

Cape Fear RPO
Brunswick County ❖ Columbus County
Pender County

Rural Transportation Advisory Committee
May 20, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Members Present

George Brown, Pender County
Giles Byrd, Columbus County
Craig Caster, Boiling Spring Lakes
Don Helms, Surf City
Bruce Maxwell, St James

Fred McCoy, Pender County
Edwin Russ, Columbus County
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Jackie Williams-Rowland, Brunswick

Non-members Present

Joe Bailey, NCDOT Division 6
James Burke, Cape Fear RPO
Greg Burns, NCDOT Division 3
David Clinton, McKim & Creed
Karen Collette, NCDOT Division 3
Nastasha Earle-Young, NCDOT TPB

Walter Freeman, Buckhead EMS
Tara Murphy, McKim & Creed
Patrick Riddle, NCDOT Division 3
Allen Serkin, Cape Fear RPO
Tiffany Snow, NCDOT TPB
Jonathan Williams, Columbus County Schools

I. START-UP

1. Call to order

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance –Having reached a quorum after a plethora of traffic delays in the region, Mr. Williams called the meeting to order at 9:13 AM.

3. Ethics awareness and conflict of interest reminder – Mr. Williams read the reminder below. No conflicts of interest were identified.

In accordance with the State Government Ethic Act, it is the duty of every Committee member to avoid conflicts of interest. Does any Committee member have any known conflict of interest with respect to any matters coming before the Committee today? If so, please identify the conflict and refrain from any participation in the particular matter involved.

4. Additions or corrections to the agenda – None

- 5. Acceptance of the minutes** – *Mr. Maxwell made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Byrd seconded the motion. The motion carried.*

6. Public comment

Mr. Jonathan Williams of Columbus County Schools noted that the proposed new Old Lake Road grade separation would radically alter growth plans that the school system was embarking on, and that he would prefer an interchange. McKim & Creed, who wrote the plan Mr. Williams was referring to, noted that a new pre-kindergarten through eighth grade school had been proposed on the property across Old Lake Road from the High School, and that constructing an interchange would greatly improve emergency vehicle routes to the schools.

At this point, Chairman Williams noted that he would appreciate a more informal discussion. Speakers were still required to announce themselves, but could speak conversationally to clarify points of question or contention. These minutes explain each of the main points, but may omit certain verbal exchanges. They have been preserved by staff.

Mr. Bailey explained that there were three projects. One for an interchange at Chaunceytown Road only, another for an interchange at Old Lake Road only, and another at both roads. It was unlikely that federal regulations would allow for more than one interchange. Mr. Burns noted that budgetary constraints and federal regulations made both interchanges unlikely. Both Mr. Bailey and Mr. Burns felt that the interchange could still be placed at either intersection since the project would be refined and designed later in the planning process.

Mr. Walter Freeman with Buckhead Emergency Management Services noted that safety was his primary concern, since Old Lake Road rapidly changes in the area from forty-five miles per hour to thirty-five.

Mr. Frank Williams noted that concerned parties and NCDOT Division 6 representatives should continue to have a dialog about the issue, but that it was an issue for down the road. He also asked for any final comments. Mr. Serkin noted that getting project funded was most important step, and that the Columbus County Comprehensive Transportation Plan could address the topic. Mr. Jonathan Williams asked about the timeline of the project, Mr. Bailey responded that the project would likely happen in 8-10 years.

- 7. Meeting Schedule** – Staff reviewed the rationale for moving an RTAC Meeting from September to October 21. Mr. Russ noted that he had no objection but that he will not be able to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment. *Mr. Williams heard no*

objection and adopted the new schedule by unanimous consent.

II. NEW BUSINESS

- 8. Cape Fear Regional Bike Plan** – Mr. Serkin made a presentation on behalf of the plan consultants, Alta Planning & Design. Mr. Frank Williams asked for a deadline for responding to the survey, Mr. Serkin answered that the survey would close at the end of June. Mr. Frank Williams also noted the Brunswick County Blueway/Greenway plans, and encouraged elected officials to discuss these opportunities with their recreation and tourism directors. Mr. Caster asked if the Cape Fear COG was seeking any kind of match, Mr. Serkin replied that the plan was fully funded by NCDOT.
- 9. 2015-16 Planning Work Program Amendment** – Mr. Serkin explained the deadline to approve an amendment to the PWP for the current fiscal year is May 31, 2016, and rationale for proposed changes. NCDOT TPB has approved the amendment. *Mr. Helms made a motion to approve the PWP, Mr. Caster seconded the motion. The motion carried.*
- 10. P4.0 Preliminary Regional Impact Point Assignments** – Mr. Serkin explained the deadline for assigning local input points for Regional Impact-tier projects was moved to July 29, 2016.

Mr. McCoy asked about the Hampstead Bypass. Mr. Serkin responded that the project was not located in the RPO, but was not likely to get funded.

Mr. Helms asked about the outlook for project H090802, which would widen NC 210 to three lanes with a multi-use path included. Mr. Riddle replied that it was unlikely to be funded at the State or Regional tier, but may happen at the Division.

Mr. Brown wanted to note that he was critical of a process which did not consider seasonal traffic, peak ADT or evacuation routes.

- 11. Southport-Ft. Fisher Ferry Tolling Resolution** – Mr. Serkin noted that prior resolutions had been passed by the RTAC in 2014, but the state legislature did not act on the issue. Mr. Frank Williams noted that the legislature was considering a bill that would eliminate ferry tolls, and there was some discussion of how the lack of funding going directly to the Ferry may impair its ability to make improvements. Mr. Serkin explained that NCDOT had asked the RPOs and MPOs reconsider resolutions.

Mr. Helms made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Byrd to write a letter explaining the rationale behind the RTAC's resolution, which would then be sent to all legislators in the area and to adopt the resolution. Mr. Frank Williams asked that the letter also be sent to Mr. Steve Keen in the Governor's office.

Mr. Brown asked about how the nature of assurances that the legislature would not take monies from the fund. Mr. Serkin replied that the fund is earmarked by existing legislation, and that the legislature could conceivably change that in the future.

Mr. Williams asked that the motion by Mr. Helms be revisited. The motion carried.

III. WRAP-UP

12. Reports/Updates -- NCDOT Division staff and others updated the committee on various projects and on-going issues. Ms. Earle-Young reported that the Onslow CTP was including the Topsail area in its study area. Mr. Brown wanted to make sure Pender County Planning was made aware of the efforts.

13. General Discussion – Mr. Frank Williams asked that Mr. Serkin send out notice of Division-tier Point Assignment public input meetings. Mr. Williams also asked the group about its thoughts on calendar prompts for meetings.

14. Adjournment – There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes prepared by James Burke on July 7, 2016.