

Minutes
Lenoir County Transportation Committee
Lenoir Economic Development Board Room
Scheduled Meeting
March 11, 2015 – 8:30 a.m.

Attendance:

Voting	Non-Voting	Absent
Gordon Vermillion, Lenoir County at Large, Chair	Adrian King, PRIDE of Kinston	John Craft, Manager, Town of LaGrange
John Marshall, Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce	Jeff Cabaniss, NC DOT	Tony Sears, Manager, Kinston
Bill Whaley, Lenoir County Economic Development Board	John Rouse, Division Engineer, NCDOT	Patrick Flanagan, RPO
Donald King, Town of Pink Hill	Rob Will, RPO Planner	Joe Albright, Town of Grifton, Manager
Dan Sale, Lenoir County, Member-At-Large		Barry Seay, Lenoir County Planning Board
Mary Jane Westphal, NC GTP Authority		Brian Lucas, City of Kinston
Eric Rouse, Lenoir County Commissioner		BJ Murphy, Mayor, City of Kinston
		Adam Short, City of Kinston
		Chris Harper, County Transport
		Mike Jarman, Manager, Lenoir County
		Mark Pope, Executive Director, Lenoir County Economic Development

Chair Vermillion called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Quorum was present.

Chairman Vermillion began the meeting with a general discussion about Mr. Ferrell Blount’s visit. Chairman Vermillion encouraged committee members to express their thoughts of the visit and discussion.

Chairman Gordon Vermillion stated that he did not feel confident that he would address issues on behalf of Lenoir County and Eastern North Carolina.

Mr. John Marshall stated that he felt that the only advice the Lenoir County Transportation Committee received was to talk with local legislatures.

The Committee agreed that they thought initially he would be able to offer advice to meet with certain individuals or groups together for discussion and to garner support since he was the NC DOT Vice Chairman. The committee agreed that Mr. Ferrell Blount’s views became more localized the more they talked. Understanding the views of the DOT board was beneficial to the committee.

Commissioner Eric Rouse stated that they were successful in stifling the Highway 70 Bypass this go around, however, from the discussion provided by Mr. Ferrell Blount, the Bypass is coming whether we like it or not. Commissioner Eric Rouse recommended to the committee not to use points going forward towards Highway 70. He recommended they use points for local projects only moving forward.

Mr. Rob Will believes next round of points will look differently than this round. He stated that the committee will be able to use regional and district points. Mr. Rob Will let the committee know that the process for the next round is right around corner

Mr. Dan Sale asked if there was any way to push the Harvey Parkway - Section C project up. Mr. Rob Will stated that the Harvey Parkway - Section C is a good focus for the Lenoir County Transportation Committee. Mr. John Rouse stated that most of the funds were going to the Havelock Bypass and would be reviewed on a regular basis.

Commissioner Eric Rouse stated that pairing of the districts would be more beneficial to Lenoir County if there was a change. He would like to see 1 & 2 paired together. The distribution of funds would be more balanced. Lenoir County is

currently getting 20% of the money at this time. Lenoir County does not have enough congestion on the roads to receive more funding in its current paired district. Commissioner Eric Rouse stated that he has talked with representatives about changing the way partnerships are done.

Chairman Gordon Vermillion would like for New Bern to attend a committee meeting soon.

Update:

TIP Projects – Jeff Cabaniss, NC DOT

- **B-4565:** Bridges #42 and #43 over Neuse River on US 70 Business (Queen St.), Awarded to Thalle Construction Co., Inc., Preconstruction meeting is scheduled for March 17th
- **W-5202K:** NC 11 - Construct 21 left turn lanes at existing median openings from Highland Ave to North of Odham Rd, Anticipated Let date June 2015
- **EB-3314D:** Kinston Riverwalk, multi-use path from downtown through Pearson Park to the Power plant, currently in final design stage, awaiting R/R approval for ROW, anticipated Let date June 2015

Non-TIP Projects – Jeff Cabaniss, NC DOT

- **Smithfield Way** (49005) - extend road from SR 1548 Hill Farm Rd to US 258, state forces to complete box culvert and grade work, paving to be done by Barnhill Contracting Co.
- **Hill Farm Rd** (48102) - extend existing turn lane on SR 1548 (Hill Farm Rd) past Kinston FD Station 3 to 465 ft north of SR 2021 (Smithfield Way), awarded to Barnhill Contracting Co., available March 16, 2015, completion date of December 31, 2015

