

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**November 9, 2005
8:30 a.m.**

40 Pearl St. NW Ste. 410
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

MINUTES

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 by Chairman Ted Vonk.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Andy Bowman	Grand Valley Metro Council
Jay Cravens	Cascade Township
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Bill Holland	Georgetown Township
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
George Meek	Plainfield Township
Sam Moore	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Deborah Nier	City of Wayland
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Ted Vonk	Kent County

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September meeting were reviewed.

MOTION – To Approve the Minutes of the September, 2005 GVMC Legislative Committee Meeting. MOVE - Holland. SUPPORT – Meek. MOTION CARRIED.

3. Updates on State Legislative Issues in Lansing

a. State Business Tax Agreement

Don Stypula reported the State business tax proposal was slated to move today or next week. Special interest groups have had very strong feelings regarding it.

Sam More stated the House leader said the proposal is shaky. He has heard Buzz Thomas is withdrawing his support. The single business tax repeal is the sticking point.

Don Stypula distributed a column by Nolan Finley which stated he believed the economy to bottom out in April 2007.

Sam Moore stated the Chamber has not yet studied Fulton Sheen's proposal. Mr. Moore stated we (Michigan) have a lot of unique taxes, which makes it hard to figure out taxing implications. He wants to eliminate the PPT, SBT, and income tax; and just go to a sales tax of 8.4 or 8.5. We need to have a uniform system.

b. Telecommunications Rewrite: What Happens Now?

Don Stypula reported the telecom rewrite is finished at the state level and it looks like it will be signed. It will make it more difficult for local government to do their own wireless systems. The MTA and MML have negotiated some changes to make it more municipal friendly. They did not get the date change enacted. It doesn't prohibit franchises, but requires them to go through a system.

Verison and SBC are pushing it and when he gets an official write-up, Mr. Stypula will get it to everyone.

The federal legislation is moving. They are in their third draft. Fred Upton is heading this. The draft is 74 pages and Mr. Stypula will get one to anyone who needs it.

Bill Holland asked for a copy of that draft.

Deborah Nier asked if their current agreements will be set aside.

Don Stypula stated yes they will.

Don Stypula stated he would bring through the Executive Committee and to the Metro Council talking point that can be brought back to your legislators.

Ted Vonk asked how many dollars would be involved for Metro Council members.

Don Stypula stated he would do a poll to find out right after this meeting.

Don Stypula stated the Eminent Domain issue will likely be put to a vote on the next ballot. It would stop local entities from using eminent domain to do redevelopment programs. He stated he believed this will be passed next year. There are concerns with how this will affect locals' ability to address blighted areas.

Andy Bowman stated the definition of blight is already in most zoning regulations.

Jay Cravens reported the Michigan Association of Planning is taking a stance that the state of Michigan has already defined how eminent domain can be used. He said he would think Mr. Stypula would want to partner with them on this issue. He questioned whether the whole issue is being overreacted to. Michigan has some of the best eminent domain laws on the books.

Local Government Finance Task Force – The task force is moving forward. It has three sub committees. They are shooting for February for a report with recommendations. As Don Stypula gets information, he will forward it on.

4. Federal Issues Update

a. Congressional Budget Cutting and the New SAFETEA-LU Federal Transportation Spending Law.

Don Stypula indicated he is watching the money promised to this region. He strongly encourages everyone to talk with their congressional representatives on this.

5. Policy Discussion: Commerce Centers Legislation

Don Stypula stated he wanted to have discussions on the issue of commerce centers. The history of this issue goes back to the GVMC blueprint and metropolitan framework. In 2003 the Governor appointed the land use leadership council, which made formal recommendations regarding commerce centers. They suggested enticing political entities to encourage commerce centers through economic incentives.

Jason Allen introduced a bill to get the discussion moving on the subject. Currently the legislation is in the Senate.

Don Stypula stated he wanted to get the committee's thoughts on the concept. Next year the legislature is going to have to reauthorize the revenue sharing formula which may be connected to this issue. Mr. Stypula stated he may bring up the issue of commerce centers to the Regional Cooperation committee.

Andy Bowman reported that a problem with the statewide concept of commerce centers is that they are being derived on too large a scale. Andy Bowman will represent GVMC on the workgroup Senator Allen is facilitating.

Don Stypula asked committee members to think about if it makes sense to have the revenue sharing formula focused on commerce centers and how can we define this.

Committee Chairman Ted Vonk stated they would put the issue on their radar screen and watch its development.

6. Adjourn – 10:30