

**Minutes of the Meeting
Holmes - Washington County Joint Infrastructure Committee
Holmes County Chamber of Commerce
Bonifay, FL
June 3, 2015**

Attendees:

Mike DeRuntz	Washington County	<u>850-415-5093</u>
Ted Everett	Wash Co Chamber of Commerce	<u>850-638-4157</u>
Wendell Whitehurst	Holmes County	<u>850-547-1119</u>
Raymon Thomas	Holmes County	<u>850-547-1119</u>
David Corbin	Washington County	<u>850-638-6200</u>
Jim Town	Washington County	<u>850-773-8000</u>
Terry Ellis	Washington Co. EDC	<u>850-528-3828</u>
Carter Johnson	FL Dept of Transportation	<u>850-260-5244</u>
Richard Woodham	City of Bonifay	<u>850-547-3817</u>
Cliff Knauf	Preble - Rish	<u>(850) 974-8815</u>
Jim Brook	Opportunity Florida	<u>850-270-3117</u>

Acting chair Ted Everett welcomed the group and asked each attendee and participant to introduce themselves and explained that attorney Jeff Goodman would be participating with the group but could not attend this day. Everett also explained that both Goodman and Cliff Knauf with Preble-Rish worked for both counties in their respective capacities and have been asked to assist this ad hoc task force.

Next Everett explained that the purpose of this committee was to do an exploratory feasibility study to develop the information to determine if it is feasible to bring utilities down FL Hwy 79 to Douglas Ferry Road and to provide that study and report to the Holmes County BOCC, the Washington County BOCC and the City of Bonifay. Everett indicated that the Washington Co BOCC did not have the ability and capacity to construct or install a package plant or a water well at this time and it makes sense to go to the City of Bonifay and the Holmes County BOCC to determine the feasibility to share utilities while opening property south from Bonifay to the Washington County line and then to Douglas Ferry Road to commercial and economic development.

Everett explained that he believed "Regionality" is the way to proceed with development planning and that with respect to grants, that the State would look very favorably on the project as a regional effort between two counties. Carter Johnson with FLDOT confirmed this position and statement. Everett concluded opening

remarks by explaining that the purpose of this committee is to determine the right questions to ask to attempt to obtain answers to those questions.

DOT was present at the meeting because the road (79) is being widened. Group needs to determine where the new property lines are located relative to the new highway and utility easements. The group will need the participation and input of the Holmes County zoning board to determine how many acres are or will be zoned for commercial and industrial development.

Jim Town and Mike DeRuntz are knowledgeable on zoning and future land use. Jim Town has done a study for Hwy 77 and I-10 for the Washington County BOCC and is being brought into this project to determine the same feasibility for Hwy 79. Town explains that he can build an economic model to compare the revenue generated to the cost to determine the feasibility. Town's initial concern is that the corner (79 and Douglass Ferry) is a long distance to the Interstate. Town further explained that the traffic counts are not fabulous up and down this section of I-10 at 19M to 20M cars per day. Also that 43 percent of the Washington County population lives within 10 miles of I-10 and 77.

Chains also work for return on investment. Chains do not rezone very often. For the most part if the site is not shovel ready they usually move on down the road. The group needs to identify shovel ready sites to attract commercial chains. The chains work on a three year construction and development cycle. You cannot wait to rezone until you identify a user. Making Neither county has significant appeal to chain operators in terms of sales forecast for a site and return on investment. Chains investment for a site in Chipley is essentially the same as it is for Atlanta. Need to approach this project as long term so that the counties will be ready. Everett explained that Town as agreed to donate his time and effort to this committee.

Everett explained Opportunity Florida's role as a regional development coordinator and asked that Opportunity Florida serve with the Committee to provide technical assistance and staff support. Opportunity Florida provided examples of successful projects with involvement jointly by the city and county in Jackson County to apply for grants and public support for development.

Cliff Knauer was introduced and asked for any observations. Knauer indicated that there were not many challenges running water and sewer. Knauer indicated the biggest question is what is the intensity of development that we need to plan for. One of the biggest issues is the size of water and sewer mains and to plan the system to be installed in phases. Group needs to plan for installing dry lines to prepare for the future. Try to set up with several small lines and one big line. DEP requires of 2 fps flow in sewer line. Water lines have to be flushed regularly to avoid bad water. Unless water is being bled-off, it can be a problem for the City. So, the system needs to be planned in phases. Determine the maximum development potential for the project.

Town indicates that he needs to look at GIS and population estimates. The corner is 2.6 miles from the Interstate. Need to get house counts and support population numbers as they are today. Development there will initially depend upon local trade and passing traffic. The good news is that the traffic will be increasing [as the highway is four-laned].

Mike DeRuntz was asked to share on Washington County land use experience. He explained the future land use process in progress now in Washington County. He indicated that county would be working on an overlay of 77 and I-10 and 79 and 280. He indicated some possibility of problem with wetlands but that the county commission was very supportive of the process and that the County would begin the public information and public meetings process to gain support for commercial develop. He believe development of water and sewer is

critical and would like to see the highway department consider the installation of sleeves as the highway is expanded.

Jim Brook asked how this process would affect the Economic Development element of the comprehensive plan. Mike Deruntz and Jim Town discussed the overlay process in development by Washington County and speculation that the overlay would be used as a means to ease into changes to the future land use plan.

Both Ted Everett and David Corbin spoke to the need for early public awareness and full transparency of the process and that public information is critical.

Bonifay representative Richard Woodham was asked to comment on Bonifay sewer system. Bonifay just finished one state of sewer plant upgrade and is about to start on the next upgrade. Bonifay is not even at half of their sewer capacity. Bonifay has a 6 inch main to North Wright and only two or three house connect. Another line would be probably be necessary. Cliff Knauer explained that most of the larger developers require fire flow capacity. With adequate fire flow it is hard to get them [developers] to come. Water is critical. Knauer explained that Walton County was able to get a CDBG grant for the Mossy Head industrial park for water and the county had to spent \$3 to \$4 thousand dollars per month for about a year to flush out the system and keep system chlorination in balance.

Cliff Knauer indicated that there are really two sides of the process. First, the utilities need to be planned and agreements completed with the City. Next, we need to identify a potential project and get the assurance that the landowners would be willing to develop the property.

General discussion was held concerning the property owners and some discussion of the Sun Lake property. Jim Town asked about the availability of GIS and household radius studies. The group would need to access the state GIS system. Town indicated that we needed to go to the regional planning council to access the population and housing counts.

Everett explained that Jeff Goodman had asked for a set date to meet each month. General discussion was held on preferred dates and decided that Wednesday July 8 would be acceptable. The next date was set as Wednesday, 10 AM in Bonifay. Opportunity Florida indicated that minutes would be developed and provided for the next meeting.

With no future comments or business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jim Brook
Opportunity Florida

Minutes of the Meeting
Holmes - Washington County Joint Infrastructure Committee
Holmes County Chamber of Commerce
Bonifay, FL
July 8, 2015

Attendees:

Mike DeRuntz	Washington County	<u>850-415-5093</u>
Ted Everett	Wash Co Chamber of Commerce	<u>850-638-4157</u>
Wendell Whitehurst	Holmes County	<u>850-547-1119</u>
David Corbin	Washington County	<u>850-638-6200</u>
Jim Town	Washington County	<u>850-773-8000</u>
Jim Brook	Opportunity Florida	<u>850-270-3117</u>
Julia Bullington	Holmes County C of C	<u>850-527-0414</u>
Guest:		
Mike Alvis	Holmes County C of C	<u>850-547-9102</u>

Acting chair Ted Everett called the meeting to order and provided a copy of the minutes from the June 3, meeting. Following review, members pointed out that page two (2) needed a change made to paragraph 7 reflecting as follows “.... overlay of 77 and I-10 and 79 and 280. [Note - this change was made and Cliff Knauer was recorded as a participant in the June 3 meeting.]

Cliff Knauer of Preble - Rish engineers joined by conference call and provided the group with an initial cost assessment to provide water and sewer at a location generally in the area of FL79 and Douglas Ferry Road (280). According to Knauer, preliminary estimates are \$800,000 for sewer and \$550,000 for water extensions. Knauer proposed installing 4”, 6” and 8” inch force mains and initially operating the 4” line. An 8” force main would adequately serve a 60,000 sq.ft. commercial development . The \$1,350,000 would conceivably serve 100,000 sq.ft. of commercial development. The extension would be approximately 10,400’ or 1.97 miles to the Bonifay City Limit.

The next item of discussion was the review of a preliminary market study conducted by Jim Town and submitted to Ted Everett for the committee review. The study addressed the economic feasibility of a modern convenience store with gas and truck fueling as an “anchor use” for the intersection. Town explained that the initial study indicated that the “retail potential” at the site was \$47,889,000 and that water and sewer billings at the site would produce significant revenue toward amortization of the infrastructure investment. Town indicated that the best prospect would be a local oil and gas jobber as opposed to a national concern because this site would be competing with other properties if prospected to national chains.

Ted Everett indicated that the group needed the Bonifay water and sewer rate sheets for the analysis. Other considerations for further study and analysis include a formal market research study. Other questions to address included the practicality of an inter-local agreement, grants available for study and infrastructure and existing zoning. Everett further indicated that the group needed engagement by the Holmes County planning and zoning entity.

In closing, Everett proposed establishing a firm date of the 1st Wednesday of each month as a firm meeting date and time until the project feasibility was determined the and recommendations were made to the appropriate public bodies. Unanimous agreement was voices with regard to the meeting date.

With no future comments or business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jim Brook
Opportunity Florida

**Minutes of the Meeting
Holmes - Washington County Joint Infrastructure Committee
Holmes County Chamber of Commerce
Bonifay, FL
August 5, 2015**

Attendees:

Mike DeRuntz	Washington County	850-415-5093
Ted Everett	Wash Co Chamber of Commerce	850-638-4157
Charles Kent	Washington County BOCC	
Wendell Whitehurst	Holmes County	850-547-1119
Roger Williams	Holmes County	
David Corbin	Washington County	850-638-6200
Jim Town	Washington County	850-773-8000
Jim Brook	Opportunity Florida	850-270-3117
Julia Bullington	Holmes County C of C	<u>850-527-0414</u>
Guests:		
Carter Johnson	FDOT	
Dean Mitchell	Consultant	
Frank Tucker	Consultant	
Billy Robinson	FLDOT	
Lee Carter	Consultant	

Acting chair Ted Everett called the meeting to order and provided a copy of the minutes from the July 8, meeting.

Ted Everett started the meeting by reviewing prior discussions and describing Washington County's experience with the property zoning "overlay" process as a way to appropriately communicate to landowners and to provide a means of transitioning into a change of land use over time. The process alleviates some concern by the landowners with regard to land use change.

Other discussion was held and is summarized with the following points:

- Washington County has approved and has implemented the overlay process within the future land use planning process
- Everett suggests that Mike DeRuntz and Ted explain the process to the Holmes County Planning and Zoning Board.
- Roger Williams will locate and provide a current Holmes County land use map including commercial property.
- Mike DeRuntz indicated that we need to identify conservation and wetlands areas. Otherwise DEP could push back on any chances to the current Land Use Map.
- Ideally, once any amendments to the FLUM is made, Holmes and Washington should provide them to DEO in tandem to demonstrate evidence of a regional, coordinated effort.
- DeRuntz suggested conducting a joint workshop between the two planning and zoning boards to explain the project and to compare maps
- Jim Town indicated that the group should consider creating a legal entity under which bonding authority could be obtained. Town also indicated that creation of such an entity would not compromise or affect the county bonding authority.
- Town indicated that the annual cost to implement the planned development could be up to \$85,000 per year.
- Representatives of FLDOT, including consulting engineering companies, answered questions about the current Florida 79 four-lane project and its status. FLDOT indicated that the Washington County segments should be finished by May/June 2016 and that the entire segment to I-10 should be completed by late 2017.
- The engineering group discussed current median spacing and median cut plans and discussed how those could be modified. FLDOT indicated that a formal request to modify the current plan should be presented to FDOT as soon as possible. The request will be handled through the Access Management Committee. Cliff Knauer and David Corbin will initiate the request and the request will be handled by Carter Johnson at FLDOT.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Jim Brook
Opportunity Florida

**Minutes of the Meeting
Holmes-Washington County Joint Infrastructure Committee
Holmes County Chamber of Commerce
Bonifay, FL
September 2, 2015**

Attendees:

Ted Everett	Washington County Chamber/EDC	ted@washcomall.com
Roger L Williams	Holmes Co Building Dept.	hcbd@holmescountyfl.com
Dana Whipple	Holmes Co Building Dept.	hcbd@holmescountyfl.com
Hubert Hendrix	Holmes Co Planning & Zoning	
Jack Marell	City of Bonifay	JMarell@embarqmail.com
Tom Jenkins	Planning Committee	realtortomjenkins@att.net
Tony	Planning Committee	triplewoodshop@att.net
Carlton Treadwell	Planning Committee	
Raymon Thomas	Holmes Co Development Commission	hcdc.thomas@gmail.com
Jim Town	Washington County	Jim_Town@bellsouth.net
Mike DeRuntz	Washington Co Planning	mderuntz@washingtonfl.com
Richard Woodham	City of Bonifay	
Wendel Whitehurst	Holmes County	hcc@holmescountyfl.org
Susan Estes	Opportunity Florida	susane@opportunityflorida.com

Ted Everett called the meeting to order and asked the group to introduce themselves. He gave the group a quick update on the purpose of the committee. Everett has spoken to Holmes & Washington County commissions about the possibility of Holmes County and the City of Bonifay extending water/sewer into Washington County as far as the Douglas Ferry intersection. Washington County does not have the capacity to put water/sewer there and no capacity to do so. The tax base needs to be increased and this is one way to help it happen as well as to create jobs.

This committee will not actually do the project but will give Holmes County and Bonifay 'play-book' that is, a way to do so. The information will show costs, grants needed for the project as well as planning and zoning to ensure the land there is ready for development. Highway 79 traffic should increase once the widening is completed.

Wendell Whitehurst was in agreement with Everett. Highway 79 will eventually be four-lanes all the way to the Alabama state line. He noted that FDOT had committed \$5 million to the study to determine the exact route.

Jim Town did a preliminary study of the area and passed out information on the various costs, funding alternatives, traffic analysis and other considerations for the project. By putting the information in a model, they were able to come up with a projection of the anticipated revenues of a large convenience store/truck stop at Hwy 79 & I-10.

>>To anchor the water/sewer line

>>Large number of homes already there within a 3 mile radius, with little shopping available between there and Bonifay.

>>The route to the beach will increase traffic as will the segment to Alabama

>>Total for sewer/water for two miles (per Cliff Knauer updated figures) is nearly \$2 million.

>>Will need an outside consultant to give recommendations on how to set up funding entity. There are several ways to create a self-funding entity under Florida law

>>Please see Handout: Notes – HCWC Opportunity Authority

>>Will also need studies on commercial development

>>Entity will need legal representation, also in the event of bonding

>>Total cost estimate today for everything would be: \$2,298,234. To pay this back over 30 years/3% with a government backed bond would be about \$51,000 per million. The debt service on the package would be \$116,000/year.

>>Much of the funding will be available via grants which will reduce debt.

>>With the right set-up, the project could be self-supporting from the beginning

>>There would also be an ad-valorem tax opportunity for Holmes County by building of a spec building

Various Entity Set-Ups (Please see attached notes for details)

>>Special Districts

>>Community Development Districts

>>Municipal Services Taxing Units

>>Tax Increment Finance

Overlay Concept on land-use would be changed on both of the county comprehensive plans. The county would create a Commercial Intent Overlay. Washington County will also need to update their land-use maps as a part of the overlay concept.

Washington County has already begun the process and will meet with landowners this will affect. This would not change the present zoning for those landowners already in the area but would make it easier for commercial development later on should they sell or wish to create a business on their property. Holmes County and the city of Bonifay are trying to determine whether they want to be involved in this project. These meetings are to educate those on the committee as well as the county and cities involved.

There will be no change in property taxes for the property owners unless they elect to have their land considered as commercial. If they elect for the land to remain non-commercial, their property taxes will remain the same. Landowners will retain all their rights. They will not need to change the zoning for their property unless they wish to do so.

It is important to plan for the development of the site, prior to FDOT putting in all the roadway. By planning ahead, FDOT can leave space for the utilities that will be needed for the project--doing the planning ahead of time will save time and money.

Ted Everett told the group that the time-frame for the "play-book" would take at least one year—including the land-use changes and comp plan changes. After that, the project would take another two to three years. It is important to be oriented to exactly where the growth of the corridor will occur.

Susan Estes
Opportunity Florida