

Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Development Empowered Technical Advisory Committee chaired by Mr.Yelappa Reddy, IAS (Retd) dated 25.07.08 at BBMP Meeting Hall

Members present at the meeting

1	Shri. AN Yellappa reddy, IAS (Retd)	Chairman	9880198549
2	Dr. Shirdi Prasad Tekur	Member	9448079790/22453655/26710740
3	Dr. Subarayan Prasanna	Member	28602228
4	Dr. H Parmesh	Member	9845022689/225566738
5	Dr. DC Sharma	Member	9845691706/23322009
6	Shri. Krishna Reddy, Chief Engineer (Major Roads)	Member	
7	Shri. M R Suresh, ACF	Convenor	9845174447
8	CH Srinivas Reddy, Executive Engineer (Central) BWSSB	Petitioner Officer	22945187
9	Shri SL Lingashettru, Executive Engineer (KMRP)	Petitioner Officer	944836150
10	Shri P Narayana Reddy, Assitant Executive engineer (KMRP) BBMP	Petitioner Officer	9739044603
11	Shri P Jayaram, AEE (KMRP), BBMP	Petitioner Officer	9739044610
12	Shri Chidanandaya, EE (Road Widening)	Petitioner Officer	9448316756
13	Shri KT Nagaraj, Chief Engineer (Major Roads)	Petitioner Officer	9845222224
14	Shri PS Ramesh, Chief Engineer (Major Roads)	Petitioner Officer	9242786413
15	Shri Cheluvaiyya BBMP	Petitioner Officer	9845550100
16	Shri S Sivanna, Chief Engineer (Major Roads)	Petitioner Officer	9739042391
17	Shri Vishwas IK, AEE (Road Widening)	Petitioner Officer	9741544844
18	Prabhavati, AEE (Road Widening)	Petitioner Officer	9741010086
19	Shri Sivanna, AEE	Petitioner Officer	9739042391
20	Shri Prakash, Assitant Engineer, Road Widening	Petitioner Officer	9448417919
21	BL Nagaraj, Assistanat Executive Engineer, Road Widening	Petitioner Officer	9448926533
22	Shri SE Max Ali	Petitioner Officer	20111078
23	Shri TM Shiva Prakash, AEE Road, Widening	Petitioner Officer	9449844688
24	Shri HN Parasuram, AEE Road	Petitioner Officer	986917635

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	Widening		
25	Shri Nurul Ameen, EE Road Widening	Petitioner Officer	9845280073
26	Shri HK Jagadish	ACF Sub Division II	9448113664
27	Shri MS RaviKumar	RFO	9480017818
28	Shri Ranganatha Swami	RFO	9972598222
29	Shri Puttaswami	RFO	9900247712

Absent Members

1	Shri S Shekar, IAS	Member	9980822315
2	Dr. Carol Upadhya	Member	9341311453/22185141
3	Prof M Shekar Madhu	Member	22932245

The Hon'ble Chairman welcomed all the members present and started the discussion. Following this, he asked the Convener to look into the details of the minutes of the second meeting and discuss any matter over which there are disagreements or debatable matters. Dr.H Parmesh said that the concerns he raised in the last meeting were not noted in the minutes. He requested that these concerns be added to the minutes of the present meeting. In accordance with his request, his points have been recorded below:

“The Road Widening works have resulted in roots of a number of trees being exposed on Palace Road. This can be dangerous to the life and property of the public, especially during the rains. And he opined that the trees be felled. This works have to be carried out without inconveniencing the public. Saplings have to be planted so that problems of environmental pollution because of traffic can be controlled and shade giving trees will help in maintaining the ecological balance.

Pedestrian rights are being ignored and this is shameful. Hence while implementing road widening works the interests of pedestrians should be given prominence, said the Hon'ble member.”

In response to this, the concerned department official said that making spaces for pedestrians has been taken into account. He also informed the Chairman that steps have been taken to plant saplings.

