I. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM by ITE Committee Chair Brent Ogden.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

There were 6 ITE participants present plus 6 who participated by telephone:

Present
Brent Ogden
Tom Lancaster
Gene Russell
Joe Palsa
Brian Gilleran
Lisa Fontana Tierney (ITE staff)

Teleconference
Steve Venglar
John Sharkey
Rick Campbell
Ray Lewis
Joaquin Siques
Dee Chapell

III. ITE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brent Ogden reported that Session 10 on High-Speed Rail Grade Crossings was held at 8 AM this morning as part of the Annual Meeting. Presentations were made by Brian Gilleran, Brent, and Michael Garcia. Tom Lancaster was the presider.

Lisa Tierney announced that the 2012 Technical Conference will be in Pasadena, California, on March 4 to 7. The 2012 Annual Meeting will be in Atlanta, Georgia, on August 12 to 15. The submittal date for proposed presentation sessions is August 31, 2011, for both meetings.

IV. ITE COMMITTEE ITEMS

1. ITE Grade Crossing Web Page

Joaquin Siques stated that the maximum file upload size for our web site is 10 mb, which complicates the addition of Annual Meeting presentations to the site.
Joaquin also reported that there are some technical difficulties in transferring the material on our web site to the ITE web site. Brent suggested that it might be easiest to abandon our web site and re-create the material on ITE’s web site. Lisa Fontana Tierney will investigate this possibility, and Joaquin will work with ITE staff Zack Pleasant on resolving this issue. If the required work to transfer the material to the ITE site proves to be substantial, a proposal might be required for this work. Lisa is hopeful that this will probably not be the case.

Joaquin stated that no messages have been posted to our grade crossing web site, possibly because it is difficult to find unless the address is known. Guan Xu has not responded to ITE’s request for an FHWA review of the material, so we are assuming that FHWA has no objection to any of the material. As noted previously, the current web site address is:

www.wix.com/jsiques44/ite-rxr-handbook

2. Traffic Control Devices Handbook

Bob Seyfried is the editor for the new document. He was not present at this meeting, but has reported to Brent that the work is progressing.

Sight Distance Revisions: Brent is updating the Introduction, which includes updating the references and confirming the accuracy and applicability of mathematical formulas and tables. Brent found that there is an error in at least one sight distance formula, although the results of the formula as shown in a table are correct. Brent noted that the table shows that the required sight distance at uncontrolled grade crossings decreases as vehicle speeds approach 30 mph, then increases at higher speeds. Although this result might be unexpected, it is correct and is due to the critical factor in the formula changing from the train speed to the vehicle speed as vehicle speeds exceed 30 mph. Brent will add text to the Handbook explaining this apparent anomaly.

There was some discussion as to our expectations of driver responsibility and actions as related to the sight distance triangle at uncontrolled grade crossings (crossings with YIELD signs). Expecting drivers to note the vehicle speed and location and estimate the train speed and location and use that data to quickly and accurately determine whether it is necessary for the driver to stop might be unrealistic. The driver’s task is complicated by train speeds that vary at the crossing. A more reasonable expectation might be that if a driver sees a train, the driver should prepare to stop at the crossing unless the driver can determine that the vehicle can cross safely before the train arrives. This type of operation will require that adequate sight distance (as shown in the sight distance table in the Handbook) be provided at each uncontrolled crossing assuming the maximum permitted speeds of the vehicles and the trains.

Brent will send his proposed revisions to the Handbook Introduction to Committee members for comment.
3. MUTCD Items

Rick Campbell discussed his effort to include more technical detail in the MUTCD regarding traffic signal preemption design and operation as Chair of the NCUTCD Technical Subcommittee on Railroads and LRT. This effort is based on his observation that signal preemption is often implemented incorrectly, resulting in operation that might result in safety deficiencies. He will continue discussing his proposed revisions to the MUTCD with members of the NCUTCD Technical Subcommittee on Traffic Control Signals. In any case, it would probably be appropriate to add much of this proposed material to the Handbook and to the Recommended Practice. Rick also reported that based on his discussions with FHWA, information on diagnostic teams will probably be included in the next edition of the MUTCD.

Brent stated that the updated Handbook would be based on the 2009 edition of the MUTCD, but the Handbook will probably not be finished before the Recommended Practice update is finished. Any new material regarding traffic signal preemption that is added to the Handbook but is not in the MUTCD will be treated as recommended practice but not as a requirement.

4. Other Handbook Concerns

Ray Lewis stated that he has concerns regarding legal aspects of crossings in the Handbook. In particular, he is concerned about the location of detectable warnings on the approaches to crossings; the distance of six ft from the tracks as specified in the proposed Department of Justice ADA rules might be too close. Ray added that he also has concerns regarding the sight distance triangle. He suggests either deleting the sight distance triangle or adding text stating that the triangle must be available at uncontrolled crossings for the maximum permitted vehicle and train speeds.

5. Update of Recommended Practice for the Preemption of Traffic Signals Near Grade Crossings

Tom Lancaster reported that the proposal to update the Recommended Practice has been approved by ITE. Authors have been selected and topics assigned. It is hoped that the Recommended Practice can include ADA requirements if the rules are finalized before completion of the draft. Brian Gilleran and Joe Palsa agreed to serve as peer reviewers as the draft is developed. The schedule calls for completion of the update in late 2012.

6. Conference Sessions Update

Joaquin Siques suggested that a walking tour of LRT grade crossings in Pasadena be organized for the Technical Conference in Pasadena. Lisa Fontana Tierney said she would provide ITE contact information to Joaquin for setting up a technical tour. There is an ITE proposal form for this purpose. It might also be possible to provide a presentation regarding LRT crossings prior to the field tour.
After some discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee that a session on ADA rules be proposed for the 2012 Annual Meeting. It could include presentations on ADA rules as they apply to grade crossings, to roundabouts, and to traffic signals. Brent will contact Scott Windley of the US Access Board for assistance with development of this session. It was noted that Scott will be presenting a webinar on ADA rules in late August 2011.

V. Other Business

Brent will send an e-mail to all Committee members with a link to the presentations from Session 10 at this ITE meeting. A link will also be posted on our railroad grade crossing web site.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of this Committee will be held during the TRB meeting in January 2012 in Washington DC.

VII. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM.