

MINUTES
GPATS POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
January 26, 2015
Suite 400 – County Square
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Butch Kirven, Vice Chairman Senator Martin, Representative Smith, Representative Burns, Representative Hamilton, Representative Collins, Representative Loftis, Councilor Norris, Councilor Meadows, Councilor Payne, County Council Chair Taylor, Pickens Council Chair Willis, Councilor Smith, Commissioner Willard, Mayor Raines, Mayor Danner, Mayor Durham, Mayor Cook, Mayor Bagwell, Mayor Long, Mayor White, Mayor Owens, Mayor McCall, Mayor Pro Tem Lawrence, Trey Fouche, R. Townsend and K. Brockington

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Baughman, E. Vinson, H. Hahn, M. Floyd, S. Julius, T. Elrod, S. Gwinn, P. Phillips, E. Dillon, J. Allison, J. Chasteen, R. Sloan, D. Cooper, J. Horton, J. Gardner, D. Dyrhaug, M. Rickerds, K. Vass, J. Hekter, D. Frate, A. Babinicz, H. Lollis, J. Folz, F. Curti, V. Holmes, H. Gamble and J. Wortkoetter

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kirven called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2015.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2014 COMMITTEE MEETING.

MOTION: By Councilor Willis, seconded by Representative Smith to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2014 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no individuals signed up to speak.

POLICY COMMITTEE ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairman Kirven stated every two years after the General Election, the Policy Committee elects a Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of the calendar year. Chairman Kirven opened the floor for nominations.

Representative Smith stated the current two officers have moved the Committee forward on a number of issues, and he would like to suggest continuing with the current leadership. Mr. Kirven as Chair and Senator Martin as Vice Chair.

Chairman Kirven asked if there were any other nominations.

Mr. Townsend stated he would second Representative Smith's motion and not have any other nominations.

MOTION: By Representative Smith to close nominations. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Nominations were closed and the Committee unanimously by voice vote elected Mr. Kirven as Chair and Senator Martin as Vice-Chair.

SCDOT PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

Tommy Elrod, Project Manager with the SCDOT updated the Committee members, with a PowerPoint presentation on various projects within the area as were included in the Committee's agenda packets. He stated the I-85/I-385 project was currently being designed, and expected to begin in late 2015 with completion in late 2018.

Mr. Elrod stated 11 bridges would be replaced mainly due to more room needed under the bridges. Additionally he went over several widening projects within the area.

Mr. Elrod stated Butler Road project was complete and felt the locals were pretty happy. He answered questions regarding projects on Roper Mountain Road, between Garlington and Feaster, stating there had been a public information meeting in July 2012 and bids were open in November 2014. However, only two bids were received and both were high. The re-bid would be in March 2015 with construction beginning in June/July 2015. Mr. Elrod stated the other projects on Roper Mountain had a public information meeting in December 2014, with right of way acquisition to begin in 2015/2016 and construction in 2017/2018.

Mr. Elrod answered questions regarding SC153, with hopes of beginning both phases together. He stated the Corps permit is anticipated to take one year to secure.

Mr. Elrod stated he would look into the Augusta Road/Old Augusta Road project and provide Councilwoman Norris with information on the status of the project.

Mr. Elrod was asked about the bridge in Greer on Memorial Drive which was damaged in the storm last fall.

Mr. Elrod stated he had not been involved with the project, but would check on it and provide an answer.

Mayor Danner stated he was told the work on the bridge should begin in the first part of February and be completed mid to late April. Facility lines have been moved and some preliminary construction has begun.

Commissioner Willard addressed the members of the Committee with some clarifications. He stated the Commission is made up of people from each Congressional District and selected by the Delegation from each of those districts. Therefore the elections of the individuals are spread out across the state. He stated part of the process that happens under ACT 114, governs the Commission, and calls for a State Transportation Improvement Plan. Each project is rated and as the rating takes place, the projects are selected based on the financial viability, public safety, traffic volume, economic development, truck traffic and a number of items which are spelled out in the ACT. The Commission itself does not choose roads. The Commission allocates in the budget the funding, the money that goes into bridges and goes into roads. As the projects rise to the top they are presented for public comment and completion of the projects. Regardless of who appoints the Commission, unless ACT 114 is changed, the new Commission will not be deciding on which projects will or will not happen. He assured the Committee there was no infighting on the Commission, they worked together. He was concerned about the Fourth District, but could only insure the funding was going into bridges and into roads. Commissioner Willard stated he felt the current Commission system, not because he is on it, is a way that truly is elected by the people of South Carolina and their representatives as opposed to one individual. He felt some of the misunderstanding had to do with the State Infrastructure Bank. The State Infrastructure Bank is not a part of the SCDOT and is appointed by selected individuals and not across state lines. He thought it was appointed by the State Legislature, and they do not have to follow ACT 114, they get to choose the projects they want to fund, projects that are presented to them by the area. The projects require a 20% match, and the projects have to be a hundred million dollars at the most, which would require a 20 million dollar match. That would take a lot of smaller rural areas out of the effort. Commissioner Willard stated he would be happy to meet with any of the Policy Committee members to clarify any misconceptions.

