CSX right of way would be the area on the other side of Matthews Township Parkway. Ms. Stoogenke said that If CATS has put it on the map to review, the Task Force should review that option and it was a worthy conversation.

Mr. Lamson said that he understood that one of the Town's goals was to have a Downtown station as a destination.

Mr. Lamson said that whether the train stops in town or not, the Silver Line would still need to go through Downtown to the ENT station location. Mr. Lamson said that this was a good thing unless it caused too much disruption in town with parking or traffic flow.

Ms. Stoogenke continued the Silver Line movement through the Matthews Building Supply site, along W Matthews Street, across N Trade Street with a station located to the south side of E Matthews and N Trade Street. Ms. Stoogenke said that this alternative would continue down E Matthews and connect to the current LPA.

Mr. Stevens asked if each alignment could be presented onto different maps as it might help.

David Blackley said he was wondering where the new W Matthews Street alignment came from and there was a lot of confusion as no one had seen or heard much about it. Mr. Blackly said that the W Matthews street alignment would have two rail lines within a block of each other crossing the only thru street in town. Ms. Stoogenke said that the W Matthews Street had been on the alignment maps in May when the Silver Line Task Force had their first meeting and it was previously presented to the Board of Commissioners by Andy Mock. Mr. Blackley asked if CATS initiated that alternate route. Ms. Habina-Woolard explained that when the Town did the Downtown Mobility Study, the W Matthews Street alternative was an idea of the design team. That design was shared with CATS and they evaluated the design. Mr. Blackley said that the Mobility Study was not that old and if new designs could be studied that quickly then CATS should be asked to evaluate the CSX right of way and the Independence Pointe Parkway options. Mr. Blackley said that he agreed with Mr. Lamsons' points about using the CSX right of way and said that because it was inconvenient to CATS did not mean it was not a better option for Matthews. Mr. Blackley added that he wanted to hear more of a reason from CATS other than it was difficult to work with CSX.

Jennifer Saunders asked where the station would be located on the corner of E Matthews Street. Ms. Stoogenke said that it would be at the corner of E Matthews street (where Kristopher's was located). Ms. Saunders asked if there was enough parking around that area. Ms. Stoogenke explained that it would be a walk-up station. Mr. Blackley said what would happen is commuters would park all over Matthews.

Lynn Lewis asked about the walk-up station and if there was enough space in that location for the station. Ms. Habina-Woolard said that it does get close to where the building stairs and plaza are located and it was planned that the station would blend seamlessly in from the building. Ms. Habina-Woolard said she did not know if the property would need to be acquired.

Mr. Dixon encouraged the members to take a tour on the Blue Line because it would give members a great point of reference to look at a real example.

Natasha Edwards said that everyone had made wonderful points and she liked the W Matthews Street alignment but understands the concern of the potential of possible disruptions. Ms. Edwards said that it needed to be a very well designed and if done right it would be a great opportunity for the Town.

Mr. Stevens said that the members of the Task Force needed to develop their driving principals and a reason for the recommendation other than it looked good on a map.

Mr. Lamson asked if there was a set of goals that the Town Commissioners set when the first LPA was approved in 2016. He asked what goals were in place to bring the Silver Line through Matthews Downtown district and if there was such a document that may aid the Task Force in its future decision. Mr. Lamson said that if there was not such a document, the Task Force could establish and evaluate. Ms. Habina-Woolard said that she was not sure if there was a document but staff would research that and report back to the group.

Jana Reeve said that she was confused and concerned by Mr. Blodgett's comment that the goal was not to make this a transit solution but the mission was to bring people into Matthews. Ms. Reeve said she was not sure she understood why and understood that the Town wanted to have a way for people to get to the Sportsplex and CPCC but she was not sure there was a big need to bring people into Downtown. Ms. Reeve said that she was also unsure why there was not a need for a direct route to commute from Matthews to Charlotte. Ms. Stoogenke said that Mr. Blodgett could come back and clarify or staff could get clarification to share with the members.

Ms. Stoogenke said that there are Vision Statements that were adopted by the Board of Commissioners with the first statement being a "Well-Planned, Multi-Modal Transportation System". Ms. Stoogenke said those Vision Statements could be sent to the Task Force members.

