

Minutes
Veterans Memorial Highway Association
Central Zone Meeting
Held Friday, January 24th, 2014
Flagstaff County Administration Building
12435 – Township Road 442
Sedgewick, Alberta

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 11:03 a.m. by Chairman Barry Morishita.

In Attendance: The List of Attendees is attached and forms part of these minutes.

Chairmans'

Report:

Chairman Morishita stated that the Association shall continue to hold Zone Meetings in all areas to keep members informed of the work which the Board is doing and also to make sure members can bring their issues and concerns about Highway 36 to the Board. It is important that the Board full understands these issues in order to properly be able to represent the members with the Minister of Transportation or the District Managers.

The Board will continue to discuss long term relationships with Wood Buffalo as to what the Association can offer them as a lobby group and their membership.

The Board's priorities continue to be improvements to Highway 36 and 881 in matters of safety, easier movement of materials, maintenance and Service.

We continue to build our relationship with the Legion to partner in the signage program and member engagements.

Now that a new Minister of Transportation has been appointed it is important that we develop a relationship to further the Associations goals and objectives.

Transportation
Strategy:

Chairman Morishita opened discussion on the recent announcement that Alberta Transportation is embarking upon a consultation process to develop a transportation strategy for the next 50 years. Robert Richard noted that the map supporting the information provided did not even identify Highway 36 or for that matter any other major highways. The notices have just been received and for our northern zone members the first meeting is scheduled for January 28th, 2014. The time frame does not provide for preparation. Robert Preston feels that we have to reinforce that Alberta Transportation is responsible for all areas of the Province. Sonny Rajoo stated that we have to also develop a relationship with Senior beauracrats to be able to forward the Associations goals in the long term. Robert Richard stated we need to work more closely with the Regional Directors to be able to know what works are planned for the highway and that they need to know that Highway 36 is the second longest north/south highway in the Province as well as being dedicated as a high load corridor and deserves more recognition and work than it presently receives. Gerald Kuefler that the Assocaition represents some 39 municipalities and first nations and that we need to meet with the Minister on a regular basis as a group. Rick Olsen stated that we need Industry to support our goals and be part of our strategy. This would the oilsands, energy sectors and trucking associations. Gerald Kuefler noted that in order for us to be successful the association needs to have administration support to handle the work. Ben Elfring stated that we need the support of the Regional Economic Developmen Assoc. Michael Simpson feels that as members we all need to speak with a unified message with Alberta Transportation.

Robert Richard stated he feels that some changes to Highway 36 are necessary to fix pinch points where you have to change directions and go a different direction and then come back to 36. Elroy Yakemchuk stated that the Province needs to upgrade many bridges in order to allow the overweight, long loads and high loads to stay on Highway 36. Barry Morishita encouraged all members to attend the consultation meetings set up by Alberta Transportation to discuss the impotence of Highway 36 and that it be included as a major north/south corridor for the Province.

- Issues/Concerns: Chairman Morishita opened discussions about central zone issues and concerns which the members would like to discuss.
- Alliance Turnoff: Susan Thomas stated that many times the long heavy load trucks use the Alliance Turnoff as a rest or stop area which creates a safety problem for anyone who wants to turn off into Alliance or coming onto Highway 36.
- Service Standards: Gerald Kuefler stated that he personally sees different levels of service from area to area for highway maintenance or snow removal. This seems to even occur when the same company holds the contract for servicing the highway. Robert Richard stated that for a high load corridor Highway 36 does not seem to get the type of service it deserves.
- High/Long Loads: Rick Olsen said it appears that some heavy high loads feel complete entitlement to the highway when moving loads and create problems for the general public. Travis Ryan said that when driving ambulance with sirens and lights flashing oversized loads and pilot cars will not pull over for him to pass. Robert Richard says that rules and regulations have to be developed and put in place to solve some of the problems.
- The meeting broke for lunch between 12:00 a.m. and 12:40 p.m.
- Economic Development: Michael Simpson would like to see if traffic on Highway 36 could be enticed into coming off the highway and into Vegreville to create some economic spin off. Sonny Rajoo stated that the Town of St. Paul has the same problem and suggested that Vegreville talk to St. Paul about what ideas they had come up. Robert Richard stated that there has to be a real effort made to get the trucking industry involved so that we can promote our communities and services for them to stop and contribute to the local economies.
- Maintenance: Rick Olsen felt that maintenance contractors spend more time on the cost plus items that they do on the maintenance and service of the highway itself.

Association

Relevance:

Chairman Morishita asked everyone to express their feelings about the Association and what they would like to see the Board work on over the next 12 months.

David Rattway would like the Association to continue to work toward getting the Province to construct an overpass at the intersection of Highway 36 and Highway 16.

Gerald Kuefler wants to see an effective administration support system in place for the organization and that maintenance and service contracts be investigated for specifications so we can work toward having common service standards the length of the highway.

Michael Simpson would like to see the Board make a concerted lobbying effort to the Provincial Government about the items we identify with Highway 36.

Elroy Yakemchuk wants to see more public/private partnerships to improve our lobbying efforts and continue to work with Wood Buffalo on common interests being Highway 36 and Highway 881.

Rick Olsen wants to see more traffic enforcement and intersection lights at Highway 36 and Highway 55.

Sonny Rajoo that we continue to work with the Legion to build up the relationship to reach our goal for veteran recognition. Keep local media aware of the organization and its goals which would provide public awareness.

Robert Richard that we need to work with Wood Buffalo, the Energy Sector and Transportation Sector in partnerships and also to see more administration support. Highway 881 needs to have the same coverage from media as Highway 63.

Travis Ryan said the Association needs to communicate the common goals and what the priorities are.

Richard Preston wants to see Highway 36 receive larger recognition as the high load corridor and keep lobbying the Minister and Province to improve Highway 36.

Ben Elfring that we ask the Minister and Alberta Transportation to attend Zone and Annual meetings.

Michael Simpson stated that the Association should encourage affiliate and corporate memberships to gain industry support.

Elroy Yakemchuk that we should tell Alberta Transportation that we are disappointed their mapping system does not recognize Highway 36 as the high load corridor.

Sue Thomas said that she agrees with the comments previously made and encourages the Board to pursue full time administrative support.

Walter Weber said that without pull outs, rest areas and passing lanes the Highway will always have traffic issues when you are moving the type of loads that are using the highway.

Sonny Rajoo that we revisit the Strategic Planas we continue with the lobby efforts.

Robert Richard suggested that the Association could work with the Highway 63/Highway 881 coalition which includes industry as members to help our efforts. The Association could also work with the Highway 41 communities to benefit the Easter part of the province.

Chairman Moritshita thanked everyone for their comments and that the Board will work on setting up the talking points for the strategy meetings, set objections for the new year, getting mor information to the members and review the strategic plan.

Adjournment: Chairman Morishita adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

Secretary - Treasurer