

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, June 25, 1992

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Parks called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Keith Parks, President
Jack Billings
Peter Brandt, Treasurer (arrived at approximately 8:15 p.m.)
Janet Calvert
Tammy Fitch, Vice President
Patricia Hocken
Thomas Montgomery, Secretary
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT: Mr. Parks observed the importance and the difficulty of selecting a site for a new transit station in downtown Eugene, and stated that the public's help is needed. He requested that speakers observe a three-minute limit on their remarks.

PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED SITES FOR NEW EUGENE STATION: Stefano Viggiano, Lane Transit District (LTD) Planning Administrator, explained that a new station is needed in order to meet Federal and State mandates for alternate modes of transportation and to allow the district's current ridership to grow. The LTD Board has determined that the station must be downtown and off-street. Every potential site within a 36-square-block area has been investigated, and the board has reduced the sites under consideration to four. A preliminary analysis of each of the four has been conducted, and the final selection will be made in May 1993.

Mr. Parks opened the public hearing.

Kimball Hodge, 2438 Quince Street, Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church at 868 High Street, stated that the church's parking lot forms part of the International House of Pancakes (IHOP) site under consideration. The church, which was founded before Eugene was incorporated, has over 2,000 members, he said. More than 1,400 attend Sunday morning services, and over 500 children attend Sunday school. The church is used seven days a week; 360 non-church groups have met there in the past year. The congregation consciously chose to remain downtown in order to have proximity to the University of Oregon and residences of senior citizens. Relocation would cost many millions of dollars. Reverend Hodge stated that construction of the transit station at the IHOP site would cause irreparable damage to First Baptist Church's ministry, and requested that that site not be selected.

Jan Schultz, 4669 East Amazon Drive, representing First Baptist Church, expressed concerns about the noise from a transit station. For six months of the year, the church windows are open, and when buses pass it is difficult to hear inside. The church sanctuary should be quiet in order to be a place of spiritual renewal. Ms. Schultz also expressed concern about potential traffic congestion, especially on Sunday mornings, and on Wednesday evenings when 200-300 children enter and exit the church. She voiced fear of the threat caused by loiterers to the personal safety of participants in women's exercise groups and mothers' morning groups.

Oz Witt, 1860 Balboa Street, representing First Baptist Church, stated that he is a member of the business community. The church has objectively studied the IHOP site and has concluded that location of the transit station there would cast a shadow on the continued viability of the church, Mr. Witt said. A one-quarter-block parking lot at 8th Avenue and High Street that currently supplies the church with 95 parking spaces would be eliminated, as well as 58 adjacent slots. Mr. Witt said this would cause a serious parking problem, particularly on Sunday mornings from 9:40 a.m. to noon. Already, parking is one of the most frequent complaints of church members. Mr. Witt said that although it was limited to three speakers, First Baptist Church could have found 30-100 people to speak for it. He presented a petition that he said bore over 1,250 signatures in opposition to siting at the IHOP location. Members of the audience wearing green circles were displaying opposition to the IHOP site, he added.

Brian Knowles, 1133 Olive Street, Apartment 915, spoke in support of the McDonald site as a person with a disability living across from that site. He said that the site is more accessible to those with disabilities than the IHOP or Election sites. Mr. Knowles said that he rides the bus several times per month to meetings and has schedule constraints.

Laura Powell, 4091 North Clarey, stated that she is the administrative assistant at the First Christian Church at 1166 Oak Street. She spoke in support of the First Baptist Church's request that the IHOP site not be selected. Her church's programs have been curtailed due to a lack of adequate parking, she said. People would not regularly ride the bus to church, and adequate parking for at least the staff of First Baptist Church is needed.

Bill Countryman, 222 East Broadway, stated that he arrived in Eugene 51 years ago when the City's population was 20,000. He operated a market until 1950, and then opened a real estate office at 6th Avenue and High Street. Recently, he chose the Eugene Hotel as a retirement home, and is very happy there. Most of the apartments at the hotel lack air conditioning, making it necessary to open their windows. Many residents suffer from asthma and bronchitis. Buses passing every few minutes would create problems of dust and pollution. The hotel's residents are scared, Mr. Countryman said.

Steve Carmichael, 2663 West 28th Avenue, stated that his parents moved from an apartment in north Eugene, where they felt isolated, to the Eugene Hotel. The change was beneficial because it enabled them to be part of the community. Mr. Carmichael's father died last November; his mother still lives in the hotel and has respiratory problems. The hotel's value as a senior center is its location in the center of Eugene. A bus station next to it

would be a tragedy, Mr. Carmichael said.

