

**CENTRE COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CCMPO)  
COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, January 22, 2008  
6:00 pm  
College Township Municipal Building**

**Minutes**

**Voting Members Present:**

Ron Buckalew	Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC)
Bob Corman	Penns Valley Planning Region
Jon Eich	Centre County Commissioner
Elizabeth Goreham	State College Borough
Ken Hall	Mountaintop Planning Region
Dan Klees, Chair	College Township
Karen Michael (for Kevin Kline)	PennDOT District 2-0 Office
Chris Lee	Harris Township
Jeff Luck	Patton Township
Steve Miller	Ferguson Township
Jadine Reese	Upper Bald Eagle Planning Region
Rich Rogers	Centre County
Frank Royer	Spring Township
Mike Savage	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Barbara Spencer	Halfmoon Township
John Spychalski	Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)
Harold Nanovic (for Tom TenEyck)	PennDOT Central Office

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Rob Cooper	Penn State University
Frank Halderman	Bellefonte Borough

**Others Present:**

Bob Crum	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Tom Zilla	CRPA
Trish Meek	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Lori Shingler	CRPA – Recording Secretary
Mike Bloom	Centre County Planning and Community Development
Hugh Mose	CATA
Michelle Barbin	Mountaintop Region
Bert Kisner	Citizen
Mike Rose	Representative Benninghoff's Office
Gary Sinderson	WJAC

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### 1. Call to Order

Mr. Klees called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 2. Election of Officers

*Mr. Corman motioned to nominate Dan Klees as Chair of the Coordinating Committee for 2008. Ms. Goreham seconded. The vote was unanimous to elect Mr. Klees to serve as Chair.*

*Mr. Buckalew motioned to nominate Elizabeth Goreham as Vice-Chair for 2008. Mr. Savage seconded. The vote was unanimous to elect Ms. Goreham to serve as Vice-Chair.*

*There was a vote of acclimation to appoint Bob Crum to act as Secretary.*

### 3. 2008 Meeting Schedule

*Mr. Spsychalski made a motion to approve the meeting dates and times for 2008. Mr. Luck seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

### 4. Approval of Minutes

*Mr. Spsychalski made a motion to approve the November 27, 2007 Coordinating Committee minutes. Mr. Corman seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.*

### 5. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizen comments.

### 6. Preliminary Draft 2009-2010 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Zilla reviewed the TIP schedule, noting that the Coordinating Committee should adopt a Preliminary Draft 2009-2012 TIP this month. PennDOT will respond with proposed revisions to this draft in February, and the Final Draft TIP should be approved for public comment and air quality conformity analysis in March. After the public comment period, the CCMPO will adopt the final TIP and submit it to PennDOT.

The base funding allocation for highways and bridges over the four years totals \$50,009,000. Mr. Zilla presented a breakdown of these monies for roadways, bridges and Transportation Enhancements. Act 44 provides additional funding above the base allocation in the amount of \$15,713,000, bringing the total to \$64,722,000. The total transit allocation is \$25,372,000; although this does not include federal earmarks, and CATA has a history of receiving such earmarks.

Mr. Zilla noted that the MPO has requested spike funding for the construction of the I-99/I-80 local access interchange. He explained that spike funding is a special allocation of funds beyond the normal base allocation. PennDOT has responded that a decision about this request will be made at a later point in the TIP development process.

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Mr. Zilla reviewed specific Safety and Congestion Mitigation Projects, all of which are being carried forward from the current TIP. Three Betterment projects will also carry forward, as well as Route 26/64 from Pleasant Gap to Zion, which is a new project.

A Pavement Restoration line item is also being added. Mr. Zilla noted that most of the funds from Act 44 allocated to pavement restoration projects currently reside in this new line item. Each year PennDOT will identify specific projects to be funded from this line item. State 711 Maintenance Program funds do not come through the MPO, but each year PennDOT provides a list of the projects to be completed with funding from this program. Mr. Lee explained that federal money comes through the MPO, but state money does not. Mr. Zilla clarified this by noting that Act 44 requires its revenues to come through the MPO even though it is state money, but 711 Program funds are not part of this requirement.

