I. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by ITE Committee Chair Brent Ogden. The meeting minutes from the last meeting were approved.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

There were 12 ITE members participating plus two friends and two ITE staff persons. Four persons participated via conference call:

Present:  
Brent Ogden  
Tom Lancaster  
Andy Davis  
Gene Russell  
Rock Miller  
Ray Lewis  
Ray Davis  
Zaki Mustafa  

Conference Call:
Phil Poichuk  
Steve Venglar  
John Van Hoff  
Joe Palsa

Steve Laffey (friend)  
Richard Mather (friend)

Philip Caruso (staff)  
Lisa Tierney (staff)

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the August 10, 2010 meeting in Vancouver BC were approved without comment.

IV. ITE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ray Davis and Zaki Mustafa, both candidates for ITE Vice President, each made a short statement discussing their ideas for future ITE activities.

Lisa Tierney announced that a new ITE Community (collaborative website) is expected to be operational within a few months. As part of the ITE web page, it will have a community board for each ITE technical committee which will allow the posting of information and comments. The board for the Grade Crossing Committee could include the information that is now on the Committee’s web page. There are still some issues to resolve in the design of ITE Community, such as whether non-ITE members will be allowed access to none, some, or all of the Community.
V. ITE COMMITTEE ITEMS

1. ITE Grade Crossing Web Page

As a result of efforts by Joaquin Siques of the City of Pasadena, the Committee’s web site is now live. The address is:

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

There are six tabs across the top of the home page of the web site. The Home Page, which is the first tab, displays the mission statement for the home page and a link to the Grade Crossing handbook, and includes new items, meeting agendas, and meeting minutes. The second tab, About Us, presents the uses of this web site and talks about the purposes of the TENC Committee. The third tab, Preemption Material, lists “Seven Points Every Traffic Engineer Should Know About Rail Preemption Installations” and links to two web sites which assist in the development of preemption signal timing (LA DOT and TX DOT). The fourth tab, Reference Docs and Links, includes links to an ITE Journal article on pre-signals, hazard index calculations, sample diagnostic team evaluation reports, and several railroad-related traffic engineering publications. The fifth tab, Provide Comments, provides a location where comments can be posted for visitors to see. The sixth tab, Contact Us, permits viewers to upload material or ask questions, and lists the committee volunteers.

Joaquin Siques, as the Administrator, will review comments posted and materials or questions submitted and will route candidate submissions to the panel of moderators. Brian Gilleran reminded that he agreed to serve on the panel of moderators.

Zaki Mustafa commented that it is critical that when comments are submitted to the site, they are read and responded to immediately. He also stated that if every Committee member accesses the site twice a day, it will move the website to the top of the list when Google searches for “Railroad crossings” or related topics.

Comments were made that it would be desirable to have our website linked to the ITE website. Lisa Tierney stated that the link should be possible as a short-term connection until the ITE Community is up and running. There were also comments that some of the pages of our website should be available to the public. Ideally, when hosted by ITE Community, the site should allow wiki-type subject developments as well as continuous discussions as new threads are started.

A link to the TRB Railroad Committee website will be added to our page.

2. Recommended Practice for the Preemption of Traffic Signals near Railroad Crossings

At the last Committee meeting, a consensus was reached that most of the materials presented in the Recommended Practice (RP) is generally applicable today so there is no urgent need to develop a wholly new version. However, based on comments, it is believed that the RP should be updated to reflect recent technological developments as well as new methods for determining signal timing at preempted signals.
As a result, Committee Chair Brent Ogden appointed a Task Force, with Tom Lancaster as Chair, to produce the updates to the RP. The Task Force will invite Stan Milewski, Ray Lewis, Rick Campbell, and LA DOT representative, and others to participate on the Task Force. The Task Force will complete an ITE project proposal, review the topics which need to be updated, produce the updates, and guide the updated RP through the ITE approval process. Lisa Tierney stated that it is possible that the new version of the RP could be electronic rather than printed.

Ray Lewis stated that accessibility at preempted traffic signals is an important topic. Issues include walking speeds across the crossing, detectable warnings, pedestrian clearance times as gates are lowered, and the time to travel from the pushbutton location to the street.

3. Conference Sessions Update

A panel to discuss grade crossing safety has been accepted for the Lake Buena Vista ITE Technical Conference in Florida from April 3 through 6. Tentative speakers include Tom Lancaster (presiding), Bill Baranowski (Roundabouts with Grade Crossings), Brent Ogden (Recent Developments in Pre-Signals and Queue Cutters), John Ciccarelli (Recent Developments in Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety at Grade Crossings), and John Van Hoff (Current Issues and New Tools for Intersections near Grade Crossings).

It was noted that the 2011 Technical Conference will be Saturday through Tuesday. Comments were also made that out-of-state travel may be difficult for some invited speakers. Some states have prohibited all out-of-state travel by state employees.

A panel has also been proposed for the ITE Annual Meeting in St. Louis from August 13 – 16. The proposed speakers for this panel include Brent Ogden (presiding), Brian Gilleran (FRA Requirements and Guidance for High-Speed Rail Grade Crossings), Ed Boni (Operation of High-Speed Rail Crossings on Amtrak Northeast Corridor), R. Davis (Barrier Gate Technology and Possible Application to High-Speed Rail Grade Crossings), and Stan Milewski (Grade Crossing Protection Features of Chicago – St Louis High-Speed Rail Corridor).

It was suggested that a web seminar on high-speed rail crossings might be useful since this seems to be a popular topic. Suggestions for panel topics for 2012 ITE meetings included high-speed rail crossings, a progress report on the RP update, an RP conversation circle, and crossings near roundabouts. The 2012 Technical Conference will be in Pasadena, and the 2012 Annual Meeting will be in Atlanta.

4. Webinars / Net Meetings / Collaborative Web Site

Using the internet for Committee meetings was suggested by several people. Lisa Tierney stated that web conferencing facilities at ITE meeting hotels are typically very expensive, costing hundreds of dollars. Lisa said that the January 2012 Committee meeting could be held at ITE headquarters using their video conferencing equipment. The Grade Crossing Committee meeting will probably be held on Monday of TRB week (January 23, 2012) at 10:30 or 11:00 AM. Lisa will follow up on this possibility. Zaki Mustafa volunteered to assist with the technical aspects.
Steve Laffey, Chair of TRB AHB60, said that his committee is sponsoring a web briefing on traffic signal preemption in the fall of 2012 and that participation by ITE members would be welcome. He suggested that it could possibly be accomplished as a joint TRB/ITE effort.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Steve Venglar of TTI mentioned a study currently underway involving improvement priorities at low-volume grade crossings. The study is examining low-volume crossings in Texas that have a crash history. The objective is to determine priority for crossing improvements for passive devices and for improvements from passive to active devices. Good crossing sight distance data is available for use in the study.

Lisa Tierney stated that ITE is looking for new volunteers to provide ITE sponsor comments to the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices regarding proposed changes and revisions to the MUTCD.

VII. NEXT MEETING

There may be a Committee meeting at the ITE Technical Conference in Lake Buena Vista in April 2012, and there may also be an informal meeting of the Recommended Practice Task Force for those members who are able to attend.

The next Committee meeting will be in St Louis at the ITE Annual Meeting.

VIII. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 AM.