

Minutes SPLOST V Committee

Thursday, January 10, 2019 – 6:30 P.M.

New Hope Elementary School, Cafeteria, Locust Grove, Georgia

The Henry Herald was notified of the meeting via email.

Meeting Agenda (See Attached Agenda)

I. Call to Order

Mr. Clayton Carte, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Carte.

III. Acceptance of Agenda

****See attached agenda***

Mr. Carte called for a motion for acceptance of the agenda for January 10, 2019 and noted one modification made to this agenda from previous agendas. The *Public Comments, Item VIII*, portion of the agenda was moved ahead of *Item IX, Action Item - District I, Project Discussion* so as to allow those in attendance a chance to speak before the Committee selects their District I project recommendations. Motion was made by Mr. Tom Israel (District I Representative) and seconded by Mr. Claud Spinks (County Manager Representative). The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Opening – Clayton Carte

Mr. Carte opened with a general overview regarding the SPLOST program and its impact in Henry County. SPLOST stands for Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. It is a program that the Georgia General Assembly created in the 1980s allowing Georgia counties to call for local sales tax for the purpose of funding capital projects. Within Henry County, SPLOST was first passed in 1996. Since then, three subsequent programs have passed. We are currently in our fourth SPLOST program, which was passed by the voters in 2013. Within Henry County, SPLOST funds have been utilized toward transportation improvements, parks and recreation, county facilities, and public safety. SPLOST funds can be applied toward anything that is a capital need. There is a separate SPLOST, the E-SPLOST or Education SPLOST, governed by the Henry County Board of

Education and it is operated separately from the Henry County Board of Commissioners General SPLOST.

The SPLOST V Committee has been formed by the Henry County Board of Commissioners to look at a proposed extension of the SPLOST program. SPLOST IV, the current program, is set to expire in March 2020. This committee will be spending the next year looking at potential projects, developing a project list, analyzing cost estimates, and getting public feedback on possible projects before recommending a project list to the Henry County Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners may then modify the list, as need be, before calling for a voter referendum to approve the extension of SPLOST in November of 2019. If the referendum is passed, SPLOST V collections will begin in April of 2020.

The SPLOST V Committee is made up of 7 appointees, an appointee from each of the Commissioners and an appointee from the County Manager's office. The committee is meeting bi-weekly throughout Henry County, holding 17 meetings in total. Meetings began in July 2018, with the first round of meetings being held in each commission district. The committee is currently in its second round of meetings, meeting with each of the 4 cities located in Henry County. Beginning in 2019, the committee will once again meet in each commission district to decide district specific projects. SPLOST V will be comprised of both county-wide projects and district specific projects.

V. Introduction of Henry County Commissioners

- Johnny Wilson, District 1 Commissioner
- Vivian Thomas, District 4 Commissioner

VI. Introduction of Committee Members and City Representatives

- Clayton Carte, Committee Chair (County Chair Representative)
- Tom Israel (District 1 Representative)
- Arnold Cole (District 2 Representative)
- Mike Elrod (District 3 Representative)
- Harold Jenkins (District 4 Representative)
- Carlotta Harrell, Committee Vice-Chair (District 5 Representative)
- Claud Spinks (County Manager Representative)

VII. Introduction of Staff/Technical Committee

- Brad Johnson, Deputy County Manager
- Ron Burckhalter, Public Works Director
- Roque Romero, SPLOST Transportation Director
- Chae Yi, SPLOST
- Dana Holder, SPLOST
- Lynn Planchon, SPLOST/Airport

VIII. Public Comments

Mr. Carte asked if anyone had signed up for public comments.

Mr. Don Veum spoke in opposition of the proposed convention center that was among the Countywide projects recommended at the previous SPLOST Committee Meeting. He cited operational costs/funding as one of the reasons he is against this project. He recommended dividing the cost of the proposed convention center, \$20 million, among the five commission districts.

Ms. Shirley Kemp asked about the paving of New Hope Road due to pot holes. She also stated that she would like the county to consider placing walking trails throughout the county and in the Ola area.

Ms. Lynda Mesko asked how the SPLOST Program would complement the transit vision for Henry County. She also asked about the Old Jackson Road & Airline Road extension project that was previously part of the SPLOST II Program and never completed. She would like to know how SPLOST V will address projects not completed in previous SPLOST programs. Ms. Mesko also asked about the paving of Seabolt Road.

Mr. Carte asked if staff would care to make comments on some of the questions raised in Public Comments. Roque Romero, SPLOST Transportation Director, addressed some of the issues mentioned in Public Comments as follows:

- New Hope Road – resurfacing project for 2019 with LMIG (Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant) funding. Stormwater will address drainage and pipes before resurfacing begins.
- Airline Road Extension – is a proposed SPLOST V, District 3, recommended project

Regarding SPLOST projects previously listed, but never completed, Mr. Romero gave a brief history about the first SPLOST Program and how projects listed far outweighed the SPLOST collections received. Mr. Romero went on to explain that in the SPLOST Programs that followed, a main priority of the Commissioners, Committee, and staff has always been to see that these projects were completed. Several projects that were not

completed in previous SPLOST Programs have been completed in the current SPLOST IV Program while others will be completed in the SPLOST V, and future, programs. Due to costs and funding, some roads had to be scheduled in phases with design, Right-of-Way, and construction being split amongst two SPLOST Programs; examples of these such roads include: State Route 81 widening, McDonough Parkway Extension, and Peeksville Road. Mr. Romero mentioned that all current and past SPLOST projects, as well as those complete and incomplete, can be found on the SPLOST website at:

