

NORTHWEST FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR AUTHORITY MONTHLY MEETING

Meeting Minutes

July 17, 2008

1. Call To Order-Chairman McElheney called to order the meeting of the Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority at 10:00am EDT on July 17, 2008 at Robert Moore Administration Building Board Room in Port St. Joe, FL

Members Present:

Randall A. McElheney, Chairman

Jay Odom, Vice Chairman

Robert B. Montgomery, Secretary/Treasurer

Eddie Dixon

James Anders

Stephen Norris

Cheryl Sanders

Jason Alderman with FDOT

Staff Present: Mike Duncan, General Counsel

Members Absent: Montgomery, Langston

2. **Welcome-** Chairman McElheney welcomed everyone to the NFTCA meeting in Port St. Joe, Florida.

3. **Approval of Minutes-** Monthly Meeting June 19, 2008.

Legal Council asked to have parts E and F of the June 19, 2008 minutes amended to state who had abstained from the vote and why. The phrase in question should be amended to state:

“**Abstain:** 1 (McElheney)

Chairman McElheney stated he owns real estate with some of the owners of Preble-Rish, Inc. and Preble-Rish, Inc. is a sub-consultant to HDR on the Franklin County project. To be cautious, Chairman McElheney abstained from voting because it is possible that this relationship could be considered a conflict with regard to the vote. He further stated he would submit Form 8B, “Memorandum of voting conflict for County, municipal, and other local public officers”, to HDR to add to the public record.

Motion by Mr. Dixon: To approve minutes as amended.

Second by Mr. Odom

Approved: 6-0

4. New Business –

A. Florida Transportation Commission (FTC) Recommended Sunshine Law refresher by legal council.

Mr. Nick Beninati from Harrison, Sale, McCloy, Thompson, Duncan and Jackson gave an FTC recommended refresher presentation on the Sunshine Laws titled, “SUNSHINE, PUBLIC RECORDS AND ETHICS CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE NORTHWEST FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR AUTHORITY.” The presentation covered Sunshine Law basics, public records law basics and ethics considerations such as the gift law, prohibited conflicts, voting conflicts and potential conflicts related to transportation project planning.

B. U.S. 98 Franklin County Trip Fund Update

Mr. Reissener stated that HDR was currently working on the formal agreement for Task Order 5, US 98 Franklin County. He also stated HDR is working with FDOT for a \$200,000 advance in the TRIP funding to be able to keep working. Mr. Reissener also explained that the TRIP funding for this project was reduced by 50% for the 4-year schedule, so HDR was working to break the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) into smaller increments with defined milestones to coincide with the funding provided by FDOT.

Mr. Alderman stated that he anticipated the Joint Project Agreement (JPA) should be published within the next 2 weeks.

C. Status Report on Task #3, Eglin Corridor Study

Mr. Reissener stated he has been working with the Eglin A.F.B. Staff and Eglin is going to appoint Mr. Bob Arnold, Eglin’s Chairman of the Mission Enhancement Committee, the point of contact for HDR on this project. Chairman McElheney, Mr. Reissener and Mr. Bob Arnold have discussed starting the formal process of evaluating and quantifying impacts from proposed alternatives. Mr. Reissener stated he looks forward to moving forward based on the current Needs Plan with a formal schedule and planned sequence of events. He further stated that HDR has submitted the 813 and it has been determined that the Eglin Study will be a formal EIS.

Mr. Anders stated that there was a recent article in The Daily News about the proposed Eglin Bypass.

Chairman McElheney stated that the NFTCA wants to start the formal EIS process. HDR has been working with limited funds to see which alternatives may be feasible, but they have not yet entered the formal documentation process required. He also said that the EIS process costs money and the NFTCA does not have a lot of it. Mr. McElheney stated he has been working with FDOT District 3 as well as at the State level in regards to funding and possibly using the Revolving Trust Fund as well. He stated that main hurdle is to get started in the process, but we need some more funds to get going.

Mr. Anders asked, "How much does an EIS cost?"

Chairman McElheney stated that for 54 miles like in the case of the Eglin Bypass, rough estimates were around \$7-8 million. He compared those numbers to the PD&E for a spur at Hwy 79 and Hwy 388 realignment, about 8 or 9 miles, with about 2 or 3 miles of new alignment, which is estimated at \$7.5 million.

Mr. Reissener stated that there are four things that need to take place before the Eglin Bypass roadway can be built: 1. It needs to make traffic sense, which we did in our Master Plan. The traffic models told us this was the road that would enhance the regional network; 2. It needs to make sense with the Eglin A.F.B. BRAC mission; 3. It needs to make environmental sense; and 4. we need a source of funding. He further stated that any one of these things can kill the project.

D. Approval of Invoices Task #2, Franklin County, Invoice No. 31712-H for June 2008- Chairman McElheney abstained from voting due to a conflict of interest.

Motion by Ms. Sanders: To approve Invoice No. 31712-H for June 2008

Second by Mr. Odom

Approved 5-0

Abstained 1(McElheney)

Chairman McElheney stated he owns real estate with some of the owners of Preble-Rish, Inc. and Preble-Rish, Inc. is a sub-consultant to HDR on the Franklin County project. To be cautious, Chairman McElheney abstained from voting because it is possible that this relationship could be considered a conflict with regard to the vote. He further stated he would submit Form 8B, "Memorandum of voting conflict for County, municipal, and other local public officers", to HDR to add to the public record.

E. Approval of Invoice Task #3, Eglin Bypass, Invoice No. 31711-H for June 2008

Chairman McElheney presented the invoice for Eglin Bypass Study Invoice No.31711-H for June 2008.

Motion by Mr. Dixon: To approve Eglin Bypass Invoice No. 31711-H for June 2008.

Second by Ms. Sanders

Approved 6-0

F. Approval of Invoice for Harrison, Sale, McCloy, Thompson, Duncan & Jackson, General Counsel, Account No. 110480 for June 2008- Chairman McElheney presented the Invoice for Harrison, Sale, McCloy, Thompson, Duncan & Jackson, Invoice Account No.110480 for June 2008.

Motion by Mr. Norris: To approve invoice for General Counsel, Invoice Account No. 110480 for June 2008.

Second by Ms. Sanders

Approved 6-0

G. Information provided by the West Florida Regional Planning Council

Mr. Arnio from HDR, on behalf to the West Florida Regional Planning Council, provided information to the Board about the other regional planning groups in the Florida Panhandle. He stated that the Bay, Gulf, Holmes and Washington Regional Partnership was created so that these regions can apply for the TRIP funding FDOT provides for region wide improvements to the transportation system. He also explained that the NFTCA may want to meet with the other regional partnerships to discuss joint applications for TRIP funding from FDOT.

Mr. Alderman added that the TRIP funds are a product of Senate Bill 360, which in turn has prompted several regional partnerships throughout the District. TRIP funding can only be applied for if the roadway provides regional connectivity between Counties or Transportation Planning Organizations (TPOs).

Mr. Reissener stated that he had attended the first meeting for the recent Florida-Alabama connector that was proposed at first to connect through Washington County and then through Jackson County. He further stated that this type of road could help the NFTCA reach their hurricane evacuation times in their Goals and Objectives. He explained that a successful hurricane evacuation was determined if residents were evacuated out of the hurricane prone zones in the time allotted. Evacuation statistics do not consider that many of those residents become stranded on Interstate 10 because of congestion to the north. Mr. Reissener presumed that those folks parked on I-10 don't think it was very successful and this new connect could help to solve some of that.

Chairman McElheney stated that he would like to see that group and see if we could get some coordination with them.

H. Board Member Comments- There were no Board Member Comments.

I. Public Comments- There were no Public Comments.

Chairman McElheney stated that the next NFTCA Meeting would be August 21st in the Council Chambers at Pensacola, Florida at 10:00 EDT.

Chairman McElheney called to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Mr. Dixon: To adjourn the meeting.

Second by Mr. Odom

Approved 6-0

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 EDT.