

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
FEBRUARY 17, 2011
NOON**

MINUTES

The February meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, February 17, 2011 at noon at the Athens Holiday Inn. Chairperson Stenette Brooks called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Yearwood, Danny
Graham, Ernie
Denson, Nancy
Mercer, Jim
Lyon, Tommy
Guest, Larry
Brown, Terry
Sanders, Bud
Bicknell, Hunter
Joiner, Jim
Hill, Charles
Nalls, Billy
Dove, Anthony
Gandy, Roy
Ainslie, Andrew
Brooks, Stenette
Morgan, Kathy
Turner, Frank
Crawford, Charlie
Thompson, Greg
Knight, Harry
Summerour, Allyson
Lewis, Vince

Members Absent:

Thompson, Chip
Houston, Lamar
Wright, Glenn
Mayers, Tom
Short, Shane
Newsome, Glenn
Faust, Ron
Perriman, Fred
Roseberry, Jerry
Davis, Melvin
Walter, Joe
Harden, Amrey
Pittard, Billy
Yeany, Russ
Little, Kevin
Lee, Kay
Roberts, Roy

Associate Members Present:

Horton, Harold
Adams, Louise
Pitts, Flemmie
Jackson, Julian

Guests Present:

Linda Hayden
Robert Bridges
Wayne Provost
Bob Thomas
Mark Franklin
Sherry Jackson
Paul Elkins
Jason Long
Tate O'Rourke
Christina Franklin
Marsay Simpson

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Evans Brinson, Comptroller
Peggy Jenkins, AAA Director
Burke Walker, Director of Planning & Local Gov't. Services

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Brooks welcomed members, guests, and staff. She asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January meeting. Such a motion was made by Mayor Nancy Denson and seconded by Commissioner Danny Yearwood. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Jackson County: In the latter part of 2010, the County adopted a new Code of Ethics; and as a result, was recognized by the Georgia Municipal Association as a "Certified County of Ethics". Jackson County is one of only three counties in the state to receive this designation. The newly renovated senior center will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony on March 1st. Inmates that have been housed in the former correctional institute and 26 additional inmates from the state will move into the I.W. Davis Correctional Institute. Equipment has been purchased that will test and inventory over 5,000 signs throughout the County, and all municipalities have been invited to participate in this process. As part of the countywide transportation plan, road crews have conducted an evaluation of all roads, and all data acquired from these evaluations will be available through the GIS department. A significant upgrade is being conducted at the West Jackson Park. Specifically, due to the County hosting three age groups for the Dizzy Dean Tournament, 300 additional all weather parking spaces are being added at the park.

Jasper County: The County Clerk retired in December after over 40 years of service to the County. Regarding recreation, new bleachers are being installed, and a new multiuse athletic field is being constructed. The County ordinances are being revised to include an occupational ordinance. A committee is working on a SPLOST list. A part of the prior SPLOST, road paving is ongoing. A portion of the sanitary landfill has been closed, and plans are to also close the C&D landfill. The County has updated their 911 center and acquired new software.

Madison County: The County is in good financial condition and finished the year in the black. The bid has been let on the intersection of Fortson Store and Glenn Carey Road, a \$250,000 project that will be funded by the County. State funds were received for road paving, and \$1.5 million was received for an extension to the library. The County will provide \$560,000 for this project. The largest Ingles in the store chain will be locating in Madison County, and the water treatment plant is complete that will accommodate the facility. Negotiations have been held with the City of Danielsville to run water lines through the City to other parts of the County. A loan has been applied for that will allow the County to tie on to the City of Commerce water lines permanently.

Morgan County: The County received two Homeland Security Fire Grants, one was for \$313,000 for SCABAs, and one for \$109,000 for a brush truck. The City of Bostwick received a Transportation Enhancement Grant from GDOT for \$100,000 for sidewalk expansion. Georgia Power recently announced its Energy Efficiency Rebate, and the County will hold a forum regarding this program in conjunction with MadisonFest at the end of April. A former manufacturing plant was renovated for use as a jail, and the County would like to acquire additional inmates to help support the facility. The County is reapplying for a CDBG to help fund a facility to house Dekalb Tech. DOT will provide funding for replacement of four bridges in the County, and construction on the new library will begin in May.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: The Committee met prior to the Council and reviewed the financial statements for the seven-month period ending January 31, 2011. A review of the account balances indicates that the Regional Commission is in good financial condition, with cash and near cash assets exceeding total liabilities, excluding the capital lease debt, by \$721,000. Revenues exceed expenses by \$1,679. Financial activity for the seven month period approximates 7/12's of the annual budget. A motion to approve the financial statement as presented was made by Mr. Frank Turner and seconded by Commissioner Anthony Dove. The motion carried unanimously.

