

MINUTES
LENOIR COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
October 12, 2011

The Lenoir County Transportation Committee met on Wednesday, October 12, 2011 at 8:30 a.m. in the Lenoir County Administration Conference Room at 101 N. Queen Street, Kinston, NC 28502.

Voting members present included: J. Mac Daughety, Interim Chairman, Dan Sale County at Large, Mayor B.J. Murphy, Donald King, for Mayor of Pink Hill, Charlie Diehl, GTP Authority, Joe Bower, Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce, Alex Rickard, RPO Planner, and Bill Whaley, Lenoir County Economic Development Board.

Non-Voting members present included: Bill Ellis, Kinston City Manager Interim, Betty Caldwell and Preston Hunter, NC DOT

Also Present: Ms. April Banks, Administrative Secretary

Members absent included: Woody Gurley, Mayor of LaGrange, Joey Bryan, for Lenoir County Manager, Wayland Humphrey, for Lenoir County Planning Board, Brian Lucas, City of Kinston Street Superintendent, Mark Pope, Director, Lenoir County Economic Development, Adrian King, Pride of Kinston, and Joe Albright, Town of Grifton Manager.

Mr. Daughety called the meeting to order at approximately 8:30 a.m.

The following updates were provided:

TIP Projects

- Global Trans-Park Freight Rail Improvements – Rail Division – Construction Approximately 45% complete
- John Green Smith Road – Let June 2011; Awarded to Barnhill Contracting, Construction started, Anticipated completion October 2011

ARRA Project

- Crescent Road – Road bed and bridge work Approximately 85% Complete; Estimated completion October 2012

Non-TIP Projects

- Banks School Road – Work has not started
- Left turn lane on Hull Road onto Rouse Road and right turn lane from Rouse Road onto Hull Road – Right of Way acquisition underway
- Carey Road Extension – Construction 80% complete, anticipate paving pending Fire Station construction
- NC 58 / LCC Entrance – Anticipated start of construction November 2011

Secondary Road Construction Projects

- Hugo Grifton Road – Work has started
- Canady Road – Grade, Drain base completed, paving anticipated fall 2011
- John Green Smith Road – Work has started
- Pruitt Road – Grade, Drain, and Base completed, Paving anticipated spring 2012
- Haywood Hill Road – Grade, Drain, Base, and Pave – Work has not started.

Mr. Hunter stated local projects are progressing and he is currently working on post hurricane efforts such as debris removal.

Ms. Caldwell stated Hull Road is open to traffic with two lanes. The final surface still has to be completed. The Crescent Road project road bed and bridge construction is approximately 80% complete. Estimated completion is October 2012. Mr. Daughety inquired about the Hwy 258 overpass. Ms. Caldwell stated the overpass is part of the Crescent Road project and there is currently no anticipated time frame for its opening.

Mayor Murphy provided an update on the Queen Street Bridges project. Mayor Murphy, County Commissioner Daughety, and elected and appointed officials had a productive meeting with DOT to reiterate the key points from the Transportation Committee. Interim City Manager Bill Ellis will meet with them again regarding signage, a signal for the Fire Station, and Hill Farm Road. Mr. Daughety stated that Bill Ellis will be working with Bill Allison of Lenoir County Transit and DOT Bridge Project Manager John Williams to work out a route to get employees of businesses on Highway 70 Bypass to and from work during the bridge work. Both bridges will be closed for approximately 18 months. The project will begin in 2014 with a Right of Way in 2013. Mr. Hunter stated there are no final designs as of yet. Mayor Murphy stated John Williams is the Project Manager from DOT. Mr. Williams will meet with Mills International about their needs regarding this project.

Mr. Daughety provided an update on the Hwy 70 Corridor. Two public hearings were held to obtain input from citizens on this project. Approximately 85 attended the first hearing and 100 the next hearing. The general consensus is in favor of a northern bypass route. The merger team will have another public hearing in November 2011. The routes will be narrowed down again and they will return in spring 2012 for another public hearing. Mayor Murphy inquired if any of the committee members have viewed the public comment sheets. Mayor Murphy offered comment sheets to anyone who was interested. The deadline to turn them in is October 21, 2011.

