

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
SEPTEMBER 20, 2012
NOON**

MINUTES

The regular monthly meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, September 20th at the Athens Holiday Inn. Secretary Frank Turner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Bridges, Robert
Eisenman, Emily
Lyon, Tommy
Palmer, Bill
Sanders, Bud
Bicknell, Hunter
Cox, Alan
Nalls, Billy
Dove, Anthony
Gandy, Roy
Ainslie, Andy
Perriman, Fred
Brooks, Stenette
Morgan, Kathy
Roseberry, Jerry
Turner, Frank
Davis, Melvin
Ivie, Charles
Harden, Amrey
Pittard, Billy
Lee, Kay
Roberts, Roy

Members Absent:

Yearwood, Danny
Graham, Ernie
Denson, Nancy
Houston, Lamar
Guest, Larry
Wright, Glenn
Finch, Charles
Joiner, Jim
Thurman, Larry
Blackmon, Jody
Boggs, Ronnie
Little, Kevin
Thompson, Greg
Knight, Harry
Lewis, Vince

Associate Members Present:

Ouzts, Buddy
Horton, Harold
Seymour, Joel
Crawford, Charlie
Nunn, David

Media Present:

Stephanie Johns
The Morgan Citizen

Guests Present:

Cheryl Smith
Beth Brown
Jordan Chinouth
Pat Graham
Lori Smith
T.K. Adams
Tim Adams
Ed Bullard

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Evans Brinson, Comptroller
Burke Walker, Planning & Government Services Director

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AUGUST MEETING MINUTES

Secretary Frank Turner welcomed members, guests, media, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August meeting. Such a motion was made by Commissioner Tommy Lyon and seconded by Commissioner Hunter Bicknell. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Jackson County: The County completed FY2012 in the black, exceeding projections, and eliminating three furlough days. The budget was balanced by utilizing \$2 million of reserve funds. A fourth judge will be added to the Jackson, Barrow, and Banks judicial circuit. Groundbreaking ceremonies were recently held for the new EMS station in Braselton. There have been a lot of industrial activity and site visits in the County over the past month. Kubota is scheduled for completion in February 2013, with Toyota following shortly thereafter. A \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) will be used to construct a Boys and Girls Club facility.

Jasper County: Commissioner Alan Cox expressed appreciation to everyone involved in the Stanton Springs project, which will be an economic development boom to the region. The First Baptist Church in Monticello has graciously offered to enlarge its parking lot in order to allow additional parking for the Courthouse. The County is in the process of resurfacing roads, and a Vanilla Bean Coffee Shop has located on the square in Monticello. Charley Elliott Road has been paved, and Lloyd Shoals Dam repairs are complete. Commissioner Cox expressed appreciation to Mr. Billy Nalls, Private Sector Representative from Jasper County, for being a very meaningful representative for the County.

Madison County: Cash reserves will be used to balance and finalize the budget. Counties will receive funds from the GDOT LMIG Program for road improvements. Madison County schools are now a Charter School System, and the Madison County High School will house a Career Academy.

Morgan County: Design plans are being developed for renovations to the public safety facility. The County is in the process of updating its website. Morgan County and the City of Madison are working jointly on a UGA study for a food hub. The County is undertaking a study to analyze the current E-911 system and determine future direction. The City and County continue to seek agreement on the distribution of Local Option Sales Tax (LOST). A \$300,000 FEMA grant will be utilized for construction of a Safe Room for use in severe weather conditions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: Committee members met prior to the Council meeting to review the financial statements for the two-month period ending August 31, 2012. A review of the account balances reflects the strong financial condition of the Regional Commission, with cash and near-cash assets exceeding total liabilities,

excluding the capital lease obligation, by \$718,000. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$1,297. Financial activity for the two-month period was approximately 2/12th of the FY13 Budget. A motion to approve the financial statement as presented was made by Mr. Amrey Harden and seconded by Dr. Stenette Brooks. The motion carried unanimously. The Committee heard a report from Chris Edwards of the auditing firm of Clifton, Lipford, Hardison & Parker regarding the FY 2012 Audit, which will be presented later in the meeting.

