

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
SPORTS COMPLEX AND CIVIC CENTER, PEARSON, GEORGIA
February 22, 2018
11:00 a.m.**

WELCOME MEMBERS AND GUESTS: Chair Joyce Evans called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Ms. Evans called upon James Everett to give the invocation and lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

<u>Atkinson County</u>	<u>Bacon County</u>	<u>Ben Hill County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Futch, Lace	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hutto, Andy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Taylor, Steve
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Johnson, Robert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Murphy, Peggy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Puckett, Jim
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> McKinnon, Janice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coley, Lisa	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dunn, Jason
<u>Berrien County</u>	<u>Brantley County</u>	<u>Brooks County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sumner, Doc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harris, Skipper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exum, Myra
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richbourg, Michael	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Johns, Diane	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dennard, Nancy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Studstill, Janet	Vacant	Vacant
<u>Charlton County</u>	<u>Clinch County</u>	<u>Coffee County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Everett, James	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> McClaine, Kenton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dovers, A.J.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gowen, Lee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kennedy, Tom	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moore, Bob
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Malin, Dawn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hardee, Willie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smith, Adam
<u>Cook County</u>	<u>Echols County</u>	<u>Irwin County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purvis, Dwight	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Walker, Bobby	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whitley, Joey
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Duke, Buddy		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seale, Matt
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bennett, Derry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Garner, Cheryl	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paulk, Mona
<u>Lanier County</u>	<u>Lowndes County</u>	<u>Pierce County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fender, Dennis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evans, Joyce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bennett, Neal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Darsey, Bill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Miller-Cody, Vivian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larson, Dick
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fitton, John	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payton, Anthony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brannen, Andy
<u>Tift County</u>	<u>Turner County</u>	<u>Ware County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thompson, Grady	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Denham, Nick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nelson, Carlos
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smith, Julie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lumpkin, Sandra	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knox, John
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marlowe, Brian	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> King, Barbara

<u>Governor's Office</u>	<u>Lt. Governor's Office</u>	<u>Speaker's Office</u>
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stone, Keith	Vacant
Vacant		
Vacant		

Staff Present

Cribb, Lisa
 Davidson, Sherry
 Martin, Amy
 Mercer, Tish
 Strom, Chris
 Taft, Wanda

Guests Present

Bobbitt, Nancy
 Ellis, Kevin
 Mikell, Nan
 Muse, Darryl
 Raulerson, Hampton
 Studstill, Albert
 West, Diane
 Westberry, Diane
 White, Charles

INSTALLATION OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS: Chair Evans invited newly elected and appointed officials to rise and congregate to take their oath as new SGRC council members. SGRC council members installed were: Mayor Dr. Nancy Dennard, City of Quitman; John Fitton, Lanier County Private Appointment; Derry Bennett, Cook County Private Appointment.

PRESENTATION OF NEW MEMBER CERTIFICATES: Chair Evans presented new SGRC council members in attendance with their council member certificates. Those receiving certificates were: AJ Dovers, Coffee County; Bob Moore, City of Douglas; Jim Puckett, City of Fitzgerald.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY 25th MEETING MINUTES: Chair Evans reminded those present that a copy of the January minutes had been emailed (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Janice McKinnon made a motion to approve the minutes. Barbara King seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF JANUARY 2018 REVENUE AND EXPENSE REPORT: Chair Evans referred those present to a copy of the January 2018 Revenue and Expense Reports included in their member packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Janice McKinnon made a motion to accept the January Revenue and Expense Reports. Barbara King seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION OF CITY OF VALDOSTA SOLAR PROJECT: RC Assistant Executive Director Chris Strom introduced speaker Darryl Muse, Utilities Director, for the City of Valdosta. Mr. Muse shared some background information about the City's utility department to include statistics about the volume of wastewater treated by the City. Mr. Muse then proceeded with his PowerPoint presentation to highlight the recent solar project undertaken by the City. He explained that Hannah Solar had approached the City to lease landfill property as a site for a solar facility. Mr. Muse further explained that the City negotiated a \$9.85 million dollar investment by Hannah Solar to construct solar facilities on multiple City properties including wastewater treatment plant properties. He shared these properties total 37 acres and the solar fa-

cilities produce approximately 6.3 megawatts of electric power which is enough to run approximately 6000 houses. Two of these facilities are wholly owned by the City. He explained this investment helped to reduce energy costs at the wastewater treatment plant by approximately \$60,000 annually and actually provide power back to the grid for sale to Georgia Power.

Mr. Muse explained that Hannah Solar is not the only solar company available for this sort of project and encouraged those present to reach out and make contact with a company to explore solar options. In answer to a question from a council member, Mr. Muse elaborated on the benefits to citizens via rate stabilization as a result of this alternative power source. Mr. Muse also stated in response to a question that no battery system was needed as no power is being stored in the system. After addressing those questions, Mr. Muse thanked the council for their time and assured them he would be around for further questions should anyone have any.

REPORT ON LOCAL UPDATE OF CENSUS ADDRESSES: RC Assistant Executive Director Chris Strom referred those present to a copy of an informational handout on the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) in their member packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Mr. Strom explained that SGRC was providing review and liaison assistance with the LUCA process through contract with DCA. He informed those present that 100% of counties in the SGRC region and 28 cities in the region were successfully signed up for this endeavor and were using SGRC as their review and liaison staff for this project. Mr. Strom also told the council about the importance of this measure and explained that this LUCA process is essential to an accurate count in the 2020 Census. Mr. Strom explained that since all counties had signed up, any cities not directly participating in LUCA would still be included in the LUCA process, but they would be dependent upon their county to provide and review address listings for those cities.

Mr. Strom explained that LUCA packets from the Census Bureau would be arriving at the RC office in the coming weeks and from the date of receipt, the RC and governments have only 120 days to compile address lists, remove duplicates, review them and submit them to the Census Bureau. To facilitate a quick and accurate turnaround, Mr. Strom requested those present to return to their communities and communicate to 911 Directors, Utility Directors and Tax Assessors that SGRC will be contacting them to obtain residential address information and to please encourage those staff to share that information for this process. With no questions being asked, Mr. Strom thanked the council for their attention and help with this effort.

REPORT ON TSPLOST: Chair Evans called on RC Regional Planner Amy Martin to provide an update on the TSPLOST process. Ms. Martin provided a reminder to the council that approximately 6 months ago the Regional TSPLOST process began, members to the Regional Roundtable were appointed and shortly after, an Executive Committee was formed. She mentioned that among the goals of this committee, was the creation of a draft transportation project list. Ms. Martin informed the council that on February 13th, the Regional Roundtable met again and approved this Regional TSPLOST project list that includes 150 projects totaling \$408 million in transportation project investments. She added that if voters pass the referendum on May 22, 2018, the anticipated TSPLOST tax generation over the next ten years is estimated at \$513 million.

Ms. Martin referred those present to the project and total investment listings in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Ms. Martin told those present the RC staff

was still available for questions regarding this process and should anyone have questions, feel free to contact her. Following her report, Buddy Duke, TSPLOST Executive Committee member, asked to speak and in brief fashion pointed out that if the referendum passes, there are other potential benefits from the work of the Regional Roundtable and Executive Committee. Specifically, he told the council that one of these potential benefits is the \$107 million contribution by GDOT to regional transportation projects if the referendum passes. Another benefit pointed out by Mr. Duke was a reduction in LMIG match requirements for communities. After remarks from Mr. Duke, Ms. Martin thanked the council for their time.

REGIONAL PLAN UPDATE: RC Local Government Services Director Sherry Davidson gave the council an update on the Regional Plan. She explained that the Regional Plan is due in July, 2018 and SGRC is in the process of drafting it. In support of that, a listening session had recently been held in Douglas going over goals, needs and opportunities for the RC regional plan. In addition, maps of areas requiring special attention had been drafted as part of the planning process. Ms. Davidson informed the council that these maps are still available for viewing and comment at the SGRC offices in Valdosta and Waycross through the end of February, 2018. Ms. Davidson informed the council that there would be a meeting held in June to review and finalize the Regional Plan. Once completed, the plan would be transmitted to DCA for their review and once returned with those blessings, it would be brought before the council for official adoption. Without any questions, Ms. Davidson thanked the council and proceeded to the next agenda item.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES/UPDATES:

Grants: RC Local Government Services Director Sherry Davidson referred those present to a copy of the project status list included in their member packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Ms. Davidson stated that the project status list shows projects that have been funded and projects that have been applied for in our region, grouped by county. She told the council that the SGRC Community and Economic Development staff were in full swing this CDBG season and had set a goal to have all 26 CDBG's ready for submission by March 29th, a few days ahead of the April 2nd DCA deadline. Ms. Davidson commended the staff for jobs well done and for their success rate with grants in past years. She asked council members to contact staff regarding any questions on the projects listed or any potential projects that they may be interested in for their communities.

Planning: RC Local Government Services Director Sherry Davidson referred those present to a handout listing the various plans that local governments are required to submit, as well as the deadlines for submission (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). In addition, Ms. Davidson reminded council members from communities with Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) negotiations on the horizon that their Qualified Local Government (QLG) status needs to be protected if those negotiations become protracted. She advised council members from affected communities that it is important to file an extension with DCA if necessary to ensure their governments' QLG status is preserved to remain eligible for grants and other benefits of a qualified local government. She encouraged council members to review the schedule for upcoming deadlines for their communities and to contact RC Planning staff with any questions.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- 1.) **ACCG Update:** Chair Evans reminded the council that ACCG's County Days at the Capitol are February 28th and March 7th. She also told the council ACCG would be hosting a Spring Training event in Tift County March 15-16. Ms. Evans concluded by telling everyone present the ACCG Annual Conference would be held in Savannah April 27-30.
- 2.) **GMA Update:** Matt Seale informed those present that GMA would be hosting a Spring Training event in Tifton on March 7th. He also informed the council that GMA's summer convention would be held in June in Savannah. Mr. Seale told those present registration would open on March 6th for the summer convention and encouraged those who were interested in attending to register as soon as possible. Mr. Seale also commended the cities of Fitzgerald and Nashville on their recent designation as Rural Zones. Speaking of "rural" areas, Mr. Seale encouraged council members to reach out to their legislators to learn more about legislation regarding telecommunications and rights of way, and inform legislators of the position of cities and counties in the region.
- 3.) **Other Announcements:** Vivian Miller Cody made two announcements on behalf of the City of Valdosta. The first being that there will be a groundbreaking ceremony for the Georgia Beer Company in Valdosta on Tuesday, March 6th from 4-6pm and encouraged everyone to attend. The second announcement was that the City of Valdosta will host their annual Azalea Festival on March 10th and 11th and encouraged everyone to attend.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- 1.) Wanda Taft, SGRC AAA Director, referred those present to a handout in their member packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes) that referenced an Aging and Behavioral Health Forum to be held in Valdosta on Friday, March 2nd at the First Christian Church. Ms. Taft explained that the purpose of the forum was to improve coordination between mental health professionals and aging service professionals. She explained this ongoing collaboration is helpful as it is common to see mental health and aging issues coincide when dealing with clients. She encouraged council members to share the handout in their packet with professionals in their communities that they may feel could benefit from participating in this forum.

ADJOURN: As there was no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.


Joyce Evans, Chair


Peggy Murphy, Secretary