Ethel Gran, 222 East Broadway, stated that she chose to live in the Eugene Hotel because of its central location, access to shopping and physicians, and its quiet, comfortable atmosphere. A neighboring bus terminal would threaten her home, she said, through the extra traffic which would be a hazard to seniors, the disturbing noise, and the fumes which would be detrimental to those with respiratory problems.

Dorothy Jones, 485 Fair Oaks Drive, spoke in opposition to the IHOP site. Eugene's downtown is struggling, she said, and the most positive area is that surrounding East Broadway and Pearl Street. Her parents live in the Eugene Hotel and enjoy it, and she does not wish the area to become congested with buses and pedestrians.

Hazel Fuller, 222 East Broadway, stated that she is a two-year resident of the Eugene Hotel. She expressed concern that a transit station at the IHOP site would increase traffic, which is already heavy on the three streets surrounding the hotel. Air pollution is very dangerous for many of the hotel's residents, she said. Many chose to live in the hotel because it is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A transit station would bring heavy pedestrian traffic past the main entrance to the hotel, which is residents' front door. Loiterers would seek the hotel's vestibule in inclement weather, and extra police patrols would be required, she said.

Harold Dunn, 222 East Broadway, said that he was born 80 years ago in Eugene, and served as a sergeant in the Eugene Police Reserve after World War II. Part of his beat included the IHOP site. Now he lives in the Eugene Hotel, and area traffic has multiplied over the years. Bringing too many people into an area creates hazards, he said, including risk from a potential earthquake.

Mike McNutt, 2245 Lawrence Street, stated that he owns property on the IHOP site and is the general manager of Skeie's Jewelers at 1027 Willamette. He wishes downtown Eugene to have a new transit station, but does not recommend selecting either the IHOP or the McDonald site. The Elections site would be preferable. He opposes the McDonald site because it would slow the development of downtown Eugene and inhibit the flow of traffic on Olive Street. Skeie's business would be damaged, Mr. McNutt said; buses are not a complementary use to retail.

Trudy DeMarchi, 1133 Olive Street, stated that she moved to Eugene six years ago and rides the bus at least twice a day. She lives at Olive Plaza, next to the McDonald site, on the third floor. Already, buses on 11th Avenue create fumes which aggravate her bronchial problem. She expressed concern about disrespectful persons collecting at the corner of 10th Avenue and Olive Street, particularly those with skateboards. Many of the elderly cannot see and hear well, and crossing streets with the additional traffic would become more difficult. She opposes selection of the McDonald site.

Ed Oxenreider, 1524 Barber Drive, stated that he is the administrator of Olive Plaza, where opinion about a potential transit station at the McDonald site is divided. The majority of Olive Plaza's 159 residents feel that the

station would have a major negative impact, he said. The average age at Olive Plaza is 76.4 years; five are over 80. Seven residents spend most of their time in apartments directly next to the proposed site, and 75 others' apartments are near. Within 500-600 feet of Olive Plaza, six to seven buses depart from the current stop. If the station is sited there, 17-23 buses would leave or arrive every five minutes within 400 feet of Olive Plaza, Mr. Oxenreider said. Already, two residents wish to move because of breathing difficulties, and doctors have told some second- and third-floor residents who cannot sleep that they should move.

Lillian Starr, 1133 Olive Street, spoke on behalf of Olive Plaza residents who oppose selection of the McDonald site. Parking for residents and their visitors would be eliminated. Even current noise levels make it difficult to sleep in the evening when residents' windows are open, she said. She raised concerns about incidents on the street that would threaten residents' security. She also questioned whether any of the proposed sites allows room for future expansion.

Dana Woodall, 1133 Olive Street, stated that selection of the McDonald site would eliminate two parking lots. Her family from out of town already has difficulty locating parking, she said.

Tom Monteith, 1133 Olive Street, stated that he lives at Olive Plaza and agrees with the remarks of Lillian Starr.

Jerry Moskus, 4385 Inwood Lane, president of Lane Community College, spoke on behalf of the 15,000 students who use the LCC Downtown Center each year and the more than 150 full-time equivalent employees of the center. He opposed the choice of the McDonald site unless accommodations are made for the more than 80 percent of Downtown Center students who drive. LCC subsidizes parking in the parking lot adjacent to the center in the amount of \$7,000 per year. The center, acquired in 1977, has 56,000 square feet and is a considerable public investment. A new transit station would serve some students, but particularly evening students and older students need nearby parking. Forty percent of downtown center students would not be there without nearby parking, Mr. Moskus said. A small business development center serves people on an in-and-out basis, and many rural students cannot ride the bus. He advocated either locating the station west of the existing parking lot at 11th Avenue and Willamette Street, or building a parking structure either over or under the bus transit site at 11th and Willamette. It would be a loss to the students if parking is moved further west, and a catastrophe if no parking is provided, he said.

