

TSAC Minutes
September 2, 2020

This was a Zoom Meeting

Members Present:

Dr. Fuller Bazer
Mr. Bill Cox
Mr. Andy Deuel
Mr. Joe Dillard
Ms. Erin Jones
Dr. Andrew Klein
Mr. Jim Kovar
Mr. Peter Lange
Mr. Eric Mendoza (Ms. Oriana Koot)
Ms. Lisa Pierce
Mr. Robert Pottberg
Mr. Tom Reber
Ms. Flora Reeves
Mr. Dale Rice

Dr. Jerry Strawser
Mr. Fawaz Syed
Mr. Uthej Vattipalli (Mr. Rio O'Neal)
Mr. Mark Welsh
Ms. Deborah Wright

Absent:

Dr. Angie Hill Price
Dr. John Stallone

Guests:

Ms. Lilia Gonzales
Mr. Jason Hayes

1. Mr. Peter Lange opened the meeting at 1:30 p.m. He thanked everyone for serving — those who are returning and those who are new. He also introduced our new members to everyone. In addition, he gave a broad-brush overview of the purpose of the committee, and reminded all that the committee gives them the opportunity to bring us constituent feedback so we can make the best decisions. Ms. Debbie Hoffmann added that we are relying on the committee's honest and blunt feedback about the topics we address.
2. Dr. Jerry Strawser, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, also thanked the committee for its willingness to serve. He mentioned that all are customers of Transportation Services in one way or another, as are their constituents. Next, he assured the members that Transportation Services is faithful to run big, operational decisions past the committee, and finally, he too asked the committee to bring concerns.
3. Mr. Lange asked for a volunteer co-chair of the committee. Dr. Andrew Klein and Mr. Rio O'Neal both volunteered. Mr. Lange said he would return to a motion and vote at the end of the meeting.
4. Mr. Lange asked the committee to review the minutes from the May 6, 2020 meeting. Mr. Bill Cox motioned for approval; Ms. Erin Jones seconded; minutes approved.

5. Ms. Madeline Dillard gave a brief presentation concerning the process for naming/renaming a bus route. See presentation: <https://transport.tamu.edu/About/tsac.aspx> (scroll to the bottom of the minutes and find "Related Presentations") Mr. Fawaz Syed finished the presentation by making a recommendation that we rename a bus route to "Gaines," in honor of Matthew Gaines, and the current initiative to recognize him as an advocate for Texas A&M and for public education and service.

5.1. Background: Mr. Syed proposed the route name change several months ago to Transportation Services and we suggested a change of name for one of the two defunct tradition names that were still bus routes names: Cottonbowl and ExCel, with Cottonbowl as our preference. He said he and his constituents were happy to change the Cottonbowl route name.

5.1.1. Mr. Syed later asked if we would consider changing the Bush route name instead, because the Bush route goes from the Student Services Building (future location of the Matthew Gaines statue) to the Bush School of Government and Public Service. He thought this would be perfectly suited to align with the Matthew Gaines initiative. We told him he was welcome to bring it up at the meeting.

5.2. Mr. Syed told the committee he and his constituents were agreeable to change the Cottonbowl name, but he made the above argument for the Bush route name change instead.

5.2.1. Mr. Mark Welsh, Dean of the Bush School of Government and Public Service, pointed out that the Bush route is helpful with wayfinding to their location, and eliminated confusion as to which bus served that route. While he liked the idea, from a practical perspective, he thought keeping the Bush route name would be helpful.

5.2.2. Mr. Lange echoed Mr. Welsh's concern, mentioning that Bush Route 5, RELLIS Route 47, and Blinn Route 12, are all routes that take riders to distant points from the heart of campus, and the names help with wayfinding. He instead lifted up the two original routes we had offered for change: ExCel and Cottonbowl.

5.2.3. Mr. Syed understood the rationale behind not changing the Bush route name and asked that we change the Cottonbowl name to Gaines, because our university no longer participates in the Cottonbowl. Even though the ExCel name is defunct for its original purposes, Mr. Syed said students now associated the route with the Excellence uniting Culture Education and Leadership, ExCel, "a student organization and freshman involvement program designed to help freshmen find academic, social, and personal balance at Texas A&M by fostering a community where they can culturally identify." (Taken from the group's description under Multicultural Services, Division of Student Affairs)

5.3. Dr. Andrew Klein asked if the name change proposal had been discussed with the Task Force on Race Relations, to see if there were any ramifications, sensitivity, or objections.

5.3.1. Mr. Syed said that task force was now under the Commission for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and that he is a member of that commission, which makes recommendations to President Michael Young and Board of Regents.*

5.3.2. Mr. Lange said if the TSAC approves this motion to proceed with the route name change, we will draft a memorandum and send it to the different agencies, and either Dr. Strawser or Mr. Syed could let the president know. Typically the timeline is to rename the route in the fall, but if we can get the memorandum to the various committees early enough for their votes, we might be able to change the route name in the spring.