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 COMMERCE** – USDA Rural Development Enterprise Grant Application – Construction of downtown parking facilities.
2. **WALTON COUNTY** – Comprehensive Plan Update.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY11 Program of Work, effective February 17, 2011, was made by Mr. Charlie Crawford and seconded by Commissioner Yearwood. The motion carried unanimously.

Members were advised that the following projects were officially closed:

1. **JASPER COUNTY** – Grant administration for a 2007 Community Development Block Grant for construction of the Jasper County Headstart facility.
2. **BARROW COUNTY** – Grant administration for a 2005 Community Development Block Grant for construction of the Barrow County Adult Daycare facility.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

At this time, Executive Director Dove gave a report on H.B. 86. The Bill was introduced by Senator Frank Ginn, with involvement from the Association County Commissioners of Georgia and the Georgia Municipal Association. Basically, the Bill would eliminate review of Developments of Regional Impact, repeal the definition of a Qualified Local Government as it pertains to comprehensive planning, and would make comprehensive planning non-mandatory. The comprehensive planning component seems to be causing the most concern, because DCA, Legislators, the RCs, and others in local government still want to see the comprehensive planning mechanism in place in Georgia. Hopefully, there will be a compromise that will be beneficial to all concerned. Executive Director Dove has had conversation with Senator Ginn and DCA Commissioner Mike Beatty, and they are working through the process.

The Governor's amended budget for this year removed all the historic preservation funding and cut some monies that flow through DCA to the Regional

Commissions for planning purposes. The House has restored all of these funds in Committee, and it looks like the Senate will do the same. Therefore, the amended FY11 Budget should remain the same. The FY12 Budget still looks uncertain.

The Governor's Commission on Regional Planning met for the second time at the Capitol on February 14th. The main emphasis in the coming year will be on transportation and water resources planning.

The Regional Commission had another very successful orientation for local elected and appointed officials on February 2nd, with over 20 participants. Attendees heard an overview of activities from Executive Director Dove, Executive Assistant Mott Beck, and each department head. The meeting resulted in several new projects, and staff will be offering assistance in these endeavors.

UPDATE ON AREA AGENCY ON AGING PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES

At this time, Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Director Peggy Jenkins gave a brief overview of services and programs offered by that division and introduced Sherry Jackson and Mark Franklin who gave a report on the Elderly Legal Assistance Program. For 17 years, Ms. Jackson and her staff have offered free legal assistance to seniors in the Regional Commission 12-county service area. These services were made available through a grant administered through the Regional Commission's AAA. This program focuses on priority areas required by the Older Americans Act. These areas include income maintenance, healthcare, nutrition, housing, age discrimination, long-term care, protective services, defense of guardianship, and abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Clientele are those with the greatest social or economic need, low income minority, and those with limited English speaking proficiency. Home visits for the isolated and home bound clients are also offered. The Elderly Legal Assistance Program works closely with other agencies in the Aging Network including the Long Term Care Ombudsman, Georgia Legal Services, Senior Centers, and GeorgiaCares. Mr. Franklin offered the follow tips for avoiding scam artists: report missing Credit or ATM/Debit cards immediately, never give out personal information over the phone, do not have SSN on Driver's License, and never send money to claim a prize you have been told you won.

UNVEILING OF NEW NEGRC WEBSITE

Several months ago the Regional Commission contracted with J House Media Services to develop a new website for the organization. At this time, Planning and Local Government Services Director Burke Walker, who served as the liaison with firm, gave a brief overview of the efforts involved, and introduced Jason Long with J House Media who made a presentation and unveiled the new website. The format of the new site will make complex information simple and easy to find and is much more user friendly. It will be much more cost effective, and staff will be able to edit and make revisions instead of having to pay a fee each time a change is needed. Most all reports, tools, and documents regarding projects will be available and can be printed as needed. The main

goal of the Regional Commission in development of this new site was to bring uniformity and all services and programs under one umbrella.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on March 17th.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant