

NORTH CAROLINA

JOHNSTON COUNTY

The Highway 70 Corridor Commission met on Thursday, October 14, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. in the Princeton Community Building, 106 N. Center Street, Princeton, North Carolina, after due notice thereof had been given.

County members present:

Carteret County – Randy Martin, Joan Pulley and Tom Steepy
Craven County – Harold Blizzard
Johnston County – Frank Price, Donald B. Rains and W. Ray Woodall
Jones County – None
Lenoir County – Brian Lucas
Wayne County – Chuck Allen and Sandra R. McCullen

Other persons present:

North Carolina Board of Transportation – Gus H. Tulloss (District 4)
North Carolina Department of Transportation – Dwayne Alligood, Haywood Daughtry, Jimmy Eatmon, Neil Lassiter, Tim Little and Bobby Lewis
Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director – M. Durwood Stephenson
Down East RPO – Robert Will
Johnston County – Rick Hester
North Carolina State Ports Authority – Stephanie Ayers
Town of Princeton – Brandon Holland
North Carolina House of Representatives – Efton M. Sager
Village of Walnut Creek – Lou Cook
Wayne County Clerk to the Board – Marcia R. Wilson
Citizens – Chris Cox, Ophelia Davis, Kay Earp, Steve Keen and others.

Welcome and Introduction of Members

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Tom Steepy welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone present introduced herself or himself.

Approval of Agenda

Upon motion of Goldsboro City Councilmember Chuck Allen and seconded by Morehead City Manager Randy Martin, the Highway 70 Corridor Commission members unanimously approved the Highway 70 Corridor Commission October 14, 2010 agenda, as presented.

Approval of Minutes

Johnston County Commissioner W. Ray Woodall requested the minutes of the August 12, 2010 Highway 70 Corridor Commission meeting be corrected to the following under the US Highway 70 priorities in Johnson County: Supports completion of the remaining Goldsboro bypass and construction of the Pine Level interchanges under the freeway priority list *with modifications to Peedin Street intersection with US Highway 70.*

Craven County Manager Harold Blizzard requested the minutes of the August 12, 2010 Highway 70 Corridor Commission be corrected to show the Craven County Board of Commissioners approved the priorities. He will send the approved priorities to Wayne County Clerk to the Board Marcia R. Wilson to incorporate into the minutes.

Upon motion of Princeton Mayor Donald B. Rains and seconded by Johnston County Commission W. Ray Woodall, the Highway 70 Corridor Commission members unanimously approved the August 12, 2010 minutes of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission as corrected. The corrected minutes will be sent to the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission.

Project Updates

James City

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated he met with North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief Operating Officer Jim Trogdon and Representative William L. Wainwright concerning the James City project. There are varying cost projections for the project. Mike Rutkowski with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. has been asked to update the Highway 70 website with the most current information and a reference to the original plan. Governor Beverly Perdue has been informed of the project. There is a lot of misunderstanding and misinformation on the James City project.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated Representative William L. Wainwright better understands the James City project since the feasibility conceptual design has been explained to him. Public input will help incorporate constituent desires into the project.

Kinston Bypass

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated the Kinston bypass project was elevated to the supervisory team to determine the purpose and need of the project. Concurrence of purpose and need was achieved on October 13, 2010.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the North Carolina Department of Transportation has a Memorandum of Understanding with sister agencies stating bypass projects will be constructed to freeway standards. The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Corps of Engineers objects to the proposed freeway construction standards. The corridors are scheduled to be established in early

2011. Then public meetings will be held to receive comments on the corridor proposals. Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson thanked the North Carolina Department of Transportation staff for their extra effort to make things work and trying to accommodate local communities.

Wilson's Mills

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer Bobby Lewis stated the Wilson's Mills project is similar to the Pine Level project. There are currently signals at Swift Creek Road and Wilson's Mills Road. The original plan had US Highway 70 free of signals from the Clayton bypass to Princeton, but the project could not be funded. The North Carolina Department of Transportation is applying for an \$11-13 million Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program grant. The CMAQ program was conceived to support surface transportation projects and other related efforts that contribute air quality improvements and provide congestion relief. The grant proposal would involve both intersections. The current proposal closes the median at Swift Creek Road, eliminates the signal and constructs a grade-separated interchange and ramps. The current proposal closes the median at Wilson's Mills Road, eliminates the signal, and constructs a grade-separated interchange and square loop style ramps.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer Bobby Lewis and Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson are meeting with the Wilson's Mill Town Council on Monday, October 18, 2010 to review the revised improvements.

Johnston County representative Frank Price was concerned US Highway 70 eastbound traffic does not slow down when exiting the Clayton bypass.

Princeton

North Carolina Department District Engineer Tim Little stated there were concerns on the first conceptual freeway plan through Princeton, which divided north and south Princeton and impeded access to the Princeton industrial park. The latest plans show a potential interchange at Rains Mill Road (Hardee's) and a potential interchange at Edwards Road (Bojangles'), potential main line directional crossover at Dr. Donnie Jones, Jr. Blvd. and a proposed minor directional crossover at Rock Quarry Road. These proposed changes will make the US Highway 70 corridor safer and make a positive change to the community.

Princeton Mayor Donald B. Rains stated the proposed changes will help the economic development of Princeton and address safety concerns.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson requested a copy of the resolution adopted by the Johnston County Board of Commissioners and Town of Princeton Town Council be sent to Marcia Wilson. A copy of the resolution is attached hereto as Attachment A.

