

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

Tuesday, September 17, 2002

3:30 P.M. Special Session

MINUTES

Place: Commissioners' Room, second floor, Durham County Government Administrative Complex, 200 E. Main Street, Durham NC

Present: Vice-Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow and Commissioners Joe W. Bowser, Philip R. Cousin Jr., and Becky M. Heron

Absent: Chairman MaryAnn E. Black

Presider: Vice-Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow called to order this Special Session of the Durham County Board of Commissioners to discuss the Northern Durham Parkway and Northwest/Northeast Loop.

Motion to Excuse Commissioner

Vice-Chairman Reckhow stated the first order of business would be to excuse Chairman MaryAnn E. Black from this meeting.

Commissioner Becky M. Heron moved, seconded by Commissioner Philip R. Cousin Jr., to excuse Chairman MaryAnn E. Black from this meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

Introduction

Vice-Chairman Reckhow made introductory remarks about the subject. She said the Board would hear from the staff regarding the action of the Ad Hoc Committee and then would discuss an alternative proposal that the citizens have put forward.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow asked the staff to make a sign-up sheet available for the speakers.

The Board of County Commissioners decided to hear the staff report and then to hear the citizens speak. The alternative report would be heard next, followed by any citizens who wished to comment. The Board of County Commissioners would then hold a discussion.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow advised that the Commissioners would make a recommendation to the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Transportation Advisory Committee. That group would consider a proposed long-range plan the following day (September 18) to put forward for public comment. The Committee would vote on the issue after a month of public comment.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow called on Mark Ahrendsen, Transportation Manager, City of Durham, for his presentation.

Mr. Ahrendsen gave the Commissioners background information to explain how the Board had arrived at this point, and how the staff recommendation and the Ad Hoc Committee recommendation came forth.

Mr. Ahrendsen presented a lengthy report to the Board of County Commissioners about the 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan. The plan included a recommendation for a transportation corridor(s) to serve east, northeast, and northwest Durham County. The recommendation, along with several other alternatives that have been touted, will be reviewed.

Commissioner Heron asked several questions for clarification purposes to which Mr. Ahrendsen responded.

Commissioner Bowser asked several questions about the Red Mill Road widening and other projects. Mr. Ahrendsen responded to the questions and comments.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow stated for the record that she had voted at the Ad Hoc Committee meeting last week with the prevailing side to support the shortened and amended Eno Drive. She stated that it was a very tentative vote and that she was not especially comfortable with the vote. After the vote, she learned that even the shortened version did not have the support of key stakeholders with whom she has always been committed to work. Vice-Chairman Reckhow said that she no longer supports the Ad Hoc Committee recommendation. She wanted the committee to consider an alternative.

The following citizens spoke concerning the Northern Durham Parkway and the Northwest/Northeast Loop. They expressed their concerns and opinions about the highway project.

Don Moffitt, President, Eno River Association

Andy Knapp, 18-year resident of Durham

Caleb Southern, East End Connector Alliance

Jackie Brown, No Build Alternative

Anne U. Peele, Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce

Thomas J. White, President/CEO, Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce
Milo Pyne, Eno River Association
Larry Holt, No Build Alternative

Caleb Southern left for the County Commissioners a copy of various statements for the record. The statements came from the following organizations:

Statement of Unity (East End Connector)
Partners Against Crime, District 2
Old West Durham
Forest Hills Neighborhood Association
Old Farm/River Forest Homeowners Association
Watts Hospital/Hillandale Neighborhood Association
Duke Park Neighborhood Association
Old North Durham
No Build Alternative
Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People
Inter-Neighborhood Council
East End Connector Alliance

Vice-Chairman Reckhow thanked everyone for coming to make his or her comments.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow referred the matter back to the Board of County Commissioners for its consideration.

The Vice-Chairman said the Board of County Commissioners had received email from Milo Pyne a few days ago that outlines a possible approach for the Board to take.

Mr. Pyne's approach would put the Board on record to include the East End Connector (U-71) as a Highway Trust Fund project and give priority in the TIP to build this project before the Northwest/Northeast Loop.

The Vice-Chairman stated that if the Board makes this motion, item number one would make the East End Connector the Board's top priority for spending Highway Trust Fund money.

Item number two in this motion would be the Commissioners' recommendation to the Transportation Advisory Committee that it amend the current design of the Northwest/Northeast Loop. It would become a four-lane, 45-mph facility, designed as a multimodal corridor, from US-70 in east Durham to Old Oxford Road in north Durham, then following the existing Old Oxford alignment to a new alignment north of, and parallel to, Snow Hill Road, and terminating at Roxboro Road.

Item number three would add to the 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan a two-lane, north/south facility from Old Oxford Road south along the Midland Terrace Connector corridor.

Mr. Ahrendsen was asked to answer several questions for a citizen in the audience.

The Commissioners asked several questions and made remarks to which Mr. Ahrendsen responded.

Commissioner Bowser said he had planned to make a different motion, but if the Board plans to focus on the East End Connector as its primary goal, he could support what Mr. Pyne had put forward.

Commissioner Bowser asked the record to reflect that his vote does not support what the Ad Hoc Committee has done. He stated that he certainly hoped that this Committee was not representing the Board of County Commissioners when the vote was taken. He said he could not see how the vote could represent the Commissioners, since only two Commissioners were on the Ad Hoc Committee. Commissioner Heron did not vote for the motion before the Ad Hoc Committee. Only Vice-Chairman Reckhow had voted for the motion in the Ad Hoc Committee.

Commissioner Bowser moved to accept the motion as read
by Vice-Chairman Reckhow.

Commissioner Heron asked if this motion included the fact that this road would terminate at Roxboro Road and would go no further west.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow said that is how the motion read.

Commissioner Bowser said he wanted his motion clear on that. The road would end at Roxboro Road where Snow Hill Road runs into Roxboro Road.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow said it would end just to the north of that.

Commissioner Cousin asked several questions for clarification purposes about the motion and the recommendation.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow said that the motion makes the East End Connector a priority. The remaining money left in the Highway Trust Fund would be used to build the Northwest/Northeast Loop (Eno Drive), amended with the outlined alignment going north to Treyburn.

Commissioner Bowser said the alignment that the Committee recommended is not included in this.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow said that this is a different alignment.

Commissioner Bowser withdrew his motion made earlier in the meeting.

Commissioner Bowser moved that the Board of County Commissioners ask the State of North Carolina to completely remove Eno Drive from the plan and that the Board move forward with the State in order to have the trust fund amended to save money. The motion also states that the Board of County Commissioners would support the East End Connector.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow, Commissioner Bowser, and Mr. Ahrendsen discussed the proposed motion.

Commissioner Bowser's motion failed for the lack of a second.

Commissioner Bowser withdrew his second motion.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow said the Board was back to square one.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow stated she wanted the Board of County Commissioners to provide guidance, if possible, to the Transportation Advisory Committee tomorrow. That was the purpose of this special called meeting.

Commissioner Cousin moved, seconded by Commissioner Bowser, for the Commissioners to focus on the East End Connector as its primary highway project at this point with new projects to follow. The request should be made that the Highway Trust Fund be amended to allow for the construction of the East End Connector.

Commissioner Heron offered a substitute motion.

Commissioner Heron moved, seconded by Vice-Chairman Reckhow, that the Board of County Commissioners include the East End Connector in its transportation plan and that the Board consider the possible I-85 widening from US 70 to Red Mill (6 lanes), Roxboro Road widening from Duke Street to Goodman Road (6 lanes), and Red Mill Road widening from I-85 to Treyburn (4 lanes). The Board should also move forward with the Northwest/Northeast Loop following the plan brought forward here with its extension to Treyburn.

The substitute motion failed with the following 2-2 vote:

Ayes: Heron and Reckhow

Noes: Bowser and Cousin

Absent: Black

Vice-Chairman Reckhow called for a vote on the motion to support the East End Connector as a priority and then to consider other local solutions as appropriate.

The motion carried with the following 4-0 vote:

Ayes: Bowser, Cousin, Heron, and Reckhow

Noes: None

Absent: Black

Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Reckhow adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Garry E. Umstead, CMC
Clerk to the Board