There are several issues related to the Highway element of the TIP. First, the implications of not receiving spike funds for the I-80/Route 26 local access interchange are likely to be significant. Mr. Zilla reviewed several alternative options, including funding part of the interchange from the MPO's base allocation, funding it from the I-80 Toll Conversion Project, or requesting spike funding for bridge projects and using the money originally allocated to those for the interchange project.

Another issue is the status of State College Borough's West Beaver Avenue/South Fraser Street realignment. The MPO took action in November to add the construction phase of this project to the TIP because the Borough was trying to obtain earmark funds that are required to be shown on the TIP. There has been some recent discussion at the Borough about whether to proceed with or abandon this effort. The outcome of these discussions will determine if the project stays on or is dropped from the TIP. Mr. Eich felt that the South Fraser Street realignment should stay on the TIP for one more year.

The status of the Old Fort Park and Ride Project is another timely issue, as environmental concerns such as stormwater management and consistency with nearby historical features have been raised in the current location. PennDOT is working to address the concerns, and staff has also raised the possibility of relocating the park and ride lot across Route 45 to a different corner of the intersection with Route 144.

CMAQ and Safety line items are also included in this TIP. There is a possibility that funds can be shifted so as to increase the small safety line item. The amount of CMAQ funding, on the other hand, is substantial. Mr. Lee noted that there are many funding streams and often the decisions about project priorities have already been made before the TIP comes to the local officials.

Mr. Zilla noted that special projects will need to be identified for the Pavement Restoration line item. This line item could also be used as a reserve because of the sources of funds currently programmed under it. He noted that there may be projects added to the TIP from the Regional Operations Plan (ROP). Staff is currently working with PennDOT to determine what the priorities are for Centre County.

When the current TIP was adopted, several new projects were added. Mr. Zilla noted that it is difficult to get the construction phases of all of these projects programmed at once, so the chances of adding new projects to the next TIP are slim. He did review the next priority projects from the LRTP in case adding projects becomes an option.

Reviewing the bridge element, Mr. Zilla explained that the current focus is on Structurally Deficient (SD) bridges, with a goal to dedicate 85% of Capital Bridge funding to rehabilitation of SD bridges. He noted that there are 61 SD state bridges and 17 SD local bridges in Centre County. 29 of these bridges are on the Preliminary Draft TIP. Also included are box culvert and maintenance/preservation line items.

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Mr. Zilla noted that statewide spike funding is to be focused on SD bridges, and PennDOT District 2-0 has requested spike funds for the bridges on the Preliminary Draft TIP. Currently, there are two municipal bridges on the Draft TIP that are carried forward from the current TIP. Staff would like to identify one or two other bridges to add. He explained that many of the bridges in the County are municipally owned and located on municipal roads. For state bridges, the federal share of the project is 80%, with the state providing a 20% match. For local bridges, the host municipality has to provide at least 5%, and up to 20%, of project costs.

Mr. Zilla explained that 19 of the 29 priority bridges as identified by PennDOT are included on the LRTP, but the remaining 10 must be added in the 2008 LRTP Update. The MPO has discussed the fact that changes may have to be made to the project ranking process for state and municipal bridges.

The Transit element will be focused on the following:

- Rolling stock rebuild and new purchases
- Advanced technologies
- Service restoration and expansion
- Rideshare and vanpool efforts

Mr. Zilla reviewed the timeline for the TIP adoption process.

Mr. Lee noted that betterment projects must be approved by the MPO, but are not reviewed by the MPO and are not part of the project ranking process.

Mr. Eich referred to Route 322 safety improvements and asked if rumble strips could be installed on the sides of the road in an effort to further enhance safety. These strips are reported to be very effective in reducing accidents, and are installed at a very low cost. Ms. Michael replied that these were incorporated as part of the Route 350 project, and PennDOT is considering installing them along Route 322 as well.

Mr. Klees referred to the response letter from PennDOT regarding spike funding, and wondered if the MPO should elevate its concern and advocacy for the I-80/Route 26 local access interchange. Mr. Lee agreed, noting that this project is a high local priority. Ms. Goreham asked if letters should be sent from individual members or from the MPO as a whole, and Mr. Zilla replied that a single letter should probably come from the MPO. He noted that such a letter would need to be drafted immediately. Mr. Eich asked when it would be appropriate to take concerns to the Turnpike Commission as well, and Mr. Zilla explained that this should be done at the same time, because the Commission is currently looking at needed improvements to I-80.

*Mr. Buckalew made a motion to send correspondence to PennDOT, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and other state officials emphasizing the importance of providing spike funding for the construction of the I-80/Route 26 Local Access Interchange. Mr. Royer seconded the motion, noting that a new housing development in that area is close to becoming a reality. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Mr. Spsychalski made a motion to approve submission of the Preliminary Draft 2009-2012 TIP. Mr. Eich seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

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### 7. Draft FY 2008-08 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Zilla reviewed that at the November MPO meetings, a PennDOT Planning Priorities letter was circulated, and potential candidate projects for supplemental planning funds were outlined. The UPWP is adopted every year in February, and will cover a time period between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009. It lists the critical work tasks for MPO staff as well as important actions to be taken by the MPO. The 2008-09 UPWP must be adopted by February 28. Mr. Zilla listed the tasks that would be included in the base UPWP.

There are two supplemental planning funds projects on the current UPWP. The first is coordinating land use and transportation planning, focusing on the Halfmoon/Patton area and the Route 64/Route 550 area in Bellefonte, Spring Township and Walker Township. Mr. Lee noted that when coordinating land use and transportation, one should consider the impact of transportation systems on land development. Second is the assessment of public transportation services in Centre County, which is in response to a request from the County Commissioners Office. Mr. Zilla noted that staff will be requesting time extensions for both of the current projects in February, and work will continue into the next fiscal year.

The MPO discussed possible supplemental planning funds projects for the 08/09 UPWP in November, and members requested additional information on each.

The first project is to update socioeconomic forecasts and the travel demand model. This particular project is the highest staff priority because it is the foundation for the LRTP update. The primary focus would be on land use forecasts, recalibration of the network after new roads have opened, and software updates. The total cost would be \$100,000, and work would carry over into the FY 2009-10 UPWP.

Mr. Lee asked if this project would eventually result in a higher level of in-house skills, with staff being increasingly able to do this without consultant assistance. Mr. Zilla replied that staff would coordinate the update with municipalities and local officials, but a consultant would be needed for the database development and management.

The second project would be to prepare a detailed inventory of municipal bridges to assist in the prioritization of projects for the LRTP and TIP. The focus would be on the development of a comprehensive database, as well as local education regarding the bridge programming process. The total cost would be \$40,000 and this project, too, would carry over into the FY 2009-10 UPWP.

The third option is a continuation of the coordination of land use and transportation plans by completing studies for Routes 64/550 corridors and the Halfmoon/Patton Area Plan. This could also include a new study in the Route 150 corridor, between the I-99 interchange and Bellefonte. Mr. Zilla noted that this would go beyond a review of traffic impact studies and plans, focusing on areas and corridors that are currently experiencing growth. The total cost would be \$50,000. Staff has identified this as the lowest priority of the three projects, because there are some opportunities to access additional funds this year based on research PennDOT is doing about needs of MPO staffs across the state. Mr. Zilla thought this particular effort could be worked into the UPWP using some of those funds, rather than supplemental funds.

Mr. Buckalew noted that the UPWP was discussed at the CRPC meeting in January, and the CRPC was supportive of all three projects.

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Mr. Klees noted that these supplemental projects may or may not be approved. His concern was how much staff time is available for project completion. He explained that he had a problem with the bridge inventory project, simply because he thought this was something that PennDOT should develop and standardize across all MPOs. Mr. Klees asked what number of tasks staff was comfortable with. Mr. Zilla thought that all three would be too much, since staff is still working on the two supplemental projects in the current UPWP. He suggested choosing two.

