

**MINUTES OF THE  
COASTAL REGIONAL COMMISSION COUNCIL  
January 10, 2024  
Richmond Hill City Center, Richmond Hill, GA  
10:00 A.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Ken Lee called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Invocation was provided by Mr. Walter Gibson, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ken Lee, Rosa Romeo, Rebecca Boston, Dan Coty, Sammy Tostensen, Walter Gibson, Carter Infinger, Tammy Goober, Reggie Loper, Shaw McVeigh, Preston Dees, Tom Ratcliffe, Richard Hayes, Jones Hooks, Steven Asplund, Anthony Simmons, Steve Scholar, Donald Lovette, Kate Karwacki, Karl Riles, and Lance Sabbe.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jonathan McCollar, Jason Coley, Craig Root, Chester Ellis, Chris Blaine, Tanet Myers, Hugh Hodge, Allen Amason, Lannie Brant, Mary Hamilton, Sabrina Kent, Kristy Chance, Van Johnson, Robert Parker, William Bland, Jr, and Chap Bennett.

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dorothy Glisson, Screven County and Chris Fletcher, Fort Stewart

**GUESTS:** Matthew Kent, Bryan County; Jennifer Fordham, DCA; Sonny Seals and Sandra Overstreet, Historic Rural Churches, and Allen Brown, Hinesville.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Allen Burns, Executive Director; Dionne Lovett, Assistant Executive Director; Lena Geiger, Finance Director; Kameron Dickerson, Senior Fiscal Analyst; Barry James, Transportation Director; Wincy Poon, GIS Manager; Pamela Rogers, Aging Services Director; Chrishonda Grant, HR Transit Coordinator; and, Colletta Harper, Administrative Services Director/HR.

**CRC STAFF RECOGNITION:** Executive Director Allen Burns presented Colletta Harper, Administrative Services Director/HR, a plaque and pelican statue for her 40 years of service.

**PRESENTATION OF OUTGOING COUNCIL MEMBER PLAQUE:** Ms. Julie Martin was out of town and unable to attend. CRC staff will make sure she receives the plaque.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion was made to approve the November 8, 2023, meeting minutes.

**Motion:** Walter Gibson  
**Second:** Chairman Carter Infinger  
**Vote:** Unanimous

**PRESENTATION:**

**Bryan County Growth Update:** *Due to Chairman Carter having a work obligation at 11:00 a.m., his presentation was moved up on the Agenda.* Bryan County Chairman Carter Infinger provided a PowerPoint update on the growth occurring with the Hyundai Metaplant. *(See attachment 1, attached herein and made a part of these minutes).* In 2015, Bryan, Bulloch, Chatham, Effingham formed the Joint Development Authority (JDA). In 2021, the megasite property was purchased, zoned, and they got it ready to go. A year later, Hyundai came to them, an official announcement was made in May, and a groundbreaking was held in October. Chairman Carter stated they missed two other opportunities and learned from their shortfalls to make sure it didn't happen again. He encouraged everyone to make sure their counties are ready when the suppliers come; there will be 28, and 14 have already made location decisions. There are plenty of jobs coming that can be spread throughout the region if a county is ready for them – be proactive and not reactive. Four thousand people are working every day to build the plant and construction is happening at a rapid pace. Blue pipe along I-16

will carry the wastewater to Savannah for treatment while their treatment center is being built, and then it will reverse back to them. In regard to water, Bryan County is in a yellow zone and Bulloch County is in a green zone. The JDA is working with the EPD, and they changed four well sites in the green zone to make sure there were no negative impacts, and EPD will continue to monitor. Chairman Carter discussed transportation improvements, and the workforce that will be needed. Hyundai jobs will start at \$60,000 and students who graduate and aren't going to college can go through their training and make a good salary. He also noted that if the electric vehicle sales don't take off as anticipated, the plant can be converted to combustible engine production. A brief Q & A followed his presentation.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS**

**APPROVAL OF 2023 CEDS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT:** *(See Attachment 2, attached herein and made a part of these minutes.)* Aaron Carpenter, Planning & Gov't Services Director stated that EDA provides funds to Economic Development Districts (EDD). The CRC serves as the region's EDD and is required to provide an annual update. A link to the report was provided in the Planning Report. A motion was made to approve the 2023 CEDS Annual Performance Report for submittal to EDA.

