

TSAC Minutes
November 4, 2020

This was a Zoom Meeting

Members Present:

Dr. Fuller Bazer
Mr. Bill Cox
Mr. Andy Deuel
Mr. Joe Dillard
Dr. Angie Hill Price
Ms. Erin Jones
Dr. Andrew Klein
Mr. Jim Kovar (Ms. Stephanie Ferguson)
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. John Stallone

Guests:

Mr. Jason Hayes
Ms. Tamra Young

1. Mr. Peter Lange opened the meeting at 1:30 p.m. He gave a brief update of our operations while waiting for people to join:

- We received our first new bus, and it is ready for service after a test run today. The remaining 34 buses will arrive before the holiday break. We were able to decommission 17 of our buses, with three to the fire school and the remainder to auction.
- Our offices at Polo Road Garage are almost ready. We will move in by mid-December. The new Recreation Center there will be open one week before spring semester starts, and the five dining establishments will be open the first day of spring semester.
- The shared-use path on Polo Road will be complete by the end of 2020.

2. Mr. Lange asked the committee to review the minutes from the September 2, 2020 meeting. Mr. Bill Cox motioned for approval; Mr. Tom Reber seconded; minutes approved.

3. Mr. Lange informed the committee that the bus route renaming initiative was successful, with all the student groups recommending changing the Route 36 name from "Cottonbowl" to "Matthew Gaines." The recommendations follow:

- SGA (Student Body and Student Senate) resolution in favor of “Matthew Gaines,” via Resolution (S.R.) 73-22
- Traditions Council recommends “Matthew Gaines,” via email.
- Matthew Gaines Society recommends “Matthew Gaines,” via email.
- Graduate Student Professional Government recommends “Matthew Gaines,” via Resolution 54.02
- Class Presidents representing Classes 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 recommend “Matthew Gaines,” via memo.

Mr. Lange reviewed the route-renaming process, below:

TSAC reviews advice from student representatives and votes to:

Recommend request; if Transportation Services approves:

1. Sends memo to VPFO (Dr. Strawser) to notify the approval of naming/re-naming of a bus route.
2. Notifies requesting individual or organization.
3. Executes communication and implementation plan for naming/re-naming bus route.

3.1. Dr. Andrew Klein asked if there would be any additional advertising/publicity about the renaming.

3.1.1. Mr. Lange said we rely on the student organizations to get the word out, but for now, we will rely on our operational communications. However, we may consider a special event tied into introducing one of our new buses with a new route name.

3.1.2. Dr. Angie Hill Price asked if there would be any route identification issues with the name change. Mr. Lange assured her that since the route number hasn’t changed, announcing a name change would not be difficult through our extensive communications.

3.1.3. Dr. Klein suggested we involve the university marketing office. Mr. Lange asked our marketing manager, Melissa Bubela (also in the meeting) to coordinate the effort.

3.1.4. Mr. Tom Reber said it was a great initiative, as there will be a statue of Matthew Gaines unveiled at the Student Services Building in May 2021.

3.2 Mr. Lange mentioned that we would be able to make the change to the bus route by spring semester. He then asked for a motion and a vote from the committee.

3.2.1. Dr. Hill Price moved that the committee endorse the recommendation, Mr. Tom Reber seconded, motion passed.

3.2.1.1. Transportation Services will now make the notifications and execute the communication and implementation plan.

3.3. The committee thanked Mr. Fawaz Syed for initiating the idea and for pushing it through the student groups.

4. Ms. Madison Metsker-Galarza gave a presentation to update the group about our progress on Permit-less parking. She mentioned that we previously introduced the

topic as License Plate Recognition, (LPR) and the industry name for it is License Plate Enabled Parking. We don't think those terms fit our campus culture, and are interested in the committee's feedback on what to call it. Some of the ideas lifted up:

- Tag-less parking
- Tag-free parking
- Hangtag-free parking
- Virtual Permit

Ms. Metsker-Galarza's presentation is at our website (scroll to the bottom of the page for presentations): <https://transport.tamu.edu/About/tsac.aspx>

4.1. Dr. Hill Price and Mr. Cox mentioned some conflict when two family members' vehicles are registered on campus. Ms. Lynn Wiggs explained the process for avoiding the conflict, but she and Mr. Lange agreed we would look at the problem and come up with solutions.

4.2. Mr. Lange said we are working hard to make parking as easy as possible. We want to talk to our Departmental Parking Representative (DPR) community about tools to assign business permits, and how they work with permit-less parking identification for each user. We will show the DPRs a mock-up and ask for feedback.

4.3. Mr. Dale Rice asked if the new access device we provide would take the place of a toll tag and ID card/permit swipe. Our team assured him it would provide the same access. We are still discussing the type of technology we will use, but whatever we choose, it will not have an expiration. We understand that toll tags are not foolproof.

5. Mr. Lange opened up a discussion about Permit Rates. We are looking hard at our budget, which has recently taken a \$16 million revenue loss. We have reduced our expenses by \$5 million through various means, but we still have to recover our devastating revenue hit. We have already asked our division (VPFO) for a \$1.25 million loan for FY2021, and another \$1.25 million for FY2022, but we would still need another \$7 million to recover. We've looked at what products and services that we could increase pricing for without changing the already-in-place 3%, annual permit increase. We focused on products that have been typically undervalued, but afford high level of access, such as:

- Departmental vehicles that do not pay for surface-lot parking (260 of these).
- Retiree permits - we provide free parking and event parking to 1,300 retirees. Is there some pricing structure for these that still provides access and value for them? This is somewhere we would need to figure out actual supply and demand.

- Media parking permits. We currently provide 75 media permits at a nominal rate. Perhaps we could charge them the garage rate.
- Disabled Veteran permits are currently free. Could we charge some amount that would still provide a discount? There are 269 of these.
- Campus contractor/service permits. Again, we could charge the garage rate, not the surface-lot rate.
- Business Permit rate increase that is more in line with the access provided.
- Increasing student motorcycle and night permit rates.
- Our department provides a free transponder tag on university vehicles – should we charge for this convenience?

Mr. Lange said he wanted to introduce the subject today, and use our December TSAC meeting to show actual numbers of the products we will charge. He then asked for discussion.

5.1.1. Dr. Hill Price asked if we have talked to the retired faculty. Mr. Lange said we have only brought up the topic today to the TSAC.

5.1.2. Dr. Hill Price thought it seemed reasonable to charge university vehicles taking up spots that we can't sell, such as contractor/service vehicles.

5.1.3. Dr. Hill Price said she was concerned about charging for the Disabled Veteran permits.

5.1.4. Mr. Cox said he had no objection to increasing fees for contractor/service vehicles, but reminded the group that the cost may get passed back to the university by increased prices from the vendors. Dr. Hill Price remarked that it might motivate fewer permit requests from them and more ride sharing.

After some additional discussion and clarification, Mr. Lange reiterated that we would have specific figures to present the committee next month.

6. Mr. Lange closed the meeting at 2:33 p.m.

*The next meeting will be December 2, 2020 (Zoom details in invitation)
Please visit our website: transport.tamu.edu*