In the last meeting, Dr. Carol Upadhya had suggested that she would contact an expert for site inspection. However, she failed to carry out this suggestion. The letter that she wrote in this regard to the Chairman was brought to the notice of the Committee and discussed. Following this, with the permission of the Chairman, the letter written by Dr. Carol Upadhya to the convener, was read out before the members. The Convener has written a note in response to this letter, addressing each of its aspects. This letter was read out before the Chairman and all the Committee Members.

In the same matter, the Chief Engineer (Major Roads) has also written a response to concerns raised by Dr. Upadhya. This was also read out before all the members. He said that all works have been undertaken in conformance to law.

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Shri C Jayaram, Conservator of Forests and Environmental Officer, BMRCL said that the works undertaken so far have been on the basis of expert advice. Hence, they don't find it necessary to seek another expert opinion.

With reference to discussion of Dr. Updhya's letter to the Chairman and the response of the Convener, Dr. Shirdi Prasad Tekur said that this kind of conflict would hamper the Committee from working towards its purpose. He said that these discussions were inappropriate. He brought to the notice of the Chairman that if Committee members refrained from such conflicts, it would be better for the working of the Committee.

The Chairman completely agreed with this opinion, and said that all the Committee members should extend their cooperation.

Dr. D.C.Sharma, responding to this, said that the members should respect the suggestions of the Committee, and as members had the right to express disagreement, he said that all matters on which there was confusion or disagreement, and should be sorted out in the Committee meetings. Members should not resort to making allegations against individuals, and they should function only in an appropriate manner.

He opined that the Committee had been constituted as an 'expert Committee', so site inspections should be made by the Committee members and it was unnecessary to invite other experts. Inviting outsiders as experts would amount to disrespecting the expertise of the Committee. He said that he was from a village, and personally, he had been pained many a time by the sight of trees being felled by the Forest Department. He said that undertaking such a painful action had become a necessity, and that this matter can be solved by fixing a fine/compensation for tree felling.

Dr. Subbarayan Prasanna said that he respected all the points that the members had raised, but said that instances where some members had made statements impulsively, should be let go off, and not be a matter of such serious discussion.

Responding to this, the Chairman said that all members had to work in a friendly manner, and that in all matters, the opinion and suggestions of all the members would be considered and then only, a decision would be arrived at.

At this, some of the Petitioners came and wanted to be a part of the meeting. Then, Mr. Yellapa Reddy said that the Committee had been constituted by the High Court as relief for the Petitioners' PIL, and that three members suggested by the Petitioners were part of the Committee, and that they should have faith in the functioning of the Committee.

In response to this, Dr. Prasanna said that he was not partisan and did not represent the interests of any particular group, and that the High Court had appointed him to be a part of the Empowered Committee. Dr. Shirdi Prasad Thekur concurred.

The Chairman said that the Committee had decided not to allow the Petitioners to be present at the Committee meeting, but that the written record of the proceedings should be made available to the petitioners.

Dr. Sharma agreed with this opinion.

Shri C.Jayaram, Conservator of Forests, said that the discussions and decisions in the Committee should be based on the wider interest, and not on the basis of personal interests. He also opined that if matters were discussed

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keeping in mind the importance of public interest, the discussion would be fruitful. But if matters were placed in an impulsive manner and personalized, this was not useful.

The Chairman said that every member had their personal disagreements and problems but the discussions ought to focus on larger matters and not these personal issues.

Shri M.R.Suresh, Convenor, placed before the Chairman, the interim applications submitted by EsG & Hasiru Usiru, and requested the Chairman's permission to read this out.

At this time, Leo.F.Saldanha and some others, tried to enter the meeting hall without permission. The Chairman, noting this, said that entering the meeting without permission was inappropriate and asked them to leave. However, Leo Saldanha insisted that he would not leave as he had come to submit his application and discuss it before the Committee members. The Chairman, disapproving Saldanha's conduct, asked him again to leave the meeting. He said that other than the High Court appointed members, no one else could be present at the meetings of the Committee.