Program of Work: The Program of Work Committee met prior to the Council meeting to review the following technical assistance requests for the month:

1. **CITY OF MONTICELLO** – Assistance in developing an Urban Redevelopment Plan.
2. **CITY OF BOWMAN** – Assistance in procuring the services of an architectural consultant to develop a Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR) for two downtown buildings.
3. **CITY OF OXFORD** - Assistance in updating their five-year Short Term Work Program as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.
4. **CITY OF ELBERTON** - Application for an Opportunity Zone and Community Development Block Grant Housing application.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY2013 Program of Work, effective September 20, 2012, was made by Mr. Joel Seymour and seconded by Commissioner Billy Pittard. The motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Dove and Terry Mathews will be meeting with Toby Carr, GDOT Planning Director, on Friday, September 22nd. They hope to gain insight on future plans and programs on which Mr. Carr is focusing in his new role. Governor Deal appointed Mr. Carr to his current position when Todd Long was named GDOT Deputy Commissioner.

Executive Director Dove advised that he recently served on a panel at the Georgia Forward Forum held at the Classic Center on August 13th. Two hundred twenty-five leaders, representing 110 organizations, attended the forum. Attendees discussed challenges facing Georgia and a vision for statewide posterity.

Executive Director Dove will be attending the National Association of Development Organizations Annual Meeting in Las Vegas on October 12th – 17th. Director Dove serves on the Board of Directors and will be moderating a panel on water resources.

Attorney General Olens supported legislation in the last session of the General Assembly that made changes to the Open Records and Meetings law. One item requiring attention is the naming of an Open Records Officer by organizations such as ours. Executive Director Dove presented a resolution naming Executive Assistant Mott

Beck as Opens Records Officer for NEGRC and Comptroller Evans Brinson as Alternate Records Officer. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Commissioner Pittard and seconded by Commissioner Kathy Morgan. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Director Dove and Ms. Beck will facilitate a retreat for the City of Madison on October 11th. The retreat will be held in our headquarters conference room.

Greene County officials forwarded the nomination of Charles Finch to serve as Private Sector representative for a term to expire on June 30, 2013. It was the consensus of the Council to accept that nomination.

PRESENTATION OF FY13 AUDIT

At this time, Mr. Edwards gave the FY2012 Audit report. He advised that it was a good, clean audit, and that there were no findings or deficiencies. He indicated that the NEGRC staff was extremely organized and accommodating, and that it was a pleasure to work with the organization. Mr. Edwards advised that the FY2012 Budget had been managed very well, and liabilities had decreased. The Audit received an Unqualified Opinion, which is the highest opinion given.

REGIONAL TOURISM ACTIVITIES AND THEIR IMPACT

At this time, Cheryl Smith with the Department of Economic Development gave a report on regional tourism activities and their impact. Ms. Smith utilized a PowerPoint presentation in discussing programs and services of the Tourism Division including outreach, business development, and visitor information centers. She emphasized that tourism project managers are the first point of contact for assistance and support in the nine travel regions in the state. With Northeast Georgia being served by three Project Managers, she indicated which Manager was responsible for each of our twelve counties. Responsibilities of the Managers include fostering tourism product growth, tourism marketing, serving as a resource to communities, acting as a resource to tourism industry partners, working with specialty tourism segments, and providing assistance to the camera ready program. Ms. Smith addressed comments and questions from members.

PLANNING & GOVERNMENT SERVICES DIVISION UPDATE

The next item on the agenda was an update by Planning & Government Services Director Burke Walker regarding activities of that division. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was completed on August 30th, and the public comment period will end on October 1st. Copies will be forwarded to the PGS Committee for review and recommendation prior to consideration by the Council at the October meeting. This year, staff worked to include the costs for preparing Urban Redevelopment Plans (URPS) into the DCA Planning Contract. Generally, this reduces local government costs by cost sharing - 60% DCA, 30% local, and 10% Regional Commission. The cost to a local government for plan development is \$5,000. Mr.

Walker advised that DCA implemented new DRI rules on July 1st, and PGS staff will host an education series on October 25th at Regional Commission headquarters to explain the new process. PGS staff is working on updates to Hazard Mitigation Plan Updates for Athens-Clarke, Elbert, Jackson, Greene, Madison, Oconee, and Oglethorpe Counties. These projects are part of the five-year updates. Staff has successfully worked on several OneGeorgia applications, and also prepared a successful CDBG Housing application for the City of Porterdale.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 18th.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant