

**EAST ALABAMA RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING MINUTES
DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE & TECHNICAL ADVISORY
COMMITTEE for the CENTRAL DISTRICT
November 20, 2008 - 1:30 p.m.
East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission – Anniston**

Members in Attendance:

Mayor Anna Berry, City of Heflin
Mr. DeJarvis Leonard, ALDOT 4th Division
Mr. Bill Curtis, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Other Attendees:

Mr. Eric English, ALDOT 4th Division, District 4
Mr. Shannon Jones, ALDOT 4th Division, District 2
Mr. Jack Plunk, Calhoun County MPO
Mr. Patrick Hall, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission
Ms. Dawn Landholm, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Mayor Anna Berry, acting as Chairwoman, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:30 p.m.

Under “Old Business”, Mayor Berry asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. DeJarvis Leonard moved that the minutes be adopted as presented. Mr. Bill Curtis seconded the motion, which was passed by a unanimous vote of the committee.

There was no other old business.

Under “New Business”, Mayor Berry stated that she had nothing to report.

Mr. Patrick Hall and Ms. Dawn Landholm gave the staff report. Mr. Hall informed the committee that this would be his last meeting, as he had accepted a position with the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Ms. Landholm stated that she will act as program facilitator until Mr. Hall’s replacement has been hired and trained.

Mr. DeJarvis Leonard, of ALDOT’s 4th Division, gave an update on ALDOT’s programmed construction projects in the four county Central District of the Rural Planning Organization. Mr. Leonard stated that ALDOT has decided to start resurfacing US Highway 78 west of Heflin and then complete the eastern segment of the highway. The resurfacing of AL Highway 9 was not included in this year’s program of

improvements, but Mr. Leonard hoped that it would be included in the 2010 work program. Mayor Berry inquired about the price of asphalt, asking if it has decreased as oil prices have fallen. Mr. Leonard said that asphalt prices probably will decrease, but at a slower rate than gas prices at the pump. Mr. Leonard also said that concrete prices are not decreasing, for unknown reasons. Mayor Berry initiated a discussion about a potential public works “stimulus package” to be lobbied before the United States Congress. Each municipality and county has been asked to provide a list of projects that are planned and upon which construction could begin within 120 days. That short time frame would limit the projects to those that would not require right-of-way acquisition.

Mr. Leonard then reported on Calhoun County projects. Base and pave on the Anniston “Eastern Bypass” should begin on December 5th. ALDOT is currently working with the Calhoun County Commission to upgrade Iron Mountain Road, which would provide access from the end of the Eastern Bypass to US Highway 431 and AL Highway 21. Currently, ADEM is requesting an update on the EECA report, which may delay construction on the section of the Bypass that traverses part of an old artillery range. Mr. Bill Curtis noted that the currently unfunded section of the Eastern Bypass, north of Iron Mountain Road, could be included in the public works “stimulus package”, as it is already planned and the right-of-way has been acquired. Mr. Leonard added that ALDOT is currently purchasing right-of-way for the “Western Bypass”, so that road also could be included in the “stimulus package”. Mr. Leonard said that almost all of the right-of-way for the widening of AL Highway 21 through Talladega County has been purchased, with the exception of a few small tracts. Mr. Leonard mentioned that a former small landfill that had been used by the US Army is in the middle of the right-of-way purchased for that project. Some remediation will need to be done on the site, but nothing particularly dangerous has been discovered in the landfill. The project should not be delayed.

Mr. Hall asked Mayor Berry if the City of Heflin has resolved the “land swap” with Norfolk-Southern, where the railroad had requested a crossing be closed. Mayor Berry said that she was pursuing that with the railroad company and needed to put it back to the “top” of her list of things to do.

There were no motions or resolutions or other new business.

Under “Special Programs”, Mr. Hall gave a presentation on access management. He commented on the connection between all types of transportation plans, especially between access management and land use. Access management is easier, and costs less, in communities that have planned their land use development in accordance with their roadway networks. For instance, if traditional highway commercial development occurs in concentrated “nodes”, as opposed to the more common “strip development”, the number of access points onto major roadways will be minimized, making it easier and safer for automobiles to enter and leave the shopping center. Businesses benefit from being in such a shopping center because traffic moves more slowly, giving the stores greater exposure to passers-by. A copy of the presentation handout is attached to these minutes.

No meeting attendees wished to be heard on matters not included in the agenda.

Under “Open Discussion and Announcements”, Ms. Landholm announced that the next meeting of the East Alabama Rural Planning Organization’s District Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee for the Central District is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. in the EARPDC board room.

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