Frank Washburn, 2011 West 26th Place, is the vice president and general manager of Commercial Equipment Lease Corporation, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty Federal Bank, located at the corner of Pearl and Broadway. In 1986, when the bank moved to that location, it had five employees, and now has more than 60. Mr. Washburn expressed concern about traffic and noise if the IHOP site is chosen. It is already difficult to traverse the Broadway/Pearl intersection, exit and enter the bank's parking facility, or use its two drive-in teller windows. A transit station would aggravate these problems, and would not be conducive to a bank-like atmosphere.

David Counter, 2696 Moon Mountain Drive, stated that for 11 years he has been part owner of the Cafe Xenon, located at East Broadway and Pearl Street. He opposes selection of the IHOP site. His business depends on a fragile balance of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The additional noise and pollution of a transfer station would destroy the atmosphere. The East Broadway area is one of the few successful retail areas in downtown Eugene.

Emily Schue, 3122 Willamette, spoke as a board member of Olive Plaza. A transfer station is part of the effort to improve Eugene's downtown area, she said. Housing is another important factor; the City must promote downtown residence in order to bring vitality to the City center 24 hours per day. The current levels of traffic and noise are acceptable, but the noise, traffic, and pollution caused by a transit station at the McDonald site would be unacceptable, she said.

Peter Bartel, 2532 Nixon Street, stated that he has been a member of the Eugene Downtown Commission for three years, but was not representing the commission. He stated that LTD must be a good neighbor in downtown Eugene, and expressed concern about the impact of 100 additional buses on the area. Currently, there is growth on East Broadway and potential at Willamette and Olive streets, he said; Fifth Street is still more dynamic. The introduction of the transit station would have a large impact on the surrounding area. He recommends investigating moving the McDonald site one block to the west, and also suggests examining sites other than the four currently proposed.

Peter Brandt arrived.

Marjorie Smith, 2645 Emerald Street, stated that she chairs the Olive Plaza Board of Directors and is a member of the Advisory Committee of the LCC Downtown Center. She expressed concern about the McDonald site, saying that it is even closer to Olive Plaza than the IHOP site is to the Eugene Hotel. Olive Plaza residents must already phone to enter the locked front doors of their building. The population arriving by bus at the station would be ever-changing and would have no personal connection to the area, she said.

Brian Obie, PO Box 1356, stated that his office is located at 298 East Fifth Avenue. The community needs a downtown transit station, he said. He neither favors nor opposes particular sites, and feels that there is no "good" choice. The Elections site may be more favorable than others, due to its proximity to the Federal Building, the Hult Center, the County Courthouse, City Hall, and the Fifth Street Public Market. If the Elections site is chosen, it should be approached carefully in order to minimize negative effects on the Fifth Street Market area, the only downtown commercial area with vitality. Mr. Obie listed conditions on the choice of that site: 1) respect for the historical and cultural aspects of the Market district and its ambience; 2) no bus traffic on 5th Avenue itself--entrance on Oak Street and exit on Pearl Street would still allow the benefits of 6th and 7th avenues; 3) formation of an architectural review committee, composed of Market district residents and businesspeople; 4) an operational plan to deal with panhandlers, predators, and pushers; and 5) a 60-foot commercial buffer on 5th Avenue.

Jeremy Nissell, 115 West 30th Avenue, owner of J. Michaels Books, spoke in opposition to selection of the IHOP site. He termed the block of his

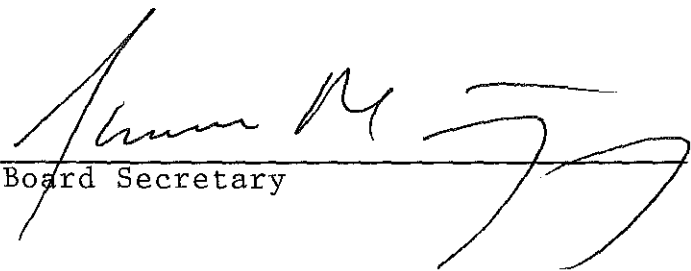
business one of the few bright spots in downtown Eugene, and noted that one merchant on it left a site near a bus station to locate there. As the cornerstone of the area, Cafe Xenon's business would be damaged by bus fumes, and that would be detrimental to other area businesses.

Michael Phinney, owner of a coffee shop on Pearl Street at East Broadway, spoke in opposition to selection of the IHOP site. He stated that it would drive away his customers, many of whom now come there from City and County government buildings.

Mr. Parks thanked the audience for attending and providing testimony. He stated that the LTD Board wants to choose the right site for the transit station.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

(Recorded by Christina Cowger)
1tdph25.062


Board Secretary