The Chief Engineer, in a Power Point Presentation, detailed out the widening works to be carried out, on each of the roads. He said that the investment in the widening works was from the Central Government, State Government and the World Bank and if the works did not progress as planned, this could be problematic.

For instance, in the case of Sarjapura Road, the widening was being funded under the Karnataka Municipal Reforms Project, and the World Bank has prescribed a time line of one year for completion. This time period expires in November, and works have to be completed before this.

Forty works have to be undertaken, of which 30 are in progress. These 30 works are in the final stages, and are almost completed. With respect to road widening works, almost 50 % has been complete and hence, in some places, steps are being taken to transplant trees posing an obstruction to the works. 144 trees have been removed so far. Out of this, 87 trees have been felled and 30 have been transplanted. Out of the remaining 57 trees, 12 are being transplanted.

He said that out of the 700 trees in the areas where works are being carried out, only 144 trees will be felled/transplanted. The remaining 556 odd trees will be protected, while carrying out the works. No tree felling that is unnecessary for the works will be undertaken. The 68 trees on the road medians, of the roads to be widened, have been protected.

Shri Jayaram, Conservator of Forests and Environmental Officer, said that as per his observations while commuting on these roads and as per the Chief Engineer's statement, all works are being carried out in accordance with law and with minimal felling of trees.

In response to this, the Chairman placed for discussion before the Committee members, the points raised by the Chief Engineer. In response to a query about transplanting of trees, the Chief Engineer said that up to 250 trees could be transplanted. The Chairman suggested to the Tree Officer that while executing road widening works, all trees that were healthy and suitable for transplantation, should be transplanted.

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Dr. Subbarayan Prasanna said that each of the proposals should be examined to see if they are intelligent, and if they are in the wider public interest.

In response to this, the Chairman said that it would be better to find solutions to tide over the problems that were hampering carrying out of the works, keeping in mind the larger public interest.

Dr. Sharma said that he felt that these works should be executed, if it was done in a transparent manner within the legal framework. He said that details of saplings planted, and the costs should be submitted before the Committee.

Chief Engineer said that the works had to be completed by August, but that they would consider all the aspects raised at the Committee meeting during implementation of the works.

Mr. Yellapa Reddy, after taking into consideration everyone's suggestions, directed that works be undertaken in a manner that is conducive to public interest.

Dr. Sharma raised the question of how the problem of traffic congestion, even after widening, would be tackled.

Shri C. Jayaram said that further widening, after the current scheme, was not possible. He opined that permitting only light vehicles on the roads, and the metro could be a solution to traffic congestion in the future.

Dr. D.C.Sharma said that educating the public and making them aware was necessary.

The Chairman said that steps to educate the public and steps to solve the traffic problem where necessary and this have to be taken up with the concerned departments.

In response to this Dr. Prasanna said that considerations of free traffic flow and pedestrians have to be looked into at the time of making the proposal and these aspects have to be included in the plan.

The Chairman said that while making decisions one cannot bow to pressures of certain organizations and that steps have to be taken against encroachments.

The Chief Engineer, BBMP has considered all measures for safety and that all suggestions expressed in the meeting are being considered while undertaking works.

Dr. Prasanna said that it is necessary to write to the Police Commissioner and the Traffic Commissioner with detailed suggestions on management of traffic on these roads. And it is appropriate that the BBMP does this.

The Chief Engineer said that the Bangalore Metropolitan Task Force in the BBMP is responsible for control, servicing and managing the roads. Laying steel plates/metal plates on the flyovers, undertaking rail links and other works in the public interest, are being undertaken. Moreover, information has been collected with respect to roads. Technical information about the condition of existing roads is being collected, and this will be used to maintain and develop the roads, he assured the Committee.

The Chairman asked that the details of road widening works, along with the plans, be submitted as a pamphlet before the Committee.

Dr. Shirdi Prasad Thekur expressed his concern that the road widening at Sarjapura Road would extremely inconvenience people who needed to cross the road, especially as there was a hospital on this road. He said that

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this needs to be addressed. He said that steps need to be taken to construct a canteen, coffee/ tea stall etc: for the visitors to the Hospital, with the help of the private sector, if necessary. Furthermore, he said that provisions for an auto stand have to be made at the road side or near the hospital. He said that construction of a bus stand in a manner that did not affect the movement of public, was necessary. He said that the spaces on the road side that is being presently used by coconut sellers, tea stall owners and other vendors (though they are not an obstruction at present) can be used for other public purposes.

In response to this, the Chief Engineer said that steps have been initiated to remove illegal encroachments. Since this is one of the important service roads, steps are being undertaken to construct bus bays, and other amenities like toilets. The process of issuing tenders is underway, for the construction of bus bays. The Chairman said that it would be necessary to hold talks with the Hospital Administration to discuss parking arrangements for the hospital ambulances and other ambulances arriving at the Hospital, and intimate the progress at the next meeting of the Committee.

Responding to this, the Chief Engineer said he would initiate this. The Chairman said that if Dr. Shirdi Prasad Thekur should accompany officials on a site inspection and come up with suggestions for improving facilities for the public. Responsibility for arranging this would be with K.PNarayana Reddy, AEE, KMRP.

The Chairman also suggested that Dr. Prasanna could inspect the areas he wanted to inspect, and present his plans and comments on the maps.

The Chief Engineer said that tenders had been called for construction of escalators between the hospital building and the hostels, at St. John's Hospital. A number of suggestions had been received from the public, on this matter.

Dr. Prasanna said that in-built RAM model would be appropriate, but the work should be undertaken after examination of all the aspects of the plan, and in accordance to 'Parliamentary Act'. He said that even the Chairman had to work, only in accordance to Parliamentary Act.

The Chairman said that with regard to implementing road widening works, that has resulted in felling of 144 trees and left 556 trees on the affected roads intact, the Committee has collectively decided to give clearance to the schemes if all records, maps, financial details, public opinion and other documents related to road widening are submitted at the meeting. He said that there should be a consultation with students of Krupanidhi College, with regard to their opinion and the facilities that they require, and asked the Chief Engineer to report progress on this, at the next meeting.

Road Widening works on Bellary Road:

The Chief Engineer put forward the details of the road widening works on Bellary Road. He said that work was being undertaken, to make it a 6 lane road.

1. High Grounds Police Station to Windsor Manor signal
2. Cauvery underpass

The above works have been completed.

3. Construction of underpass near CBI Junction

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4. Construction of pedestrian underpass from Ananthnagara to Baptist Hospital
5. Construction of pedestrian underpass near Hebbal police station
6. Construction of bus bay near college hospital which will help the college students and the general public.

These works are being undertaken to make Bellary road into a 6 lane road, so that this will ease traffic congestion. Those trees that are an obstruction to these works have been transplanted to the premises of the Agricultural College. All works have been undertaken after considering the opinion of the public, and after consultations with them. All works are being undertaken according to the Indian Road Carriage Act.

The Chairman asked that Dr. Prasanna be given a copy of all documents with respect to the road widening for his suggestions, and that this be placed at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chief Engineer said that this road that is 4 lane at present, has to be widened to a 6 lane road because of traffic congestion, and most of the additional land required for widening has been acquired from the Government. The approximate road length to be widened is 7.33 km, and the budget will be 1443 lakhs.

In response to this, the Chairman said that arrangements for planting saplings in a scientific manner should be made wherever spaces are available, and that facilities for pedestrian crossings should be provided. For providing all these facilities, a minimum area of 3.50 m should be available on the roads, and this should be provided for. The Chairman said that the Committee had collectively decided to grant permission for the completion of these works, if the relevant documents could be produced at the next meeting.

Road Widening works on Palace Road

The Chief Engineer said that works on Palace Road involved widening of service road and constructing footpaths. A temple and a Masjid on this road poses an obstruction to the road widening works. But it was the advice of the area police that works should be carried out without affecting the temple and the masjid, and hence, the widening is being carried out in a manner that will leave the temple and the masjid intact.

