

**EAST ALABAMA RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING MINUTES
DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE - CENTRAL DISTRICT**

*January 17, 2008 - 1:00 p.m.
East Alabama Conference Room – Anniston*

Members in Attendance:

Mayor Anna Berry, City of Heflin
Lance Grisett, City of Talladega
Dee McDaniel, ALDOT 4th Division
Donna Mathews, City of Lineville
Charles Merkel, Town of Oak Grove
Joe Roberson, Town of Ohatchee
Ryan Robertson, Cleburne County
Steve Williams, ALDOT
Mayor Sam Wright, City of Sylacauga

Other Attendees:

Bill Curtis, Director of the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission
Jack Plunk, Calhoun County Metropolitan Planning Organization
Mr. Patrick Hall, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission
Ms. Dawn Landholm, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Mayor Anna Berry of Heflin, acting as Chairwoman, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Under “Old Business”, Mayor Berry asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the previous meeting. The minutes were adopted as presented.

There was nothing to report from the officers.

Ms. Landholm, in staff reports, reminded everyone to please fill out and turn in their TAC and CAC appointment forms. Ms. Landholm explained how the Rural Planning Organization would be concurrent and not conflict with the newer East Alabama Rural Action Commission. Ms. Landholm also notified members that she and Mr. Hall would be attending ALDOT’s meeting concerning the Statewide Transportation Plan on January 28th.

Mayor Berry then led attendees in introductions for the benefit of new attendees.

There were no motions or resolutions.

Dee McDaniel of ALDOT's 4th Division then passed out and explained the attached documents regarding the status of projects of the Five Year Plan in four county area of the Rural Planning Organization of East Alabama, Central District.

Under "Special Programs", Ms. Landholm spoke on what she learned at the National Rural Transportation Peer Learning Conference in September of 2007, in addition to the attached hand-out, here is a summary, by states presenting at the conference:

- Iowa – Established RPOs early on; 90%+ of all roads are local and county roads; quarterly meetings; produce a long range transportation plan and annual work program.
- Pennsylvania – Also established RPOs early on; used their "Local Development Districts" to foster the RPOs; the RPOs prepare both a long range transportation plan and an improvement plan; function more like MPOs.
- Kentucky – Established RPOs early on; used their local Area Development Districts; once a month there is a long meeting between RPOs, MPOs, and DOT for education, information, and peer exchange; develop an "unscheduled projects list" and present it to the state for the TIP; best advice was to keep the RPO committees on task.
- Tennessee – used existing Development Districts to start the RPOs; the RPOs were originally advisory only, but have been expanding; RPOs have the authority to prioritize projects within it's area; the State DOT uses the RPO needs study when preparing plans for future projects.

Mayor Berry then asked Mr. McDaniel and Mr. Williams of ALDOT how projects are prioritized. Mr. Williams responded by saying projects are first evaluated if they are included in the Five Year Plan and the long-range Statewide Plan, as well as such data as accident rates. Mr. Williams further noted that the RPO would have more influence in having projects completed if the counties and municipalities were to act as a group, through the RPO mechanism, and not as individuals. Mayor Wright reinforced the point by also suggesting Talladega, and other counties, have inter-government meetings on a quarterly basis, bringing together mayors, city and town councilmen, and county commissioners to discuss common issues and interests.

Under "Open Discussion and Announcements", there was a discussion of how an area qualifies to be a "Metropolitan Planning Organization", and the rights, responsibilities, and funding that is then provided. Mr. Curtis explained the origin of designating places as "metropolitan areas", and said staff would provide additional information at the next meeting.

Ms. Landholm announced that the next meeting of the East Alabama Rural Planning Organization's District Policy Committee meeting for the Central District is scheduled to be held on Thursday, April 17th, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.