Mr. Ellis stated the City will have a public hearing on Monday regarding the potential closing of College Street crossover on Atlantic Avenue. The project will proceed quickly if no comments are made.

Mr. Daughety provided an update on the Smithfield Way Project. They are still seeking local land owners to do a land swap to gain access to the right of way. If nothing is worked out, then the County can possibly purchase the right of way. This project is progressing smoothly. Mr. Rickard asked if there was a time frame for this project relative to the RPO rankings. Mr. Daughety responded they should know something definitive on access before December 16.

The Rail Update was given by Mr. Daughety. Mr. Daughety stated he and Mark Pope Economic Development Director invited CSX to a meeting with Representatives from Agriculture, Commerce, and the Military Growth Taskforce to share thoughts of a potential Logistics Village around the Global Transpark including an Industrial Refrigerant Unit, Defense Logistics Center, and possibly an Inland Port. Mr. Pope and Mr. Daughety wanted to ensure CSX had an opportunity to view potential projects and to see if CSX might partner with the County. If there was a reconnection of the approximately 5-7 miles of CSX track north of Kinston, the GTP will have direct access via rail to the Port of Norfolk. They will meet again in approximately 90-120 days.

Mr. Daughety stated the Hwy 11/241 project has become a regional project. Support has been expressed from Eastern North Carolina including Jacksonville and Onslow County who drafted a letter of support. Mr. Rickard stated he has the preliminary report from the Down East RPO. There were no points issued for Hwy 258.

Mayor Murphy stated the recent Transportation Summit of RPO/MPO's held in Kinston with General Trogden in attendance was very productive. They will meet again in approximately three (3) to six (6) months. Mr. Daughety stated it is good for everyone to come together and move forward to working as a unit. A subcommittee will meet next week with two (2) members from each RPO and MPO on Tuesday October 18th. They will meet with regional planners to map out strategic road projects for Eastern North Carolina. Then they will go back to DOT hopefully with five regional projects to improve connectivity and mobility in Eastern NC. Mayor Murphy inquired if funds were requested. Mr. Rickard responded that Jack Best, Chairman of the Eastern RPO said the committee will take the lead in setting up these meetings and no funds will be required. Mayor Murphy asked if the group would form an additional committee. Mr. Rickard stated they wanted to have these meetings once or twice a year.

Mr. Daughety stated out of this eventually there may be a possible formation of an Eastern North Carolina Transportation Committee or Board. Mayor Murphy stated he wants the new committee to be in line with the current structure instead of creating a new entity. Mr. Daughety stated the projects will possibly come back to the existing committee. Hopefully, all of Eastern North Carolina will become unified and look at projects from a regional standpoint instead of just their particular county. Mayor Murphy stated he had a conversation with Mr. Jim Fain, President of GTP, about making sure the military bases are connected with universities and other entities with roads. Mayor Murphy stated he thinks it's important to make sure that all entities in Eastern North Carolina can be connected and help each other. Mr. Diehl stated he appreciates what Mr. Daughety, Mayor Murphy, and Mr. Rickard have accomplished. This will strengthen collectively all participants in Eastern North Carolina.

Mr. Daughety stated the region needs to come together and develop a regional plan of development. There is a need for a regional plan, and also plans for the metropolitan area and western North Carolina.

Mr. Bower asked when the Merger Team will return regarding Highway 70. Mr. Daughety stated they will meet again in November 2011 and have Public Hearings in spring 2012. Mr. Rickard stated there was a County Workshop for the Hwy 11 corridor last week. Pitt County will meet at Ayden-Grifton High next week on this project. Lenoir County property owners were sent invitations also. He will request DOT to perform a feasibility study. On October 27, 2011, Eastern North Carolina RPO will give a preliminary approval on spot rankings of projects and then there will be 30 days to obtain public comments.

Upon a motion by Mayor Murphy and second Mr. Whaley, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by
April L. Banks
Administrative Secretary