

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
NOVEMBER 16, 2017
NOON**

MINUTES

Members Present:

Graham, Pat
Denson, Nancy
Ferrelle, Dodd
Houston, Lamar
Lyon, Tommy
Palmer, Bill
Smith, Jeffery
Rhodes, Lee
Plott, Roy
Workman, Stone
Dyer, Dave
Scarborough, John
Padilla, Bob
Ainslie, Andy
Bentley, David
Roseberry, Jerry
Turner, Frank
Daniell, John
Harden, Amrey
Pittard, Billy
Boggs, Ronnie
Little, Kevin
Fordyce, Cary

Members Absent:

Blechinger, Linda
Jennings, Tommy
Guest, Larry
Brock, Phil
Crow, Tom
Shaw, Jim
Pennamon, Carl
Blackmon, Jody
Perriman, Fred
Banes, Marcello
Berry, Rick
Thompson, Greg
Chambers, Joyce
Ledford, Howard
O'Rourke, Tate
Roberts, Roy

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Alicia Page, Comptroller
Burke Walker, Director of Planning & Government Services
John Devine, Principal Planner

Associate Members Present:

Ouzts, Buddy
Horton, Harold
Seymour, Joel

Guests Present:

Peter "Bo" Rutledge
Andrew Seaver
Josh Findley
Shannon Henry
Steve Smith

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Jerry Roseberry called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September meeting. **Such a motion was made by Mr. Frank Turner and seconded by Mr. Dave Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Newton County: Widening of State Route 142 from north of I-20 at Hazelbrand Road to north of Alcovy Road, including widening Alcovy Road from Harland Drive to just east of Avenue of Champions is progressing very well. Alcovy

Road will be four 12-foot lanes with a 20-foot raised median. Construction of the Three Ring Movie Studio is underway. T.K and Louis Adams were recently inducted into the Newton County Board of Education Educators Hall of Fame. Things have improved in Newton County due to the election of three new Commissioners last year and the fine job that Chairman Banes is doing. Mayor Roseberry advised that he was really enjoying the working relationship he has with Mr. Banes.

Oconee County: The Oconee County Parks and Recreation Department was recently honored as the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association District 7 Agency of the Year. In addition, Director Lisa Davol was presented with the District's Roy A. Hammond Leadership Award, and long-time employee Don Bearden received the District's Facilities and Grounds Professional of the Year Award. The Board of Commissioners voted to demolish the old jail which would allow for a 9,000 foot expansion to the courthouse. Dave Shearon, who ran unopposed, was recently elected as Mayor of the City of Watkinsville.

Oglethorpe County: Commissioner Billy Pittard advised that he attended the Georgia Association of Regional Commission's annual conference at St. Simons, and it was a very productive meeting with very informative speakers. Dink Nesmith has been appointed to the Economic Development Authority in Oglethorpe County and will be a very valuable member. Leadership Oglethorpe will begin soon and is a valuable resource for young leaders in the County. Chairman Pittard asked that everyone be aware of H.B. 146 (providing cancer insurance to Firefighters) and its implications to local governments. There is a possibility it will be revisited during the upcoming session of the General Assembly.

Walton County: The County continues to grow rapidly, and the housing market is steadily increasing. The County has hired a Public Information Officer that will enhance and maintain the website and be the "voice of the paper". The County has completed a Wage and Market Study that will be enacted in January 2018. A lot of good economic development efforts are taking place in the County, and it is anticipated that an exciting and great announcement will be in the news soon. A new Arby's has opened in the City of Monroe.

Prior to continuing with agenda items, Chairman Roseberry made the following announcements:

- 1) The Council will not meet in December.**
- 2) It is very important that everyone return the Census survey that was e-mailed by December 15th.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: Members of the Audit & Finance Committee met prior to the Council meeting. Members reviewed the financial statements for the three-month period ending September 30, 2017. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$21,608.77. Financial activity for the period is at approximately 25% of the FY2018 Budget projections overall. **A motion to accept the financial report as presented was made by Mr. Amrey Harden and seconded by Mr. Cary Fordyce. 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. **NEWTON COUNTY** – Assistance in developing a transit plan in conjunction with the Georgia Piedmont Technical College. There is no fee required for this assistance.