Resurfacing - Jeff Cabaniss, NC DOT

- **NC 55** - from NC 11 to the Craven Co line, contract awarded to Barnhill Contracting Co., work planned for Spring, completion date June 30, 2015
- **Castle Oaks Subdivision** - resurface roads and reconstruct shoulders, contract awarded to Barnhill Contracting Co., available March 15, 2015 with a completion date of November 15, 2015
- **Secondary Roads** - Let date March 25, 2015, available July 1st with a completion by November 13, 2015
- SR 1116 Jonestown Rd from NC 11 to US 258, widen from 18' to 24' and resurface
- SR 1578 Airport Rd from 2 lane section to NC 58, mill and resurface
- SR 1569 Carey Rd from US 70 Bus. (Vernon Ave) to SR 1571, mill and resurface

Chairman Vermillion asked if we had an official closing schedule for the bridge. Mr. Jeff Cabaniss stated that there should be a June closing for the bridges. Exact date will be ready for release in April. Mr. John Rouse stated that we have to follow the window of time for working with the river. Closings will be announced and posted in advance, minimum of a 2 weeks notice. DOT only has 6 to 8 months to work in the water.

Chairman Vermillion stated that the festival is in May and should not be affected. The committee discussed how important it is for folks to update their GPS systems and help eliminate issues with road closings.

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes – Gordon Vermillion, Chair

- A quorum was present. The minutes were reviewed by the committee for February 11, 2014. Mr. Bill Whaley made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. John Marshall seconded the motion. All voting members were in favor of this motion. The minutes were approved by the committee.

Chairman Vermillion asked Mr. John Rouse to update the committee on tax and highway laws. Mr. John Rouse stated that the fuel tax is specific to Senate Bill 20 and it needs to stabilize the tax. The bill set the tax at \$0.35 and the House wanted to set the base at \$0.36. Mr. John Rouse stated that every penny of gas tax equals approximately \$50 million. If the fuel tax drops, DOT is out of highway funding. Most of these funds are used for operations/maintenance side of the business. Correcting the tax issue now would keep us moving forward and not disturb current funding. Fuel tax is expected to drop to \$0.07 in July if no action is taken. The fuel tax is based on whole sale fuel price and would reflect the lowest cost of fuel for the year. South Carolina is known to have the lowest fuel tax, but they have a property tax associated with DOT and their project funding. Chairman Vermillion stated that in North Carolina, the people using the road pay and that makes sense to him.

Mr. John Rouse stated that 2/3 of the money from the tax is operations/maintenance and the other 1/3 of the money is used for capital improvements/trust fund. Mr. John Rouse stated that the number has not changed since the early 90s. Roads needs are outpacing the revenue being generated. Chairman Vermillion stated that future of road funding is estimated to be \$90 billion. Mr. John Rouse stated that this was not just a state problem but a national problem.

There is an expected 50% population increase for North Carolina in metro areas (crest of Raleigh to Charlotte, with a greater strain on the roads in those areas).

Chairman Vermillion asked the committee if they should follow up with note/letter to representatives asking them to encourage a focus on Eastern NC on behalf of Lenoir County and request that the city/county/municipalities to do the same thing. Also, if this note/letter is to be generated, should it include a component showing the importance for the CF Harvey Parkway - Section C.

Mr. Dan Sale asked about the vote for historic tax credit reinstatement. Mr. John Marshall stated that the request is in the budget but it has not been voted on at this time.

Mr. Gordon Vermillion asked about the project being completed on Herritage Street. Mr. John Rouse stated that it was a city street and the work was not being complete by DOT. Mr. Adrian King stated that it was part of a grant for closing certain railroad crossings. The railroad company is paying for the renovations on Herritage.

Mr. John Rouse wanted to know about the current discussion for restriping Queen Street. Mr. Adrian King stated that there would be a meeting on April 9 to finalize plans. He stated that drawings from Dunn & Dalton have been submitted for review.

Mr. Bill Whaley asked about the syncing of lights once the bridge project begins. No one was in attendance at the meeting on behalf of the City. The committee wanted to clear the question for this process up at the next meeting. Mr. John Rouse stated that devices have been ordered for syncing the lights and they will have to be in place prior to closure of the bridge.

The next transportation meeting will be Wednesday, April 8, at 8:30 a.m.

Much discussion followed

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 a.m.