Public Works Director C.J. O'Neill said that based on memory, the reason for this rail line was set very early on with charettes in 2014 and public input and engagement sessions. Mr. O'Neill said that during those sessions there was a very strong public sentiment pushing for Matthews to be a destination style route and a station in or around Downtown. Mr. O'Neill added that after those discussions, DOT looked at Independence Boulevard for commuter traffic into Charlotte.

Mr. Abernathy said that he believed that the Commissioners reviewed the W Matthews Street alternative in 2016 and voted against that alignment.

NEXT MEETING: September 2, 2020 at 7:00 pm via Zoom

OPEN FORUM FOR TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Mr. Stevens said that the Silver Line Task Force was going to ask that Town Staff be removed for this portion of the meeting so that members could speak freely (staff members were removed from participant status. Deputy Town Clerk stayed on to record minutes). Mr. Stevens said that he did have a status meeting with the Town Manager and the Mayor. Task Force Members had provided the Mayor feedback related to information coming very quickly, members unsure if a decision could be made with the level of details that was being given, concerns that staff had a predefined agenda that they were steering members toward, and that everyone on the Task Force needed to be given a voice.

Mr. Dixon said that there are a couple of decision points. The first was to talk about the route but he said he felt the more important decision would be discussion on where the stations needed to be located. Mr. Dixon said that there was a difference of opinions in the group and during the decision-making process the members needed a value list and he felt stations were an important value to the routes. Mr. Dixon added that there would be disruptions during any development.

Mr. Blackley asked if there was a reason that the group could not meet in person. Mr. Blackley said that this is a multimillion-dollar project and meeting with technology disruptions was difficult. Mr. Stevens said that point came up when he spoke to the Mayor but there were staff members that were not comfortable meeting in person. Mr. Stevens said that he was ok meeting in smaller groups or individually in person. Mr. Stevens explained to the members about open meeting laws if group size was over a quorum.

Ms. Saunders suggested the Task Force plan to take a walking tour of what was planned for the Downtown section

of the Silver Line. Mr. Stevens agreed.

Mr. Lamson said that he felt the sessions were more geared towards engineers and a lot of engineering data was provided to the group. He said his question was why and what the group was trying to accomplish, if a straight line would be a better option, and what are the goals. He said that the Silver Line needed to be looked at in a business or residency perspective on if a station was needed and what were those uses. Mr. Lamson said that he believed that a destination station was a good thing but there would be a price for disruptions. Mr. Lamson said he believed there should be commuter destinations on each side of Town to accomplish traffic relief.

Jim Johnson said that his expectation of the Task Force was a higher level of information with multiple options. The realization was the Task Force was not given many options to choose from. He added that the Task Force needed to make a decision that was best for the Town and not what was best for CSX or CATS.

Mr. Dixon said that it was explained to him that Duke Power and Railroads had more land rights than anyone.

Mr. Stevens said that at some point the Town Board and CATS would require the recommendation of the Task Force. As a group there would be an opportunity to make a good solution based on principles and studies. Mr. Stevens said that based on information received from Mr. O'Neil, the LPA and alternatives to the LPA is where the group needed to focus. Alternates could be proposed but they may not go anywhere. Mr. Stevens said that staff had gone toe to toe with CATS and there was no predefined path they were steering the group towards. Mr. Stevens added that going back to the Independence Pointe Parkway option or other options such as the query may not be an option.

Mr. Dixon said the biggest impact of this group could provide would be the proximity of a station to the downtown area.

Mr. Stevens said that he would send group contact information out to the members.

Mr. Lamson asked about an agenda for the next meeting and if there was a Vice Chairman to facilitate the meeting in Mr. Stevens absence.

Mr. Lamson said that he would like to see requested documentation from staff and he would like to see the Task Force spend time talking about goals of the group to see if everyone had the same perspective and objectives on the scenarios and if options were even possible.

Mr. Stevens said that he did want the group to discuss goals at the September 2, 2020 meeting

Ms. Edwards nominated Mr. Lamson for Vice Chairman and Mr. Blackly seconded the nomination. The nomination was unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 8:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shana Robertson Senior
Administrative Specialist/Deputy
Town Clerk