

MINUTES
LENOIR COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
April 14, 2010

The Lenoir County Transportation Committee met on Wednesday, April 14, 2010 at 8:30 a.m. in the Lenoir County Administration Conference Room at 101 N. Queen Street, Kinston, NC 28502.

Voting members present included: Mr. Russell Rhodes; Chairman, Mr. Dan Sale, County at Large; Mr. Chris Humphrey, County Commissioner; Mr. B J Murphy; Mayor of Kinston; Mr. Joe Bower, Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Bill Whaley, Economic Development Board; Ms. Leigh McNairy, and Mr. Don Howard, GTP Authority.

Non-Voting members present included: Mr. Mark Pope, Economic Development; Mr. Preston Hunter, Mr. Len White, and Ms. Betty Caldwell, NCDOT; Mr. Scott Stevens, City Manager; Brian Lucas, City of Kinston Planning Board; Mr. Joey Bryan; Lenoir County Transit; Mr. Patrick Flanagan, RPO Intern.

Also Present: Mr. George Graham, Board Chairman; Mr. Michael Jarman, Lenoir County Manager; Mr. Lee Smith, Wayne County Manager; Mr. Jack Best, Wayne County Commissioner; and Ms. Lashanda Aytch, Administrative Secretary

Members absent included: Ms. Treva Brigman, Mayor of Pink Hill; Mayor Woody Gurley, Town of LaGrange; Mr. Adrian King, Pride of Kinston; Mr. Rodney Howard; Town of Pink Hill, Mr. Joe Albright, Manager of Grifton and Mr. Wayland Humphrey, Lenoir County Planning; and NCDOT Board Members.

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

Upon a motion by Mr. Humphrey and a second by Mr. Howard, the minutes of March 10, 2010 were unanimously approved.

NCDOT Update – The GTP rail spur project has begun; the contractor is Hinkle Construction. Utility relocations are in progress and revisions to signals along the temporary cargo route are in progress. At the location of Murphy Gas and Wal-Mart on Hill Farm Road from US 70 to just north of Joan Drive, a new concrete island is to be installed to address crashes on Hill Farm Road. The US 70 Kinston Median Project from west of Queen Street to NC 58 west of McDonald's is under the design phase. No designs have been displayed to date; construction to start in 2011. US 70 traffic signal at Mt. Vernon Park Road is now in the hand of the City of Kinston for removal. The City is negotiating with DOT to determine what will be the best solution for the community and the traffic location. Mr. Pope stated NCDOT should not tie the traffic light issue at Mt. Vernon to the traffic light request by Sanderson Farms. The traffic light at Sanderson Farms will be temporary until the new highway is constructed. Mr. Rhodes stated a draft resolution for traffic signal at Sanderson Farms will be created for the committee's approval. The draft will be sent to the City of Kinston for approval as well.

Bridge Replacement at Queen Street is being considered as well. Based on emergency response vehicles access and the lack of emergency stations on the south side of the river, the Transportation Committee requested an onsite detour. An onsite detour will leave one lane open in each direction on the bridge throughout construction. DOT would like an offsite detour that will put traffic on the King Street Bridge. Right-of-way acquisition should start in 2012 and construction in April 2013.

GTP Rail Spur – Groundbreaking took place; work will be complete by November 15, 2010.

US 70 Corridor Commission – Mr. Rhodes stated The County began funding this commission five years ago with a \$10,000 contribution and a \$10,000 contribution from the City. After two years the City stopped funding the commission due to budgetary constraints. The County paid \$10,000 for three (3) years; \$20,000 was contributed by the County in FY 09-10. This year the commission is asking the County to contribute \$25,000 on a year to year agreement. Mr. Jack Best stated he along with Mr. Smith were asked to form a sub-committee to discuss the corridor and get all counties involved on the same page. Mr. Best stated US 70 is the “life” of eastern North Carolina. The sub-committee met and it was determined that a lobbyist should be hired to help gain funding and recognition that US 70 needs to grow.

Mr. Smith stated Durwood Stephenson was selected by the sub-committee for his construction and legislature background. Mr. Stephenson will fight for the funds that are needed to help US 70 expand. Mr. Pope stated Lenoir County was not involved in the hiring process of the lobbyist; Lenoir County was left out of the US 70 sub-committee, therefore left out of the whole “team aspect” of US 70. Mr. Best stated he asked Mr. Chris Humphrey to be apart of the sub-committee. Mr. Humphrey stated he was asked to be apart of the committee, but due to prior obligations, was not able to attend the US 70 sub-committee meetings. Mr. Best stated the next five (5) years will be a very critical point for transportation in eastern North Carolina. NCDOT will have their five (5) year review in June 2010; the US 70 project has to be on that review listing in order to be considered for funding. Mr. Best apologized about how the lobbyist was hired and Lenoir County was not notified, but emphasized that timing was critical.

Mr. Jarman stated he appreciates the efforts of the Lenoir County Transportation Committee; he stated the issue funding should be determined by what is best for the community at large instead of how the lobbyist was chosen. Mr. Rhodes stated he is concerned that Lenoir County will have no voice in choosing where the bypass will go in Lenoir County. Mr. Bower asked if Lenoir County does not continue funding the commission, would it still be apart of the commission. Mr. Smith stated it would not be fair if the county was permitted to be part of the commission. Mr. Graham stated some form compromise must be considered in order for the community to grow; US 70 is very important to Lenoir County and all surrounding counties. Mr. Smith and Ms. McNairy stated if the decision is made to stop funding the commission; it will kill in progress made for funding. Upon a motion by Mr. Whaley and a second by Mr. Bower the committee approved the continuance of funding the US 70 Corridor Commission for \$25,000 with annual renewal with the addition of Mayor Murphy on the US 70 sub-committee.

Adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by
Lashanda Aytch
Clerk to the Board