

NORTH CAROLINA

CARTERET COUNTY

The Highway 70 Corridor Commission of North Carolina, Inc. met on Thursday, July 20, 2017 at 1:30 p.m. at Carteret County Crystal Coast Civic Center, 3505 Arendell Street, Morehead City, North Carolina.

County members present:

Carteret County – Jesse Vinson, Robin Comer, David Whitlow and Mark Mansfield

Craven County – Bobby Darden, Danny Walsh and Donald Baumgardner

Johnston County – Ted Godwin, Berry Gray and Frank Price

Jones County – None

Lenoir County – Linda Rouse Sutton, Mark Pope and Russell Rhodes

Wayne County – Wayne Aycock and Chris Boyette

Other persons present:

North Carolina Board of Transportation – Hugh Overholt and Gus Tulloss

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director – M. Durwood Stephenson

North Carolina Department of Transportation – John Rouse, Tim Little, Chris Pendergraph, Jeff Cabaniss and Jamie Shern

New Bern MPO – Kim Maxey

Lenoir County – Brian Lucas

Wilson's Mills – Alicia Gregory

City of Goldsboro – Jennifer Collins

City of Havelock – Katrina Marshall

City of Kinston – Mayor BJ Murphy and Tony Sears

Town of Ayden – Mayor Stephen Tripp

Town of Newport – Tim White

Carteret County News-Times – Mike Shutak

NC State University (retired) – David Green

NC East Alliance – John Chaffee

Pine Knoll Shores – Kevin Reed

Call to Order and Welcome

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Vice-Chairman Linda Rouse Sutton called the meeting to order and Carteret County Member Robin Comer welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of the Agenda

Upon motion of the Wayne County Member Chris Boyette and seconded by Johnston County Member Frank Price, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the agenda with the removal of the Ports Update and SPOT 5.0 Update.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion of Wayne County Member Wayne Aycock and seconded by Johnson County Member Frank Price, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the meeting on May 18, 2017.

Comments from Executive Director M. Durwood Stephenson

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson indicated Stephanie Ayers, Director for North Carolina Ports had a meeting conflict and was unable to attend today's meeting. A Ports Update was included in the Commission's agenda packet for review. He also indicated he had been engaging partners and associates to promote and stress the importance and necessity of flood prevention the Commission would hear from Jamie Shern today regarding flooding issues along the Neuse River.

North Carolina Board of Transportation Member Reports

North Carolina Board of Transportation Division 2 Member Hugh Overholt indicated the North Carolina Department of Transportation is moving at a rapid pace with accelerating projects within the STIP and working hard to deliver more projects. He stated the next Board of Transportation meeting will be held in Greensboro and he concluded with announcing Allen Thomas is the new Executive Director for the Global Transpark.

North Carolina Board of Transportation Division 4 Member Gus Tullos indicated the US 70 Corridor Project status report had been updated and was included in the Commission's agenda packet for review. He stated the CSX project was ahead of schedule and he thanked Division 4 staff for all their hard work with projects being managed at the Division level.

Flood Prevention

Jamie Shern, Environmental Program Advisor with NCDOT Division Highways, addressed the Commission regarding flood prevention due to the flooding inflicted by Hurricane Matthew and the subsequent release of a large volume of water from the Falls of Neuse Dam. He discussed recommendations to minimize area flooding along the Neuse River in Eastern North Carolina. The Commission agreed downstream flooding is an issue and Executive Director M. Durwood Stephenson indicated he would discuss the issue with Congressman Rouzer for support with updating studies to minimize area flooding along the Neuse River.

Food Processing Model

The Honorable Stephen Tripp, Mayor of Ayden, NC presented the Ayden Food Commercialization Center Model to the Commission. Plans for the proposed food-processing center are moving forward with completion of a business plan, feasibility assessment and business concept in order to seek funding for the proposed center. A Food Commercialization Center Committee has been developed and is charged with developing the facility to help regional growers and producers process and market their products. The ultimate goal of the center would primarily be to help small producers grow large enough to need to create their own space, at which point they would move their production out of the center. The original concept of the center was entrepreneurship. They want people to come in, set up a new product, get it into the marketplace and outgrow the facility with hopes they then locate in an industrial park in Ayden. Ultimately, the hope is that the proposed food center could set an example that could be replicated in

other areas, a model for future growth. The Food Commercialization Center has the potential of bringing 38,000 jobs to Eastern North Carolina and the Committee is seeking funding to help with construction cost. A grant application has been submitted to the U.S. Economic Development Agency with hopes to cover up to 80% of the construction cost. An exact cost for the proposed center is not available and will depend on size, however estimates range from \$3.65 million to \$5.87 million.

Food Processing Clusters

John Chaffee, President of NC East Alliance reviewed Food Processing Clusters with the Commission. Mr. Chaffee indicated the importance of value-added agriculture in Eastern North Carolina. Eastern North Carolina is internationally recognized as a major agricultural production area. North Carolina ranks first nationally in the production of sweet potatoes and tobacco, and second in poultry and eggs, hogs and pigs, turkeys and trout sold and third for cucumbers sold. He indicated there are more than 160 facilities within the region involved in food manufacturing. Total employment in the food industry sector exceeds 20,000 people, or 5% of the total businesses.

Value-added agriculture clusters in the NC East Alliance region include food and beverage, service, other agriculture manufacturers, suppliers, forestry projects and corporate farms. This is a vibrant cluster in eastern North Carolina. Mr. Chaffee pointed out the top food processing and beverage employers in the region and income stats. He stated the Alliance is working with state, local and national economic development organizations to help existing industries expand and actively market to and assist in the recruitment of new businesses into the area.

Division 2 Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Division Engineer John Rouse updated the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission on the following projects:

- “Little Baltimore” – Grade separated interchange at US 70 and Willie Measley Road. Right-of-way is slated for 2023 with construction in 2024.
- Kinston Bypass – Work on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is underway. Right-of-way is slated for 2022 with construction in 2024.
- Felix Harvey Parkway Extension – Right-of-way acquisition and utility relocations are underway. Construction let date is scheduled for December 2017 and anticipated to be completed in 2020.
- James City – The proposed project scope will consist of upgrading the existing roadway to a freeway with 5 grade separated interchanges from the Neuse River Bridge interchange east to Thurman Road. Planning document to be completed in Spring 2018. Project to be let as a Design/Build with a projected date of Fall 2018. Estimated project cost is \$250 million.
- Slocum Road Interchange – Project has been awarded to S.T. Wooten for construction. Construction cost is approximately \$24 million and scheduled completion is Fall 2019.
- Havelock Bypass – “Record of Decision” signed by the FHWA December 2016 and complaint was filed by Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) in December 2016. Negotiations between Department and SELC are currently underway to determine if a settlement can be agreed to in order to avoid litigation. Current right-of-way schedule is FY 2017 with construction scheduled for FY 2019.
- Gallants Channel Bridge – Structure work is complete. Roadway work and tie-ins are currently underway. Work on Turner Street Bridge continues and may run into fall of this year. The

anticipated completion date of new bridge and putting traffic on new alignment is late summer/early fall of this year.

- Newport River Port Bridge Replacement – Project scope is to widen 70 from Morehead City to the Radio Island Causeway, including the Newport River Bridge. Project is funded as part of the draft 2018-2027 STIP and Environmental Study is underway. Project will not only include the widening of the Newport River Bridge, but will also include an interchange for access to Radio Island. Project to be advertised as a Design/Build project in FY 2020.

Division 4 Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Division Engineer Tim Little updated the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission on the following projects:

- Clayton Bypass – Resurfacing is estimated to begin April 2018.
- Wilson's Mills – Interchanges currently under design. Right of way acquisition scheduled for 2017. Construction let date scheduled for 2019.
- Feasibility Study – US 70 Johnston/Wayne County line to Wilson Mills area – results of study will determine if breaking the project into smaller pieces would be beneficial for future prioritization.
- Pine Level – Interchanges are under construction and are 55% complete. Project is 15% behind schedule with a 2018 completion date.
- US 70 – Johnston/Wayne County line to Goldsboro Bypass – looking to accelerate project to improve existing US 70 to Freeway Standards with construction in 2024.

Public Comments

No member of public spoke.

Financial Report

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson reported, as of June 30, 2017 there was an account balance of \$215,107.28.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission will be held on September 21, 2017 at 1:30pm in Craven County. The meeting location will be at the New Bern Convention Center in Ballroom B.

Adjournment

At 3:30 p.m., Highway 70 Corridor Commission Vice-Chairman Linda Rouse Sutton adjourned the meeting.



Jennifer K. Collins