Mr. Eich asked which of the tasks would be the most technically difficult or require the highest level of assistance to staff. Mr. Zilla explained that the forecasting and model update would meet these criteria. He added that coordinating land use and transportation planning is becoming a priority statewide, and he thought a higher level of base funding would be coming to these types of projects. He said that staff undertakes land use and transportation coordination projects regularly as a result of the additional local money provided for MPO staff.

Mr. Lee supported the prospective supplemental planning projects in the following priority order: 1) updating the forecast database, 2) coordinating land use and transportation, and, 3) developing a municipal bridge database. Mr. Hall asked if all municipal bridge projects have already been ranked in the LRTP. Mr. Zilla said that half of the SD bridges are ranked, but at least ten others need to be incorporated into the LRTP because they are PennDOT priorities. He explained that there are 17 local SD bridges in Centre County, and there are questions as to how these should be handled. Mr. Corman noted that Mr. Bloom is compiling a local bridge database whether or not the project receives supplemental planning funds. He wondered if staff and PennDOT could work with a consultant to come up with a statewide model for this type of database.

Mr. Klees noted that staff would be requesting an extension of the two existing supplemental projects, so the current project to coordinate land use with transportation is going to continue into next year. By the end of 2008, those plans will be completed, and it might be more appropriate at that time to make further coordination a priority for the next UPWP. Mr. Zilla agreed, especially since there is a chance of getting additional funds for those types of efforts through the base program funding. Ms. Spencer added that if the first two projects could be accomplished in the coming UPWP, and the third could be done in the next, all three would eventually be achieved.

*Mr. Eich made a motion to submit the update of socioeconomic forecasts/travel demand model and a municipal bridge inventory for supplemental planning funds. Mr. Lee seconded, provided that coordinating land use and transportation planning would be considered again next year. The Committee voted unanimously to submit these projects.*

Mr. Lee referred to page 18 of the UPWP, which addresses runs of the model being used for changes in travel patterns related to the development of growth areas. He noted that development can actually be caused by highways. He suggested that this section also include the assessment of changes in growth patterns relative to travel patterns. He explained that if we had considered I-99 and its location, we might have a different situation in the Marion/Walker area in terms of growth. Mr. Klees said that College Township reviewed the I-99 routing prior to construction, and he assumed that other affected municipalities had that opportunity as well. He noted that there were two committees that included representatives from each municipality within the I-99 corridor, and planning was done for the interchange locations. New land regulations were proposed and adopted as a result of this input. He emphasized that Pennsylvania regulations do not provide very well for proactive efforts in land development.

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Mr. Lee referred to page 7, section D (Long Range Transportation Planning) of the UPWP. He noted that the emphasis should be on shaping growth, and on how transportation facilities can be used to accomplish that. Ms. Reese noted that until there is county-wide zoning, it is up to each municipality to make those decisions. Upper Bald Eagle Valley is in the reactive stage because people are moving to that area. Sewage demands are a limiting factor, as the current sewage infrastructure will not support the growth.

Mr. Klees asked if there was any objection to enhancing the language as Mr. Lee suggested. There were none.

### 8. I-80 Toll Conversion Project

Mr. Klees reviewed the letter that the MPO wrote to legislators in June concerning funding for transit and road improvements. At that time, the MPO's stand was that if interstate tolling was going to be considered, it should be considered for all interstates. He said that transit funding is a concern in Centre County and, while Act 44 did not provide everything that CATA wanted, it has made a big difference. He noted that the Turnpike Commission made an I-80 tolling presentation to the MPO in the fall, and since then they have formally applied to FHWA for approval to implement tolls. The FHWA responded to the Turnpike Commission's application with a request for additional information. Moreover, several other entities have provided comments about the toll conversion plan. Mr. Klees noted that FHWA's response referred to current unobligated Interstate Maintenance (IM) funds in the amount of \$310 million.

