

**EAST ALABAMA RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING MINUTES
DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE - SOUTHERN DISTRICT
July 31, 2008 - 10:00 a.m.
ALDOT Division 4 Office – Alexander City**

Members in Attendance:

Commissioner Lathonia Wright, Randolph County
Mayor Oscar Crawley, City of Lanett (represented by Mr. Jerry Thrower)
Mr. DeJarvis Leonard, ALDOT Division 4
Mr. Bill Curtis, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Other Attendees:

Mr. Jerry Thrower, City of Lanett
Mr. Joseph Moncrief, ALDOT Division 4
Mr. Patrick Hall, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission
Ms. Dawn Landholm, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Mr. Patrick Hall, acting as Chairman, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m.

Under “Old Business”, Mr. Hall asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the previous meeting. Commissioner Lathonia Wright moved that the minutes be adopted as presented. Mr. Jerry Thrower seconded the motion, which was passed by a unanimous vote of the committee.

There was no other old business.

Under “New Business”, no officers were present to report.

Mr. Patrick Hall and Ms. Dawn Landholm gave the staff report. They informed the Committee that they would be presenting a summary of the Access Management Workshops, which were held in June of 2008, and they would be attending this year’s National Association of Development Organizations conference on rural transportation planning in Duluth, Minnesota.

Mr. DeJarvis Leonard, of ALDOT’s 4th Division, gave an update on ALDOT’s programmed construction projects in the four county Southern District of the Rural Planning Organization. In Tallapoosa County, the resurfacing of AL 63 will be finished soon. There is a planned bridge replacement at Hillabee Creek. In Chambers County, there will be a future development at Interstate 85 Exit 70, to include industrial access roads. Also, there will be a resurfacing of Interstate 85 in Chambers County. The

resurfacing of AL 50 is finishing, but there is a concern about the capacity of AL 50 between LaFayette and Lanett as the increase in traffic counts has been higher than expected. Mr. Thrower noted that Chambers County will experience unprecedented growth once the Kia manufacturing facility is completed just across the state line in Georgia. Mr. Leonard noted that ALDOT is looking at improvements in Chambers and Randolph Counties, including the resurfacing of US 431 and intersection safety improvements. All routes between Roanoke and Lanett are being considered for improvement, as well as roads between the two cities and the Kia facility. There could also be a resurfacing project on AL 9 and US 231.

A discussion ensued about the impact of higher gas prices on state revenues for road construction and maintenance. Commissioner Wright asked about the more than 1,200 rural bridges that are unsafe for school buses. Mr. Leonard responded that bond money was supposed to be used first to improve the bridges for school bus crossing. To the best of his knowledge, Chambers County had completed all of its bridge improvement, and he will check the status of other counties. Mr. Bill Curtis noted that the United States Congress was working on a bill that would require bridge inspection every two years, and that money to be used to improve bridges for school bus crossing would be attached to it. The bill was passed by the House of Representatives but is still in the Senate. It is said that the President will veto the bill.

Mr. Leonard continued, informing the committee that construction costs have increased 30 to 35 percent over the past 4 years. The affect of the recent price increases has not been published, but he expects construction costs to continue to increase. Due to increased construction costs, ALDOT and local road departments need to move away from asphalt mixes and explore cheaper alternatives, especially on roads which have little to no truck traffic.

The committee then discussed the “Celebrate Alabama” amusement park/shopping center to be located in Lee County along Interstate 85. The long term plan for Interstate 85 is to expand it from four to six lanes between Exits 51 and 58, with a near-term plan already in place for adding lanes between Exits 58 to 62. Also, the expansion of the Lanett airport would impact the amount of truck traffic on I-85. Commissioner Wright also noted that AL 48 from Wedowee to Carrollton was another route that crosses into Georgia and may need some attention, due to commuters living on Lake Wedowee.

Under “motions and resolutions”, Ms. Landholm reminded the Committee about the discussion at the May meeting regarding changes to the Bylaws. She proposed two changes to the Rural Planning Organization’s structure. First, she suggested amending the bylaws to allow the District Policy Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee to meet concurrently. There are several advantages to doing so. Concurrent meetings would allow the mayors and county commission members to appoint staff who work on roads as their alternate representative without that person having to attend two separate meetings covering the same topics. In addition, these people with technical knowledge would be

available to respond to questions the elected officials may have. Finally, meeting attendance—and, therefore, local government representation—should increase.

The second issue to address is the Citizens Advisory Committee. Very few people have been appointed to this committee. Ms. Landholm proposed eliminating the Citizen Advisory Committee. That section would be removed from the Bylaws, and the Citizen Participation Plan would be revised to call for periodic public forums to allow and encourage more citizen participation.

Ms. Landholm requested a motion recommending the changes to the Regional Policy Committee, if the Committee approves of the proposed modifications. Mr. Leonard moved that the Bylaw and Citizen Participation Plan amendments that Ms. Landholm proposed be recommended to the Regional Policy Committee. Mr. Throver seconded the motion, which was passed by a unanimous vote of the committee.

Under “Other New Business”, Ms. Landholm asked the Committee to establish the next fiscal year’s meeting schedule. The committee agreed to continue to meet at 10:00 a.m. on the fourth Thursday of the month, with the exception of the next meeting, which will be on Wednesday, November 19, 2008. The committee wanted the first meeting of the fiscal year to occur after the new Mayors take office but before the holiday season. The remaining meetings would occur in January, April, and July.

Under “Special Programs”, Mr. Hall gave a summary and a presentation based on the Access Management Workshops held in Anniston and Alexander City in June. The workshops were successful and well attended, and Mr. Hall hoped to see more local governments actively participate in access management. With good local participation and coordination, local access management ordinances could result in the creation of a statewide access management plan. Mr. Hall then directed the Committee to a handout of his presentation, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. This presentation detailed the regulatory and design options that could be used to further the goal of managing access along highways, roads, and streets. Specifically, the use of zoning and road design were highlighted.

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 for the Southern District is scheduled for Wednesday, November 19, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at the ALDOT 4th Division Headquarters Building.

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