Based upon recommendation of the Executive Director, **a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY2018 Program of Work, effective November 16, 2017, was made by Commissioner Pittard and seconded by Mr. Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Annual Training Conference of the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions was held November 8th -10th at St. Simons Island. NEGRC attendees included Council Members Lamar Houston, Kevin Little, Tommy Lyon, Billy Pittard and Jerry Roseberry, and staff members Mott Beck, Carol Cofer, John Devine, Jim Dove, Michele Kelly, Alicia Page, and Burke Walker. Attendance from Regional Commissions throughout the state was outstanding. Participants heard from DCA Commissioner Christopher Nunn, Economist Roger Tutterow, GDOT Board Member Tim Golden and Commissioner Russell McMurry, Political Analyst Todd Rehm, Justin Kirnon of GMA and Clint Mueller of ACCG. A highlight of the Conference was a presentation by U.S. Senator David Perdue on Friday morning. In addition, there were several breakout sessions of interest to Council Members and staff. Overall, it was an outstanding conference!

Director Dove advised that there will be three municipal vacancies on the Council. One is due to Mr. Charles Ivie's passing; the other two seats are those of Roy Plott and Greg Thomson who were defeated in the recent election. We hope to have someone for these three vacancies soon.

Executive Assistant Mott Beck and Executive Director Dove facilitated a very successful retreat for the Mayor and Council in Oxford on October 27th. It was their 9th retreat; and everyone agreed that there was a lot of good discussion, and it was very productive. Division Directors were in attendance and gave reports regarding their activities, and the Mayor and Council developed a list of short and long term goals to work on in the future. Principal Planner John Devine assisted with facilitation of the retreat, and gave a great presentation on the regional plan, CEDS, and comprehensive planning efforts.

The Council will not meet in December, and Executive Director Dove wished everyone a very safe and happy holiday season. The first meeting of the New Year will be held on January 18th.

Executive Director Dove advised that Mr. T.K and Louise Adams who were inducted into the Educator Hall of Fame that was started by the Newton County Board of Education. The pair was outstanding educators for many years, and Ms. Louise is a dedicated Associate Member of the Council. Greene County Private Sector Representative Lee Rhodes was featured in the Georgia Forestry magazine. Congratulations to all!

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA LAW SCHOOL

University of Georgia Law School Dean Peter “Bo” Rutledge was introduced by Council Member Stone Workman. Mr. Workman’s son, Phillips Workman, is a distinguished Student in the Law School. Dean Rutledge described the ongoing activities of the Law School, its high ranking, and efforts undertaken during his tenure. Dean Rutledge is particularly interested in faculty becoming more engaged with students while also increasing interaction of students with graduates of the program. Dean Rutledge has ensured that every effort is made to keep increases in costs associated with enrollment at a minimum. The Dean commented on the fact that the Law School is a larger part of the University and the local/regional/state communities and wishes to be involved in multiple outreach efforts. He entertained questions and comments following his presentation.

UPDATE ON REGIONAL PLANNING – FIREFLY TRAIL, REGIONAL PLAN, TRANSIT

Principal Planner John Devine briefed the Council on regional planning activities within the Planning and Government Services Division (PGS). An update to Northeast Georgia’s regional plan, required every five years through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, is currently underway and is expected to be ready for adoption by the Council in the spring. PGS staff is also in discussions with multiple local governments regarding public and human services transportation, and will begin work within the next year on gathering input for updating regional transit plans. Finally, Mr. Devine reviewed progress on the Firefly Trail, a 39-mile rail-trail project, whose first segment recently opened in downtown Athens and which was a key project in the

Athens-Clarke County TSPLOST package approved by voters in November. In addition to the Athens segment, funding is in place to build trail sections in Maxeys and Union Point, and further grant opportunities are available through the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. A GDOT-commissioned Georgia Institute of Technology Economics Department study on the trail revealed a projected 1.33:1 return on Investment, 1.13 million users per year, and \$14.7 million in direct annual economic impacts upon completion of the trail.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on January 18, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant