

**ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY
SPLOST 2020 CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

January 30, 2019

The Athens-Clarke County SPLOST 2020 Citizens Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, January 30, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at 780 Barber Street, Athens, Georgia. The purpose of the meeting was review of project presentations

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Aitkens, Frances Berry, Carl Blount, Laura W. Carter, Dr. Cshanyse Allen, Tracy Davenport, Katrina Evans, Denny Galis, Dr. LaKeisha Gantt, David Griffin, Thomas P. Lauth, Robert Miles, Adam Shirley, Lora Thompson, Rob Trevena, Jim Weck, Dr. Shannon Wilder, Dr. Marilyn Wolf-Ragatz and Jennifer Zwirn

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sara Beresford, Amy Stone

STAFF PRESENT: Keith Sanders, SPLOST Program Administrator, David Fluck, Central Services Director

WELCOME / COMMENTS / INFORMATION

Welcome by Chair, Dr. Shannon Wilder.

MEETING MINUTES REVIEW & APPROVAL:

January 28, 2019 Minutes: Laura Carter made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2019 Minutes. Carl Blount seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.

PRESENTATIONS:

#15 Bridge Improvement Program

Drew Raessler, Transportation & Public Works Director, made the presentation.

Questions/Answers:

(Audio did not capture questions)

#20 North Avenue Bridge & Intersection Project

Drew Raessler, Transportation & Public Works Director, made the presentation.

Questions / Answers:

Adam Shirley: Could you give us a breakdown of the \$7.3 Million in this proposal for the bridge replacement and intersection improvements?

Drew Raessler: The intersection is \$1.5 to \$2 million and the remainder would be for the bridge. The roundabout would be more expensive on the intersection but possibly cheaper on the bridge because with a roundabout the number of lanes could be reduced. We can provide a narrower footprint on the bridge which will save money. With a traditional intersection improvement with a signal where we add some turn lanes may increase the cost to the bridge.

Adam Shirley: An alternate proposal that gets rid of the intersection may not be that much cheaper?

Drew Raessler: If we just did the bridge and left the intersection as is we would be able to reduce the costs of the full proposal but not by the full \$2 million because eliminating the roundabout increases the cost of the bridge slightly.

Laura Carter: Removing the roundabout will not solve the safety issues at that intersection, correct?

Drew Raessler: That is correct. Not doing this is tandem will create some issues. There are efficiencies in tying the projects together.

#17 Intersection Improvement Program

Drew Raessler, Transportation & Public Works Director, made the presentation.

Questions / Answers:

Tracy Davenport: The presentation shows funding received for modifications to the Chase Street roundabout in SPLOST 2011?

Drew Raessler: That is correct. Chase Street roundabout is to be funded through SPLOST 2011. This project would fund intersection improvements for Tallassee @ Mitchell Bridge, Hawthorne @ Old Epps Bridge, Alps @ Baxter and Timothy @ 441, Lumpkin @ West Lake, College Station @ Barnett Shoals, and South Milledge @ S. Lumpkin.

Tracy Davenport: Tallassee seems to be one of the worst congestion spots. I don't know if the intersection at Tallassee and Mitchell Bridge will decrease the traffic congestion and wonder if the intersection of the outer loop would be more beneficial?

Drew Raessler: We would design this section similar to the Chase Street intersection improvements. The design would look at Tallassee and Mitchell Bridge Rd. and both entry and exit ramps to the loop.

Marilyn Wolf-Ragatz: How do pedestrians deal with the roundabouts? It does not feel as though that is a safe situation for kids from school.

Drew Raessler: The beauty of roundabouts is that they calm speeds and fix congestion. There is constant motion but that motion is much slower. Roundabouts are designed where they look at the maximum entry speed, rotating speed and exit speed. All of those speeds are designed with curves and light to force you not to travel faster than 15 MPH and closer to 10 MPH. When you force those slower speeds you then provide an opportunity to be able to see what is going on around you better.

That helps for finding your exit as well as identifying pedestrians. Traffic is much slower, the pedestrian can see better and is only having to cross one lane of traffic at a time.

Shannon Wilder: Could you elaborate on the pedestrian improvement project on Milledge at Five Points?

Drew Raessler: Pedestrian improvements are focused more on crosswalks and the way pedestrians interact with traffic. The intersection improvement would be looking at the safety and operational characteristics of the vehicles coming through the intersection. (Drew will look at the concept of the Five Points Improvements project again and provide more information.)

#25 **Smart City Transportation Project**

Drew Raessler, Transportation & Public Works Director, made the presentation.

Questions / Answers:

Jim Weck: Does the fiber have to be dedicated or can you use existing fiber routes in a shared environment?

Drew Raessler: We can share but we have to play nicely with whoever we are sharing with. We coordinate a lot with Parker Fiber where we can. Typically we will run dual fiber strands. The money is not so much in the fiber itself but the installation. Where ever we can get our own fiber run allows our wires to be separate so we can handle our stuff and they can handle theirs. Sharing actual cable gets to be challenging mostly due to security but sharing trenches is not an issue.

Tracy Davenport: While you are digging trenches for the fiber optic can we go ahead and lay it for municipal broad band?

Drew Raessler: Municipal broad band is different in that it is mostly wireless technology. It is not quite as reliant on fiber in the ground. Our fiber techs do handle our communications where we have remote facilities. Our traffic engineering building is remote from downtown and those buildings have to have dedicated fiber to them so we do coordinate with the IT folks to make sure that fiber is where it is needed and if we can share internally.

Frances Berry: You had mentioned that you had a smart camera at an intersection already. What was that intersection?

Drew Raessler: We have a few. The one that I mentioned is at Alps and Baxter. There are a couple downtown. I could get a list of those.

Carl Blount: With the adaptive traffic signal system would there be any cost savings with not having to utilize law enforcement at certain intersections?

Drew Raessler: Absolutely.

Adam Shirley: The construction budget is \$3.4 million, what does that get us?

Drew Raessler: That is a lump sum and we would have to do an in-depth planning process. Should the municipal broad band get funded and we are able to jump on with that. We would need to talk with the IT folks to discuss how we would separate those bands to keep ours separate. In that case, \$3.4 million would go a long way. If we have to lay more fiber and bring more signals, it would not go nearly as far.

#55 ABHS Path to Recovery Residential Program

Tamara Conlin, Interim CEO for Advantage Behavioral Health Systems made the presentation. Evan Mills, Director of Business Development and Housing Director assisted.

Questions / Answers

Tracy Davenport: How long would the facility house your clients? What is the maximum time?

Tamara Conlin: It would depend on what type of program they were in. There are support housing programs until they were able to move out of that situation or it could be a 30 day crises.

Evan Mills: What we had in mind is to expand the existing programs and help them for up to 18 months. We are currently occupying 20 units within the community for those programs. If we were to expand, we would expand by 50%. Last year we served 66 individuals and we project we could serve 100 for up to an 18 month period of time. The time would vary depending on the level of need and whether we are successfully able to relocate them.

Tracy Davenport: We understand that there is a socio economic status risk factor? What programs do you have that focus on changing the socio economic status?

Evan Mills: Our clients usually do not have the resources / health insurance to go to private pay facilities. Our population does fall within the lower socio economic status.

Tracy Davenport: What programs do you have to help them re-enter the community?

Tamara Conlin: There are individual counseling, group counseling, day programs, social skills development, employment programs, and a wide variety of services depending on the individual and what they need.

Jim Weck: Did I understand you to say that you serve 15 counties?

Evan Mills: Ten.

Jim Weck: Are you looking to other revenue sources from the other nine counties to supplement that?

Evan Mills: We have revenue sources that will be supporting the ongoing operations and services at that facility. The facility is now located in Athens.

Denny Galis: Where does that money come from?

Evan Mills: Department of Community Affairs, Department of Housing and Urban Development and we get funds from those ten counties. Athens-Clarke County residents make up about 40% of our overall population of clients.

Carl Blount: It cannot be easy trying to find housing for these people. Can you speak to that?

Evan Mills: We work with approximately 50 landlords in the area. The biggest barrier is the criminal background checks. Because of the ongoing relationships with those we are working with, they do make some exceptions based on that. The population that we continue to see are frequently downtown visiting the justice system and emergency rooms. If we can get them into a supportive environment within our area we can get them in for rehabilitative services.

Adam Shirley: How many of the people you serve would be kids?

Evan Mills: Right now this is focused on single adults.

Cshanyse Allen: How many of your clients are homeless or without stable housing? Do they have to pay anything for the housing?

Evan Mills: 100%. It depends on the program.

Cshanyse Allen: Do Athens-Clarke County residents have first priority for the housing versus those that come from outside the county?

Evan Mills: Yes. That is how it works right now within our residential programs based in Athens. Because of the nature of the VHCC there are abilities for residents from outside the county to come in. We do operate housing in Barrow, Jackson, Madison and Walton Counties as well.

Shane Blackwell: If you receive the funds to build this facility will you have enough to operate it?

Evan Mills: Yes. We have on-going state contracts. We have been in this business for 15 years. What we don't have is capital funds. If we were to be provided a building we could operate and even expand that program with the existing state contracts that we have. Our target is to expand by 50%. This will allow us to leverage our other resources to expand our program and continues to operate.

Frances Berry: You will not be hiring any new staff?

Evan Mills: We would not need to hire new staff because it is located on the property and we can share existing staff.

#62 CCSD High School Athletic Field Upgrades

Demond Means, Clarke County Superintendent of Schools made the presentation. Derrick Maxwell, Principal of Cedar Shoals High School, Dr. Swade Huff, Principal of Clarke Central High School, Tony Derricotte, Athletic Director of Cedar Shoals High School, and Dr. Xernona Thomas, Chief of Staff of Clarke County School District were also present.

Questions / Answers

Katrina Evans: I have looked at it and found studies that show those fields have temperatures that are 40 degrees higher than Bermuda fields at head height. It does seem that there are a host of health related concerns with that and I am wondering if you have evaluated it?

Demond Means: There are collaborations just like this in Jackson and Barrow County where the county government worked with the school systems to install turf fields. Trainers make the determination if it is safe for young people to participate / practice on those types of fields. There are many turf fields across the state of Georgia and obviously over the country where young people are utilizing that type of playing surface. We don't believe there is a risk factor in any shape or form. In reality we looked at our cost savings from not having to preserve a grass field. Yes, it is warmer but it comes down to an advisor or coach making the determination in collaboration with a trainer to say if it is safe or not.

Tony Derricotte: We investigated North Oconee and Oconee County High. They already have turf fields. Their trainers did a study just for this particular reason using natural grass surfaces compared to their turf fields and they saw about a six degree difference between the two fields.

Adam Shirley: How much for the football fields and how much for the track?

Demond Means: \$1.2 million for the fields and \$300,000 for the track.

Rob Trevena: How much are you spending annually for field maintenance?

Demond Means: \$200,000.

Carl Blount: What would maintenance be for the turf fields?

Demond Means: \$100,000. You still have to replenish rubber pellets annually.

Adam Shirley: You stated that the community would have access. Can you estimate how many weekends or days per year the space would be available?

Derrick Maxwell: The way it works now at Cedar Shoals is that I do not lock up our fields. Individuals are free to access that as long as students are not involved in practices or games. You will see individuals there late at night participating out on the field. We have an open campus. Often times, during holidays, I receive emails from people who want to come walk the stadium or track and I tell them yes. We want people to know that we have an open campus for community access.

Dr. Xernona Thomas: Many of our youth leagues use the fields on Saturdays and Sundays. We have had to turn away some of the larger band competitions and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes had to move to Oconee County School because of the quality of our field.

Shane Blackwell: Will the track be open to the public as well?

Derrick Maxwell: Absolutely.

Shane Blackwell: Will this generate revenue to the economy?

Demond Means: We believe it will generate funds for the entire community and I will start with festivals of bands. Music educators want to come to Athens for those types of festivals but we don't have the environment to invite them. With these types of surfaces we will be able to host a number of different events and competitions.

Tom Lauth: Funds from those kind of activities would benefit who? The school system or general government?

Demond Means: With this kind of contribution from the county government we would want to be collaborative all the way. We would like to partner with Leisure Services.

#67 Gaines Youth Development Complex

Mike Hackett, CEO of Boys and Girls Club of Athens and Demond Means, Clarke County Superintendent of Schools made the presentation. Derek Kellogg and John Hancock of Junior Achievement were also present.

Questions / Answers

Robert Miles: Your proposal is for three buildings. How large is the tract of land and how much will those buildings take up?

Mike Hackett: It would take up most of the land. We are not opposed to finding another location on the east side.

Katrina Evans: Why couldn't the school facilities that are not being utilized after 2:40 every day be utilized for this?

Demond Means: We do utilize our facilities past the traditional school day. Most of our elementary schools have after school programs. This is much more than utilizing a building after school. This is providing work force development opportunities in a traditional Boys and Girls Club type of facility. It could also be used by Leisure Services. We would have the only Discovery Center in this region under Junior Achievement. There could be a library or office of early learning on this facility.

Jennifer Zwirn: It says the total operating costs would be paid for by CCSD and the Boys and Girls Club. Is there an MOU in place and who would be handling what?

Mike Hackett: There would be an MOU in place prior to this project starting.

#74 Oconee Rivers Greenway Implementation Project

Nat Kuykendall, Chair of Athens Clarke County Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission made the presentation. Jake Moss, Vice Chair was also present.

Questions / Answers

Katrina Evans: TSPLOST 2018 gave you \$10 million dollars. Can you tell us what you are doing with that?

Nat Kuykendall: Yes. Building the Greenway Trail along the river with connections to the neighborhood for the future. We want to put the best foot forward for the downtown section of the Greenway.

Laura Carter: How many more miles of Greenway will the TSPLOST give us?

Nat Kuykendall: It will be about two miles.

Jake Moss: It also funds the bridge from Dudley Park that will go over Trail Creek and under Oconee Street Bridge.

Marilyn Wolf-Ragatz: Is this something that could be done in phases?

Nat Kuykendall: Yes and we will get back to you with an alternative.

DISCUSSION / ALTERNATE REQUESTS

Discussion:

(Discussion was held for the next meeting.)

- #15 Bridge Improvement Program**
- #20 North Avenue Bridge & Intersection Project**
- #17 Intersection Improvement Program**
- #25 Smart City Transportation Project**
- #55 ABHS Path to Recovery Residential Program**
- #62 CCSD High School Athletic Field Upgrades**
- #67 Gaines Youth Development Complex**
- #74 Oconee Rivers Greenway Implementation Project**

INFORMATION / NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next meeting of the committee is Saturday, February 2, 2019, 9:00 a.m. The following meeting of the committee: Monday, February 4, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. at the Bob Snipes Water Resource Center. Purpose: Project Presentations

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

The above summation is an interpretation of the items discussed and decisions reached at the above referenced meeting, not a transcript of the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available upon request. Anyone

desiring to add to, or otherwise correct the minutes, is requested to return written comments to the SPLOST Administrator by the date of the next meeting.

Keith D. Sanders

Keith D. Sanders, SPLOST Program Administrator

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