5.4. Mr. Welsh asked if we should also consult with the Commission on Historic Representation.*

5.5. There was some discussion about the exact name of the proposed route name, "Matthew Gaines," or "Gaines." Mr. Bill Cox suggested that Route 26 is named after a person, and is simply "Rudder," so perhaps we should follow suite with "Gaines." Mr. Syed said he also noticed that and therefore proposed "Gaines." Mr. Lange suggested that we propose both names in the memorandum to the various constituent groups.

5.6. Mr. Dale Rice asked for clarification on the process again, and Mr. Lange explained that the TSAC vote today was to get the process in motion. Additionally, we will make sure we notify all the constituent groups.

* June 17, 2020 letter from President Michael Young:

Effective immediately, I am announcing the following groups, each to include current and former students, faculty, staff and relevant subject matter experts:

- **A Task Force on Race Relations.** The remit of this group is to better address racist behavior, from prevention to bystander intervention to all available sanctions, and campus climate;
- **A Commission on Historic Representations.** This Commission will review representations – to include statues, monuments, buildings and similar representations – in name, placement and historical context on our campus and suggest appropriate courses of action with respect to each of them. This group will be asked to begin with making a recommendation on the Lawrence Sullivan Ross statue in the near future.

This Task Force and the Commission complement specific actions announced in recent days to create meaningful change and I thank Chancellor Sharp for his support. Both groups will bring a wide range of perspectives through their

experience and expertise. In the coming days we will announce membership and process.

* July 13, 2020 press release:

Texas A&M University President Michael K. Young announced the membership and charge of a comprehensive Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to contribute to the climate at Texas A&M and combat racism, Monday morning.

“I am deeply grateful to diverse group of dedicated Aggies – students, former students, faculty and staff – who are volunteering their time to engage in research and discourse across topics of racial intolerance, historical representations such as statues, policies and practices,” said Young in the announcement.

The commission will consist of 45 people, including students, former students, faculty and staff that will evaluate diversity, equity and inclusion on campus.

5.7. Mr. Lange called for a motion. Mr. O’Neal moved that the committee vote for changing the Cottonbowl route name to the “Gaines” or “Matthew Gaines” route as presented, with the addition of getting the memorandums to the correct committees. Mr. Tom Reber seconded, motion passed.

6. Mr. Kenneth Kimball, Transportation Services, presented our financial outlook. See presentation: <https://transport.tamu.edu/About/tsac.aspx> (scroll to the bottom of the minutes and find “Related Presentations”) He explained that our losses from spring until now are \$4.5 million. If the next spring semester does not return to some semblance of normal, he anticipates an additional \$5.6 million in losses. However, if next spring semester shows the university community in recovery mode with more than 50% of the students returning to campus, etc. we can survive the earlier losses. Either way, we will have to cut or delay capital projects.

6.1. Mr. Lange added a positive note that our permit revenue is holding steady, but only accounts for 40% of our revenue. The 60% of our revenue stream is gone because we have few hourly (visitor) parkers, and no events. We are mitigating our loss by not filling vacant positions. We have already eliminated 15 positions, reflected in the figures. Additionally, we have to look at our capital projects, for which we pay cash. We can defer those, to solve the \$5 million problem. However, it also means that we will have to push off future garage builds indefinitely. Our reserve funds took 10-15 years to build, and now we will be starting over. We are planning for the worst, but hoping a return to normal by fall 2021.

6.1.1. Mr. Kimball said we expected our reserves to drop after building Polo Road Garage, but after the COVID losses, they took a much deeper dive.

7. Ms. Dillard gave a brief Transit update.

- We are only carrying 25-26% of our previously recorded ridership for this time of year. We are running almost all of our buses, keeping ridership at a maximum of 50 per route (which is the total passengers for the entire round, start to finish). Ninety percent of our rounds last week carried less than 22 people.
- BUILD Grant update: The first of our 35 new diesel buses will arrive in mid-to-late October, with the remaining arriving in November-December. We are also expecting three Proterra electric buses, which will go into production in January, and will be delivered in March 2021. We will be retiring the 38 buses being replaced. Mr. Lange mentioned the buses we are replacing are 19-20 years old. We have donated some to the TEEX fire school. We are also working on a charging station infrastructure, which ready when the electric buses get here.

8. Mr. Lange gave a brief Polo Road Garage (PRG) update.

- The garage opened on schedule, without a waitlist. All who signed up for it were offered a parking place there. We moved all visitor parking from surrounding lots into PRG.
- In mid-to-late November, Rec Sports, Dining, and Transportation Services will be moving into PRG. All will be ready for spring semester. About 55 of our staff will be moving there, from about five locations around campus.

9. Ms. Deborah Wright reminded us to consider a co-chairperson for the committee. Mr. Lange asked for the motion. Ms. Wright moved selection of Dr. Andrew Klein as co-chair; Mr. Rice seconded, motion approved.

10. Mr. Lange again thanked everyone for their service to the committee, encouraged them to let us know how we can help, and reminded them to share minutes with their constituents. He closed the meeting at 1:34 p.m.

The next meeting will be October 7, 2020 (Zoom details in invitation)

Please visit our website: transport.tamu.edu