Lenoir County

City of Kinston Planning Director Bryan Lucas stated the access management plans were presented to the Lenoir County Transportation Committee yesterday. The plans concurred with the priority list with the exception of mainline directional crossover at Tidewater Transit and Eason Road intersection where the Felix Harvey Parkway ends at a stop sign.

In response to a question from Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Tom Steepy, Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the two exceptions were not included in the previously approved \$2,000 for consultation with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. on the access management study in Lenoir County between the new Felix Harvey Parkway and LaGrange/Little Baltimore area. He stated the priorities in Lenoir County are shifting. He asked if Lenoir Community College was still a priority.

City of Kinston Planning Director Bryan Lucas stated the Lenoir County Transportation Committee agreed that Lenoir Community College is still a priority. The college supports the closure on US Highway 70 and having the entrance on NC Highway 58. The priorities have been decided, but he did not know if they had been presented to the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners for consideration.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated work continues on Eason Road.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson requested the Lenoir County priorities be sent to him and Marcia R. Wilson. A copy of the priorities is attached hereto as Attachment B.

County Priority List

City of Kinston Planning Director Bryan Lucas stated the Lenoir County Transportation Committee discussed the priorities.

Craven County Manager Harold Blizzard stated under freeway priorities, #4 and #7 should be combined to read “Construct ramp over interchanges at Thurman, Taberna Road, Airport Road and Williams Road in that order.” Under access management priorities, add #9 “Construct/modify connector road from Williams Road to Airport Road via airport entrance drive.”

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Tom Steepy stated the Carteret County Transportation Committee did not approve #1 Median from east of Hestron Drive to Banks Street: Install plantable median with properly spaced openings and sidewalks and #7 Community College/Hospital area intersection improvements – Develop Penny Lane connection and eliminate central access point to Carteret Community College and Carteret General Hospital. The remaining priorities were approved and sent to the Carteret County Board of Commissioners. A copy of the letter from the Carteret County Transportation is attached hereto as Attachment C.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated the median project in Morehead City is a hazard elimination project. The North Carolina Department of Transportation will work with Morehead City and involve the public on the project.

Johnston County representative Frank Price stated the Johnston County TAC sent its recommendation to the Johnston County Board of Commissioners. Since the recommendation was made, the Princeton modifications and Wilson Mill project have surfaced. He reported there was a tanker accident at Oak Street. The Oak Street rail closure/ Buffalo Road railroad grade separation is a Johnston County access management priority. This project was completed within 10 days of a tanker accident, which closed the westbound traffic for 12 hours.

Goldsboro City Councilmember Chuck Allen stated there was no change to the Wayne County priority list. The Wayne County Board of Commissioners has not voted on the priorities.

East Carolina University Economic Feasibility Study

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated he is reviewing the preliminary draft of the economic feasibility study. The study should be ready by the January 2011 meeting of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson welcomed North Carolina State Ports Director of Planning and Development Stephanie Ayers to the meeting. The North Carolina Ports Authority has ranked the US Highway 70 corridor as its #1 priority.

North Carolina State Ports Director of Planning and Development Stephanie Ayers provided an economic impact study prepared for the North Carolina State Ports Authority. A copy of the summary letter is attached hereto as Attachment D. A new economic impact study of the ports is scheduled to be available in early 2011.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Elections

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Tom Steepy stated the officers of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission are usually elected in January of each year. He thought it was time for a leadership change and he would not seek reelection as Chairman of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission. After discussion, Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Tom Steepy appointed Wayne County Manager W. Lee Smith, III to spearhead the nominating committee to recommend a slate of officers for the Highway 70 Corridor Commission at the January 2011 meeting.

Other Business

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Tom Steepy shared a newspaper article concerning the process the North Carolina Department of Transportation will use to decide how to spend money generated by the Mobility Fund. Citizens are invited to share their feedback by October 29, 2010.

North Carolina State Ports Director of Planning and Development Stephanie Ayers stated the North Carolina Ports Authority provided comments on the North Carolina Mobility Funds. The comments requested consideration of (1) freight mobility and (2) US Highway 70 connectivity. The Authority will submit secondary comments by October 29, 2010. The first several years of the North Carolina Mobility Funds will be used to fund the Yadkin River bridge.

After discussion, Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Tom Steepy requested Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson meet with North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter and North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer Bobby Lewis to identify candidate projects along the US Highway 70 corridor for Mobility Fund funding.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief Operating Officer Jim Trogdon was willing to send the lead planner for the Highway 70 corridor projects to meet with the appropriate local officials. The lead project planner and his staff would provide updates on the projects and listen to local input. The meetings would first address individual bypass projects and then address individual access management projects. Interested members were asked to contact Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson to schedule a meeting. The meetings could begin as early as November.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter may have a project, which can no longer be funded. He would like to have a Highway 70 project to insert in its place. Therefore, we need to move the projects forward in order to have a Highway 70 project ready.

Goldsboro City Councilmember Chuck Allen stated the US Highway 70 Goldsboro bypass would be fully funded in 2012.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated the Gallant's Channel bridge is scheduled to be put out for bid in July 2012. The United States Coast Guard has issued a preliminary notice concerning the vertical and horizontal opening and is currently seeking public comments.

Haywood Daughtry with North Carolina Department of Transportation Traffic Safety Unit requested to be notified of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission meetings.

Next Meeting

The Highway 70 Corridor Commission will meet on Thursday, January 13, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. at the Maritime Building, 113 Arndell Street, Morehead City, North Carolina.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Information

As of October 13, 2010 the total cash on hand for the Highway 70 Corridor Commission totaled \$171,252.42.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated his September 2010 report was sent to the members electronically. The report is attached hereto as Attachment E.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Tom Steepy adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Marcia R. Wilson