

**EAST ALABAMA RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MEETING MINUTES  
DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE & TECHNICAL ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE for the CENTRAL DISTRICT  
April 15, 2010  
*East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission – Anniston***

*Policy Committee Members in Attendance:*

Mayor Charles Merkel, Town of Oak Grove  
Mr. DeJarvis Leonard, ALDOT 4<sup>th</sup> Division  
Mayor Steve Baswell, Town of Ohatchee

*Technical Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:*

Mr. Michael Hosch, Calhoun County  
Mr. William D. McDaniel, ALDOT 4<sup>th</sup> Division

*Other Attendees:*

Mr. Jack Plunk, Calhoun Area MPO  
Ms. Stacey Browning, EARPDC

Ms. Stacey Browning, acting as Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 1 p.m.

Under “Old Business,” Ms. Browning asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the previous meeting on January 21, 2010. After determining that there were no changes, she asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mayor Merkel made a motion, and Mayor Baswell seconded. The minutes were approved.

There was no other old business, so Ms. Browning moved on to “New Business” and gave a staff report on the Highway Trust Fund. She provided a handout that discussed the HIRE Act, which extended surface transportation authorization through the end of the year. The bill also provides \$19.5 billion for the Highway Trust Fund. She also mentioned that the Act restores the money that had been rescinded from the state departments of transportation. Ms. Browning said that now that a longer-term extension had been passed, the Senate would begin working on a six year transportation authorization.

Ms. Browning then mentioned that the handout included lists of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) projects throughout the region.

Ms. Browning then asked ALDOT to provide an update on road projects. Mr. DeJarvis Leonard said that he would like to address the funding restoration that Ms. Browning had briefly mentioned. He first mentioned that \$175 million had been

rescinded from the state. He said that the money had been given back to the small MPOs in the state, based on the amount that was rescinded. He is unsure whether any money had been restored to the counties, whose funding had been cut from \$500,000 to \$365,000. Mr. Michael Hosch had not heard if the counties would get any money back. He also mentioned that the restored money meant that ALDOT was funded through the end of the calendar year, not just the fiscal year.

Mayor Charles Merkel asked a question about the Talladega bypass, to which Mr. Leonard responded that the project had not been let yet. Mayor Merkel then mentioned that work should begin on Highway 280 on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April. Mr. Leonard said that the work will not begin until the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. William D. McDaniel discussed several ALDOT projects. He mentioned that the widening project on 202 in Oxford was proceeding well. He also discussed the Chief Ladiga Trail in Jacksonville. This project received more funding from the MPO; this funding was transferred from another project on which there had been an underrun. He said that the two sidewalk projects in Jacksonville were under construction, and should be completed fairly soon. Mr. McDaniel mentioned that the Friendship Road project was an MPO project, and the city had chosen to do its own engineering. ALDOT will be inspecting soon. Both the Prickett Trail Bridge replacement and the Eulaton Road bridge replacement projects have been let and will begin soon. The Heflin streetscape project has encountered many issues, but the final inspection will be very soon.

There is a Safe Routes to School project in the city of Lineville along Highway 9 near the high school. This project will be let soon. He mentioned that the County Road 7 resurfacing project was able to get Forest Highway stimulus money. The industrial access project in Childersburg has been verbally approved and should have a precon in the summer. The Lomar Drive project has begun construction, and Phase II is still under design. The city of Talladega has various improvements to city streets that will begin soon. Mr. McDaniel asked if there were any questions or corrections. Mayor Merkel mentioned that the project listed as County Road 8 resurfacing from County Road 2 seemed to be reversed. The project is actually the resurfacing of County Road 2 from County Road 8.

Mr. Leonard mentioned that the project in Talladega County labeled as AL 77 from AL 275 to AL 234 should be AL 34. This is the five lane section going over the mountain that is rough. Mayor Merkel asked about the bypass, which he thought would be on the top of the list once the federal money was restored. Mr. Leonard said that it was right underneath the Interstate 20 project on the list. Mayor Baswell asked if there was a separate MPO for Childersburg and Sylacauga. Mayor Merkel said that they are a part of the RPO, and Mr. Leonard mentioned that an MPO requires a population of 50,000. Mayor Baswell asked about funding. Mr. Leonard mentioned that maybe the study area for the Anniston area MPO should be bigger. There was some discussion of the population of Talladega County. Mr. Jack Plunk mentioned that there was a population density requirement for MPOs, which used to be 1000 people per square mile. However, the requirements have become more rigid to dictate that the areas must be adjoining. He

mentioned that Piedmont and Ohatchee were currently separated from the Anniston MPO by some agricultural land. He also said that he thought the way that the south side of Gadsden is growing, Piedmont and Ohatchee may be absorbed by Gadsden's MPO before Anniston's. Mr. Leonard mentioned the problem of Valley, which may become a part of either the Opelika MPO or the Atlanta MPO. He said that the issue would come out when the new Census information was available.

Ms. Browning asked if there was any other new business. She then mentioned that the next meeting would be July 15, 2010 at 1 p.m. in the EARPDC board room. The meeting was then adjourned.