A letter received from the Senate asked that the MPO write to the U.S. Department of Transportation to express opposition to the application by PennDOT and the Turnpike Commission to toll I-80, and state that they have not satisfied the requirements of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), section 1216(b)(3)(B). This section states that "in the case of a facility that affects a metropolitan area, an assurance that the metropolitan planning organization [...] has been consulted concerning the placement and amount of tolls on the facility."

Mr. Luck noted that all correspondence received from various entities thus far has been in opposition to I-80 tolling, but nobody is offering any alternatives for generating revenue to fund transportation improvements. He explained that he is not personally in favor of tolling, but felt that it was incumbent upon the MPO to advise legislators of funding mechanisms that would be acceptable to policymakers in Centre County.

Mr. Hall noted that, in his opinion, leasing the existing Turnpike or increasing the gas tax would be better options. His concerns with I-80 tolling include truck traffic diverting to local roads, as well as increasing electric costs due to coal trucks paying tolls to access existing plants. He explained that leasing the Turnpike was a good idea, and that a private entity could likely operate the facility more cheaply than the Turnpike Commission has. He urged the other members of the MPO to make a strong statement against I-80 tolling.

Mr. Eich asked about the turn back of interstate maintenance funds, specifically why this money was turned back. Mr. Nanovic explained that, in the middle of a fiscal year, PennDOT would not let any money lapse. The IM funds, rather, have yet to be obligated. Mr. Eich noted that the press seems to indicate that Pennsylvania's right to those funds had lapsed. Mr. Nanovic was not aware of that happening.

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Mr. Klees noted that if gas taxes were increased, everyone would pay. Now that the price of gas is so high, any percentage increase would be much smaller than it once was. Meanwhile the cost of construction materials is much higher than it once was.

Ms. Goreham reported that under SAFETEA-LU, federal transportation funds will be over expended by billions of dollars next year. This is a tremendous issue on a national scale. She noted that an increase in the gas tax would be, in her judgment, the fairest alternative.

Ms. Reese did not feel that it is the MPO's job to put forth alternative options for generating revenue. She explained that, in her opinion, the letter from the Senators was asking the MPO to come out against I-80 tolling in an effort to encourage lawmakers to come up with other options.

Mr. Lee's concern about user fees center around their potential effect on low income commuters. Aside from that issue, he thought people should pay for the miles they drive, using transponders to track and report mileage. He felt that any follow-up letter sent by the MPO should include alternative methods for generating revenue, and should be sent to both FHWA and the legislature.

Mr. Spsychalski noted that Act 44 is a reality that we must live with now and through the next fiscal year. He explained that it is not within the MPO's charge to come up with alternatives for generating revenue. However, Centre County needs funding for critical transportation projects. He suggested that the MPO do only what was asked of them in the Senate letter, and discuss the issue further at another meeting. Further, if the MPO wants to send a letter in opposition to I-80 tolling or Act 44, he thought it should make sure to ask for a comprehensive replacement of Act 44 if it is repealed. The primary responsibility for designing such a comprehensive replacement rests with the legislature.

*Mr. Hall made a motion to write to the U.S. Department of Transportation in opposition to tolling I-80, and also to oppose the application submitted by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to toll I- 80, stating that they have not satisfied TEA-21, section 1216(b)(3)(B). Ms. Reese seconded the motion.*

Mr. Spsychalski noted that if Act 44 had not passed, the region would already be seeing a huge cutback in CATA service. He explained that a letter asking for a rejection of I-80 tolling would be like "slipping a banana peel" under part of Act 44. He was unsure of whether such a rejection would actually force the legislature to provide an alternative. Mr. Klees noted that if the motion passes, a second letter could ask for replacement of Act 44.

Mr. Eich noted that there was a significant effort in 2006 to study alternatives for funding mass transit. He thought the legislators should go back and look at those alternatives again.

Mr. Lee felt that the motion, as it currently stands, is irresponsible. Noting that the application to implement I-80 tolls does not satisfy TEA-21 requirements is correct, but he was not sure about adding the MPO's opposition to tolling I-80. Mr. Klees explained that FHWA probably does not care if the MPO is against tolling; they are likely more focused on whether the application satisfies statutory requirements. A second letter could be sent to the state explaining the MPO's opposition to I-80 tolling, and asking that Act 44 be replaced with another comprehensive funding program.

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*Mr. Hall amended his original motion to only include the fact that the I-80 tolling application does not satisfy TEA-21 section 1216(b)(3)(B). Ms. Reese seconded. The vote was in favor of sending a letter in opposition to the submission by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to toll I-80 because they have not satisfied TEA-21, section 1216(b)(3)(B), with three members abstaining (K. Michael, H. Nanovic, J. Spsychalski).*

*Mr. Lee made a motion to send correspondence to Governor Ed Rendell, state legislators, PennDOT, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission opposing the tolling of I-80 as a method for generating revenue; while supporting the intent of Pennsylvania Act 44 to provide a dedicated, predictable and growing source of revenue for highway, bridge and public transportation improvements. The CCMPO also urges the Governor and state legislators to consider other revenue options, such as the methods proposed by the Transportation Funding and Reform Commission in 2006, and to select an alternative to placing tolls on I-80. Mr. Eich seconded the motion.*

Mr. Luck thought that only the portion of Act 44 that includes money from tolling needs to be fixed. He explained that an important part of Act 44 was stable and dedicated funding for road, bridge, and transit improvements, and he did not think the MPO was against such funding. Ms. Michael noted that there is specific language in Act 44 regarding what mechanisms are funding specific types of transportation improvements.

Ms. Reese suggested that staff draft letters to FHWA and to the Pennsylvania legislature, and email those to the Chair and Vice-Chair for review so that they can be mailed as soon as possible.

*Mr. Lee's motion passed, with one member voting against (S. Miller) and three members abstaining (K. Michael, H. Nanovic, J. Spsychalski).*

### **9. Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan**

Mr. Kausch explained that the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan is required for CATA to be eligible for three federal transit programs: Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom, and Section 5310. The preparation of this plan was part of the prior UPWP, and completed with supplemental planning funds. Mr. Kausch reviewed the required elements of the Coordinated Plan.

There were “interim” plan requirements in place last year, and Mr. Kausch felt that the MPO’s Coordinated Plan exceeds those requirements and is compliant with final guidance from the FTA. The Plan addresses each of the four primary elements, is integrated with other planning documents, and was formed with extensive public input. The Coordinating Committee adopted the Interim Coordinated Plan in May, 2007. The Plan makes several recommendations:

- Range of transit service expansion activities
- Enhance current operations
- Training for both customers and transportation providers
- Participate in the Coordinated Planning process of neighboring jurisdictions
- Study CATA-CCOT integration
- Intersection and other pedestrian improvements

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Mr. Kausch reviewed the current state of funding with respect to the three programs. For Section 5310, the CATA application for 2007 was approved, but the CCOT application for 2007 was not. However, CCOT's vehicle and equipment replacement needs are being funded by PennDOT using another program. For JARC and New Freedom, no 2007 projects were funded in rural and small urban areas. A full round of competitive funding for all three programs is expected this year.

To fully comply with all federal requirements, the Plan will need a minor update this year. First, new Section 5310 application information and narrative will be added. Mr. Kausch said he would also like to expand the section on the CATA ridesharing program and include narrative on the new Act 44. Editorial revisions will be made as appropriate. The MPO will need to readopt the Plan before March 15, when it will be submitted to PennDOT. Any deficiencies noted by PennDOT will be addressed. The deadline for submitting JARC and New Freedom applications is June 1 and grant awards are expected to be made by June 30, 2008.

**10. Announcements**

Mr. Klees noted that Chris Exarchos had been a member of the Performance Review Committee. Since he is no longer a Commissioner, the County has appointed Mr. Eich as their representative.

*Mr. Lee made a motion to appoint Mr. Eich to the Performance Review Committee, seconded by Mr. Luck. The motion passed unanimously.*

**11. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Shingler  
Recording Secretary