Representative Loftis inquired about the widening of 290 from Travelers Rest to Greer and if it was still on the radar screen.

Keith Brockington, Transportation Manager stated the widening of Highway 290 was in the Long Range Transportation Plan. He stated each time the Plan was done, the project would be ranked. Currently the project had a low ranking.

SCDOT PRESENTATION – ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING

Tommy Elrod gave an overview of the Environmental Permitting process, which is a critical and required component of receiving Federal Funding for projects. He provided a PowerPoint presentation, showing activities that may require a permit, approval time

frames for permitting and ways to reduce the time frame for the approval process. He stated if a project was less than 300 feet or 3 acres of wetlands, a General Permit would be obtained, which would take a few months. Anything over 300 feet would be an Individual Corp Permit, which has more steps to go through. It would go out for public notice, which is what is needed for the SC - 153 project and the I-85/I-385 interchange. Mr. Elrod provided pictures from the 153 project and other projects as examples.

2015 TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM CALL FOR PROJECTS

Keith Brockington addressed the Committee members regarding the annual cycle for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), which shall open for Fiscal Year 2015. It is open to all eligible jurisdictions that currently do not have an active application or project less than 50% complete. He stated the SCDOT has awarded the FY 2015 TAP Apportionment to GPATS in early January in the amount of \$631,105. He stated all staff for the GPATS jurisdictions has been provided with an SCDOT TAP Application. Mr. Brockington requested the applications be submitted no later than February 6, 2015. The applications would be reviewed at the February 24, 2015 Study Team meeting, the drafts would be presented to the Policy Committee on March 15, 2015. The Study Team would finalize the projects for the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) at the June 1, 2015 meeting and approval of the project into the TIP would occur at the June 15, 2015 Policy Committee meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Woodruff Road Parallel and SC-153 Acceleration Proposal

Chairman Kirven stated he did not think there was any way in sight for the projects, especially the Woodruff Road Parallel to do the large scope of the project. He stated he felt thought should be given to ways that the projects could be broken down into small increments to continue moving forward.

NEW BUSINESS

GPATS 2040 Long – Range Transportation Plan Kick-Off

Keith Brockington announced the Kick-off of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) which is a requirement of Metropolitan Planning Organizations such as GPATS. The plans are crucial to guiding the actions of GPATS by identifying projects, setting priorities and providing a demographic picture of the region for the next 25 years. He stated the GPATS Travel Model was tied into the LRTP updates and provides the best picture of traffic and congestion. He detailed the timeline for completing the plan as follows:

2015 – Consultant Selection, Data Collection, Survey Dispersal, Kick-Off Public Meeting.

2016 – Travel Model Creation, Demographic Analysis, Area Public Meetings, Project Development.

2017 – Travel Model Completion, Area Public Meetings, Document Creation, Adoption.

Mr. Brockington stated since 2007, the PL Carryover has been made available for plans to local jurisdictions. Because of the cost associated with doing the LRTP, during the next two fiscal years the carryover funds will not be made available.

Mr. Payne asked if coordination with the State Transportation Plan was done. Additionally, he asked how innovative transportation solutions were looked at.

Mr. Brockington stated he would be coordinating with the State Transportation Plan, Federal Transportation Plans and Local Transportation Plan. He stated it was a Federal requirement to look at all modes of transportation, transit, bicycle, pedestrian. Social and environmental justice and environmental impacts which are elements of the requirements of the LRTP. He stated an innovative solution would come from the public involvement process. Priorities will be noted from surveys and public meetings and every suggestion and comment will be considered.

Mr. Brockington introduced Sam Julius, newest member of the Transportation Staff. He will be the Transit Planner/Grants Manger for GPATS.

Mayor Bagwell recognized Fox Simmons, Easley City Administrator. Mr. Simmons will be leaving to take a position in Myrtle Beach. He praised his work with the City.

Mayor Danner recognized the GPATS staff for their ongoing assistance with the Highway 29 Corridor Study. The City of Greenville as well as GTA also shared their staff along with the County. He stated all parties are an excellent example of collaborative planning

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor White moved to adjourn the meeting. Without objection the meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

Submitted by Recording Secretary