Dr. Prasanna opined that temples and masjids are being used by some , for protecting their personal interests.

The Chief Engineer responded that the temple on Palace Road, was that of Muneshwara, and it was an old temple , and it had existed from the days of Sir Mirza Ismail.

Dr. Shirdi Prasad Thekur opined that if the temple could be barricaded, it would help the safety of the visitors to the temple.

Dr. D.C. Sharma responded that the decision on temples, places of worship and other places of Heritage should be taken after consulting the Court on how to deal with this , when they were affected by road widening works.

The Chairman said that after considering all the above aspects, and the fact that the work was in progress, and that the due procedures had been followed, all the members feel that road widening works should be permitted, and the felling of trees posing an obstruction should be permitted.

Road Widening Works on Sheshadri Road

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The Chief Engineer, while explaining the works on Sheshadri road, said that the 3 lane road will be transformed into a 6 lane road. To cross the road to enter Maharani's college, a pedestrian bridge has been constructed and trees have been transplanted to the premises of the Agricultural Department.

After considering all aspects, and with the permission of the members, the Chairman stated that the road widening works were permitted.

Dr. Sharma and Dr. Paramesh enquired about how many trees were transplanted. In this regard, the Chairman said that details of where they were transplanted and the costs should be placed before the Committee, and details of what species of trees were transplanted should be provided at the next meeting.

The Chief Executive Engineer expressed the pressures and difficulties he had to face because of the stalling of the road widening works, and requested that the Committee give permission for carrying out the works in accordance to the law, at the earliest.

Dr. Sharma said that Freedom Park and the Golf Club could be used for transplantation of trees from the roads, where the trees were posing an obstruction to the road widening.

Dr. Subbarayan Prasanna said that a policy for how to grant permission for constructing multi storeyed buildings was necessary, especially for implementation of schemes like road widening that required acquisition of adjoining lands.

The Chairman said that these decisions should be in concurrence with the existing zonal regulations. Furthermore, he said that as widening of Palace road, Sheshadri Road and Race Course road was unavoidable to ease traffic congestion, and for this tree felling was inevitable, he said that the Bangalore Turf Club could be declared as a Tree Park/ Bio Diversity Park and these trees could be transplanted there.

Shri Jayaram, ACF and Environment Officer, BMRCL, while discussing the BMRC works said that the laying of tracks and other design works were been undertaken with the guidance of Dr. Sreedharan, DMRC. In 2005, it was estimated that 1500 trees would obstruct trees, and need to be felled. But while implementing works, only about 50% of this number is found to have been affected(loss of branches/ the entire tree). To compensate for those trees being felled, the BMRC is making payments to BBMP for undertaking compensatory measures. The entire 1500 trees would not be lost to the metro, as earlier estimated. Lists have been prepared of the trees to be felled and the trees whose branches need to be pruned, to the Forest Department. As a compensatory measure, BMRCL will plant 15000 saplings and at present, the BMRCL has allocated funds for planting 5000 saplings.

The Chairman, in response, said that if details of the stage wise works to be executed, records on public opinion and details of communication with utility agencies could be produced at the next meeting, this could be discussed.

Dr. D.C.Sharma and Dr. Paramesh said that details of affected areas should be provided to the Committee.

The ACF and the Tree Officer stressed the importance of the plans. They expressed their gratitude to the Committee for granting permission to widen Palace Road, Sarjapura Road, Bellary Road and Sheshadri Road and thanked the members for their detailed suggestions. They stated that they would produce the required documents at the next meeting of the Committee.

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Meanwhile, when the matter of Kadirenahalli road widening under JNNURM was brought up, the Chairman said that the matter could be discussed at the next meeting.

After deciding that the next meeting will be held at 12/08/08 at 10:30 PM, the Committee dispersed.

Chairman

Sustainable Development Empowered Technical Advisory Committee

BBMP