<http://www.co.henry.ga.us/Departments/S-Z/SPLOST>

IX. Staff Recommended Countywide Projects

Mr. Romero then gave a presentation about projects within District I that have been suggested for the SPLOST V Program. ****A list of these projects can be found as part of the handout packet to tonight's meeting, as well as on a slideshow presentation on the SPLOST website.*** The total cost for these suggested projects falls a little over \$60 million. The set amount of allocations per district has not been set, but may be somewhere around \$18 million. Also, the completion of the SPLOST V proposed projects is contingent upon the approval of the SPLOST V Program scheduled for the November referendum. Mr. Romero also mentioned that the SPLOST tax is not a new tax, or an increase in taxes, but rather a renewal tax that has been in place since 1996.

Mr. Carte stated that he appreciated all of the healthy dialogue, but he wanted to reserve some time for Mr. Tom Israel (District I Representative) and District I Commissioner, Johnny Wilson, to discuss projects that they felt would be priorities within the SPLOST V, District I, Program. Mr. Israel stated that one of his main priorities is to alleviate bumper-to-bumper traffic on State Route 81. He mentioned that on that particular morning, he travelled State Route 81 and it took him 45 minutes to get to the McDonough City Square from Keys Ferry Road. He mentioned intersection improvements at Bill Gardner Parkway @ Lester Mill Road and at Racetrack Road @ Iris Lake Road & Travis Drive. Mr. Israel stated that the Racetrack Road projects were also dependent on involvement and funding assistance from the City of McDonough. Mr. Israel also asked that everyone keep in mind that these projects are just suggestions that will be taken to the Board of Commissioners who will then determine the final list that will go before the voters of Henry County in November. Peeksville Road, Burg Road, Ellistown Road, Sandy Ridge Road (from Keys Ferry to Stallsworth Road), Cardell Drive, Sipka Road, Hosannah Road, Weems Road, Luella Road, and Laney Road were also roads in District I that were suggested for improvement. It was stated that the Right-of-Way for Sipka Road had already been acquired so only money for design and construction would be needed. The Towaliga River Bridge on Hampton-Locust Grove Road was suggested as a bridge improvement project that would be jointly funded by both Districts I and II. The resurfacing of both Hampton-Locust Grove Road and L.G.-Griffin Road were suggestions made for District I projects as well. Mr. Israel stated that

the District I list and suggestions were not set in concrete, but these are roads in District I that are recognized as needing improvements. Mr. Israel also mentioned the proposed convention center and how the Committee agreed to table that project pending a feasibility study. Mr. Israel stated that it was his opinion that the money proposed for the convention center would be of better use allocated among the districts for transportation projects.

Mr. Carte stated that the agenda item shown as *Action Item – District I Projects*, was meant to be the Committee selecting the projects for District I that they would be recommending to the Board of Commissioners. However, he feels that the Committee, at this point, is not in a position where they feel comfortable narrowing the projects down for District I. He feels that the Committee should revisit this issue at a later date. Mr. Carte also addressed projects that were on previous SPLOST Programs and never completed; he stated that Georgia law does allow projects to be placed back on the ballot for removal, however, it would have to be approved by the voters. He stated that this is something he definitely thinks the Committee, as well as the Board of Commissioners, should look at. He stated that some former projects may now, not meet the needs for county investment; examples given are projects completed under separate funding sources such as GDOT and the cities. Regardless, Mr. Carte emphasized that in order for a project to be removed from any SPLOST list, it would have to be placed on the referendum and voted on by the citizens. After much discussion, it was determined that the District I projects would be revisited at the February 7, 2019 SPLOST Committee meeting. Mr. Carte encouraged those with concerns and questions to continue discussion with their Committee Representative, Commissioners, and county staff.

X. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Carte asked if there are any revisions to be made to the minutes regarding the December 13, 2018, SPLOST V Committee Meeting. Ms. Harrell stated that she would like clarification to be made concerning the proposed convention center item. She would like an addendum to be added stating that the Committee agreed to table the convention center item pending a feasibility study and research of other possible funding sources. She emphasized that the convention center item was tabled, and not approved, at the December 13, 2018 meeting.

Motion was made to approve the minutes, with corrections clarifying the tabling of the convention center item. Motion was approved by Mr. Spinks (County Manager Representative), and seconded by Mr. Elrod (District 3 Representative). Motion passed unanimously.

XI. Future Meetings

Mr. Carte made the announcement that the next two meetings of the SPLOST V Committee will be held on Thursday, January 24, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at Luella Middle School in the school cafeteria; and on Thursday, February 7, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. at Heritage Senior Center in McDonough.

XII. Committee Comments

Mr. Elrod asked for direction regarding the District 3 meeting in February. He stated that it was his understanding that he meet with District 3 Commissioner, Gary Barham, prior to the February meeting to prioritize the proposed SPLOST V projects for District 3. Discussion was had recommending ways to prioritize projects within each district prior to future meetings. Mr. Spinks (County Manager Representative) encouraged citizens to dialogue with their Commissioners when they have questions and concerns. He also recommended that citizens attend both Commission and Committee meetings to stay informed and to voice their concerns.

XIII. Adjournment

Mr. Carte made the motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Mrs. Harrell and seconded by Mr. Spinks. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:41p.m.

**Minutes were prepared by Dana Holder, Henry County SPLOST staff.*