

**EAST ALABAMA RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING MINUTES
DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE - CENTRAL DISTRICT
*October 18, 2007 - 1:00 p.m.
East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission - Anniston***

Members in Attendance:

Commissioner Robert W. Downing, Calhoun Co. Commission
Honorable Anna Berry, City of Heflin
Mr. DeJarvis Leonard, ALDOT Division 4
Mr. Bill Curtis, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Other Attendees:

Mr. Steve Williams, ALDOT - Montgomery
Mr. Jack Plunk, Calhoun Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Mr. Michael Hosch, Calhoun County
Mr. Patrick Hall, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission
Ms. Dawn Landholm, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Mayor Anna Berry, Vice-Chairman, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. She then welcomed everyone to this meeting of the East Alabama Rural Planning Organization's District Policy Committee for the Central District. Ms. Dawn Landholm, who has been acting as the RPO's program coordinator, introduced Mr. Patrick Hall, who will be assuming the role of program coordinator. Mr. Hall began working at the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission in mid August.

Under "Old Business," Mayor Berry asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the June 21, 2007 meeting. Mr. DeJarvis Leonard made a motion that the minutes be adopted as presented. Commissioner Robert Downing seconded the motion, which was approved by a unanimous vote of the Committee.

In "Other Old Business," Ms. Landholm directed Committee members' attention to the Committee membership lists, copies of which are attached to these minutes. Several jurisdictions have yet to appoint Technical Advisory Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee members. Ms. Landholm stressed the importance of making these appointments as soon as possible, so both Committees can hold kickoff meetings. She also explained a new opportunity for the Rural Planning Organization. Heflin Mayor Anna Berry is the regional co-chair of the East Alabama Action Commission (EAAC), Governor Riley's new initiative. Several Central District RPO members had attended the Governor's EAAC kickoff meeting at the end of August. The EAAC has four committees: Workforce Development, Education, Health, and Economic Development. Mayor Berry has requested the State's permission to add two new committees—Culture and Tourism, and Infrastructure. Ms. Landholm has suggested to Mayor Berry that, in order to reduce

duplication, the RPO's Technical and Citizens Advisory Committees be integrated into the Infrastructure Committee as a Transportation Subcommittee. The Chairs of the Technical and Citizens Advisory Committees are non-voting members of the District Policy Committee (DPC) and can report EAAC activities to the Policy Committee and bring back to their committees information from the Policy Committee. Keeping the DPC separate from the EAAC will enable local elected officials in our region—all of whom are automatically members of the RPO—to participate in other EAAC committees if they wish.

Under "New Business," Mayor Berry asked for reports of officers, staff, and/or committees. Ms. Landholm directed DPC members' attention to the draft 2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), a copy of which is attached to these minutes. As soon as the public review period is complete, ALDOT will issue a finalized STIP. The STIP contains a schedule of highway and transit projects for October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2011. ALDOT's website provides direction on how to submit comments during the public review period. ALDOT also is still accepting public input on the Statewide Transportation Plan, which Committee members may view on ALDOT's website. Mr. DeJarvis Leonard stated that the final STIP has been approved and published on ALDOT's website. Ms. Landholm stated that copies of the finalized STIP will be provided at the next meeting.

Mayor Berry asked if other persons have business with and/or reports for the Committee. Mr. Leonard stated that he had nothing new to add at this time.

Under motions or resolutions, Ms. Landholm asked if anyone present had safety projects they would like to have included in the RPO's safety report to ALDOT. Since the final meeting of the 2007 fiscal year was postponed until October, she will include any new safety projects presented at this meeting in her FY2007 report. At the June meeting, had expressed concern about potential conflicts between vehicles and people fishing off the AL Highway 77 causeway. Mayor Berry recommended that U.S. Highway 78 through downtown Heflin be reduced from four lanes to two driving lanes and one two-way turn lane to slow traffic down and to allow a safer angle for on-street parking spaces. No additional safety projects were recommended.

Mr. Leonard made a motion to adopt the resolution approving the proposed safety projects. Mr. Bill Curtis seconded the motion, which was approved by a unanimous vote of the Committee.

Under "Other New Business," Commissioner Downing asked Mr. Leonard about funding for right-of-way acquisition along AL Highway 109. Mr. Leonard stated that preliminary engineering has been completed on Phases 1 and 2 of that project, and ALDOT was able to move the remaining \$1 million from preliminary engineering to right-of-way acquisition. That amount will purchase the right-of-way from AL Highway 202 to Morrisville Road. Right-of-way acquisition for Morrisville Road to U.S. Highway 431 will cost about \$4.2 million. Road construction will require new dedicated funds.

Ms. Landholm directed DPC members' attention to a calendar that she had distributed. The calendar shows the Calhoun Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's meeting dates for the 2008 fiscal year. The RPO needs to meet once a quarter, and Mr. Leonard has requested that

the RPO meetings be scheduled to follow MPO meetings. Ms. Landholm asked that DPC members select one meeting date per quarter for the balance of the fiscal year. DPC members selected January 17th as the first quarter meeting date, April 17th as the second quarter meeting date, and July 17th as the fourth quarter meeting date. Unless otherwise suggested, the DPC will continue to meet in the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission's board room.

Under "Special Programs," Ms. Landholm informed the DPC members that she and Mr. Hall had attended a National Rural Transportation Peer Learning Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee at the end of September. The conference was very informative. Mr. Hall will present information from the sessions he attended at this meeting, and Ms. Landholm will share her "lessons learned" at next quarter's meeting.

Mr. Hall directed DPC members' attention to the handout entitled "Intermodal Transportation: Planning for the Future," a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Some of the key points to Mr. Hall's presentation include:

- Shipping goods via multiple transportation modes (i.e., intermodal shipping) is expected to increase dramatically over the next 30 years.
- Increased congestion at major airports and on the nation's highways, plus improvements at the Port of Mobile, will spur increased intermodal shipping within and through Alabama.
- Warehousing and intermodal transfer stations will become stronger economic engines, as will satellite airports to accommodate overflow from Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport.
- Truck traffic across the nation and in Alabama is expected to grow tremendously by the year 2020.

Mayor Berry asked if anyone wished to be heard on matters not included in the agenda. No meeting attendees offered additional comments.

Under "Open Discussion and Announcements," 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, January 17, 2008. She suggested that the meeting continue to be held at the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, since it is fairly centrally located and has a large meeting room. No alternative meeting locations were offered at that time.

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