

**EAST ALABAMA RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING MINUTES
DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE & TECHNICAL ADVISORY
COMMITTEE for the NORTHERN DISTRICT
July 9, 2009 - 1:00 p.m.
Etowah County Courthouse – Gadsden**

Policy Committee Members in Attendance:

Judge Melvyn W. Salter, Cherokee County Commission
Commissioner Perry Gwin, Etowah County Commission
Mayor Tony Wilkie, City of Centre
Mr. Johnny L. Harris, ALDOT 1st Division
Mr. Bill Curtis, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (represented by
Ms. Dawn Landholm)

Technical Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

Other Attendees:

Robert Nair, Etowah County
Mr. Ben Thackerson, ALDOT 1st Division, District 5

Commissioner Perry Gwin, Chairman, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Under “Old Business”, Commissioner Gwin asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the previous meeting. Judge Melvyn Salter moved that the minutes be adopted as presented. Mr. Johnny Harris seconded the motion, which was passed by a unanimous vote of the committee.

Ms. Dawn Landholm informed the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission is still going through the process of hiring a new staff member, who will become the RPO Program Coordinator.

Under “New Business”, Commissioner Gwin and Judge Salter stated that they had no report.

Ms. Landholm informed committee members that SAFETEA-LU is scheduled for reauthorization this year. Representative Jim Oberstar, who is chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, has proposed some changes to the regulations which would strengthen the role of the Rural Planning Organizations. Ms. Landholm explained that she has

not read the proposed legislation, so she cannot provide details at this time. Hopefully, information will be made available at the National Rural Transportation Conference at the end of October.

Mr. Johnny Harris, of ALDOT's 1st Division, asked Mr. Ben Thackerson to update the committees on ALDOT's projects in Cherokee County. Mr. Thackerson stated that ALDOT has almost completed resurfacing on AL Highway 9 from Ellisville to Piedmont. The resurfacing project on US Highway 411 from Leesburg to the bypass in Centre has been let, as has the widening and leveling project on AL Highway 273. Each of the county highway departments received some stimulus money from ALDOT. Etowah County has chosen to spend its stimulus funding on Gilley Road, and Cherokee County will be working on County Road 71.

Mr. Harris informed committee members that ALDOT is in the process of re-balancing the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Due to the injection of stimulus funding into the State's budget, some projects were moved up in the schedule. The STIP update is not available, so the scheduling of the projects he is reporting on may change.

There are five projects scheduled in Cherokee County. A safety project on AL Highway 9 from Cedar Bluff to AL Highway 35 will involve widening the shoulders and adding pavement markers. That project is scheduled to begin this month. ALDOT also will be installing guardrails on various county roads. The project should be in August. The City of Centre received Transportation Enhancement funds to construct sidewalks along Northwood Drive. ALDOT is conducting a corridor study on a project to add lanes to US Highway 411 from AL Highway 9 to the Georgia state line. The final project planned for Cherokee County is replacement of the AL Highway 68 bridge over the railroad just north of AL Highway 273.

In Etowah County, several projects are scheduled for the urbanized area. In the rural area, two projects are scheduled for AL Highway 179: a safety project involving adding chevron signs, re-striping, and adding pavement markers; and replacement of the bridge over Cove Creek. The only other road project scheduled for the rural area is clearing, grubbing, and placing fill material in the I-59 median north of the US Highway 11 overpass.

Under motions or resolutions, Ms. Landholm directed committee members' attention to the proposed FY2010 meeting calendar, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. The proposed schedule continues the pattern of conducting the quarterly meetings on the same date as the first Gadsden-Etowah County MPO meeting of the quarter. This scheduling makes it more convenient for ALDOT staff to attend the RPO meetings by reducing their travel. The meeting location would continue to alternate between Gadsden and Centre. Ms. Landholm asked if committee members wanted to keep the Gadsden meetings at 1:00 p.m. and the Centre meetings at 1:30 p.m. Judge Salter asked that Gadsden meetings also be scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Ms. Landholm asked if any other members wanted to suggest changes to the dates, time, or location. Judge Salter moved that the meeting schedule be approved as presented, with all meetings starting at 1:30 and continuing to alternate between Gadsden and Centre. Mr. Harris seconded the motion, which was passed by a unanimous vote of the committee.

Under "other new business," Ms. Landholm announced that new officers would be elected at the November 12th meeting.

There were no “Special Programs.” However, Ms. Landholm did distribute a handout about activities that are eligible for Transportation Enhancement funds, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Mr. Harris informed the committees that three Transportation Enhancement (TE) applications in Division 1 were awarded under the stimulus funds, which funded 100% of construction costs. The City of Centre was awarded TE funding under the standard formula, which is 80% federal funds and 20% local match.

No one present wished to speak under “Persons wishing to be heard on matters not included in the agenda.”

Under “Open Discussion and Announcements”, Ms. Landholm announced that the next joint meeting of the East Alabama Rural Planning Organization’s District Policy and Technical Advisory Committees for the Northern District is scheduled for Thursday, November 12, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. in Centre.

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