**Motion:** Dan Coty  
**Second:** Commissioner Lance Sabbe  
**Vote:** Unanimous

**APPROVAL OF UPDATES TO THE CRC EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK:** *(See Attachment 3, attached herein and made a part of these minutes.)* Shaw McVeigh made a motion to approve. Interim Executive Director Dionne Lovett referred members to the handout and briefly reviewed the updates. Ms. Rebecca Boston noted that on page 26 A, "up to" should be added before an additional fourteen (14) weeks. Mr. McVeigh's motion was amended to include the change.

**Motion:** Shaw McVeigh  
**Second:** Walter Gibson  
**Vote:** Unanimous

**APPROVAL OF DISCLOSURE OF 2023 CRC EMPLOYEE BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS:** *(See Attachment 4, attached herein and made a part of these minutes.)* Interim Executive Director Lovett explained this is our annual disclosure that we do each year per DCA's requirements. A motion was made to approve the Transactions as presented.

**Motion:** Shaw McVeigh  
**Second:** Commissioner Rosa Romeo  
**Vote:** Unanimous

## **PRESENTATION**

**Historic Rural Churches:** Mr. Sonny Seals stated that Historic Rural Churches has documented 400 churches in 120 counties in Georgia. A book was written and is in the 4<sup>th</sup> printing, they've had a series on PBS, and they have a website. He stated the next step is to create a Historic Rural Church Trail through Regions 5, 7 and 12, using Georgia's history to promote education, historic tourism, and rural economic development. Historic churches are those constructed prior to 1900. The vision is for a digital strategy providing audio history and virtual tours of each church since most are locked. Senators Burns and Hickman will be introducing legislation to establish a Historic Rural Church Trail Association (HRCTA). The Association would be located in the CSRA region. The plan is to hire a full-time project director who will assist with raising funds and manage the HRCTA implementation. The Association structure would include the project director, Region 5, 7, and 12 Regional Commissions, Explore Georgia Tourism, and at-large members. A brief Q & A followed his

presentation. He stated that as information becomes available, he will forward it to the CRC's Planning Director Aaron Carpenter to forward to everyone.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Project Status Reports** - *(See Attachments 5, 6, 7, and 8 attached herein and made a part of these minutes.)* Chairman Lee questioned the expense for vehicle insurance. Finance Director Lena Geiger explained that when we renewed in September, we paid it all up front to save \$10,000, so you do see a larger amount at one time.

**CADDA Report:** *(See Attachment 9, attached herein and made a part of these minutes.)* There were no questions regarding the report.

## **INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Welcomed new council members – Mayor Karl Riles, Hinesville, and Brunswick City Commissioner Lance Sabbe. Congratulated Kate Karwacki as the new Chairman for McIntosh County.
- HVAC Update – RFP issued in November, one bid received from our current vendor for \$170,000, with a three-year warranty. There have been shipping delays on the unit; will speak with vendor this afternoon for installation update. We will not pay them until after installation and we see that it is running well. The vendor will submit a rebate application to GA Power on the CRC's behalf. Also, have a phone call with Senator Ossoff tomorrow to review funding opportunities as part of the infrastructure bill and Inflation Reduction Act, which may offer us direct pay incentives in lieu of tax credits.
- Aging services have engaged interests by health insurance agencies due to an RFP released from DCH which requires vendors/agencies to have a meaningful partnership with AAA's in order to submit a bid. Aging has a new contract with Humana for \$50k to expand the evidence-based program CAPABLE. They will receive an additional \$50K if they actually win the bid. DHS has assured us they support this initiative.
- Mid-year annual review with Division of Aging Services tomorrow. DAS will assess the current year's progress to date, as well as allow CRC to provide updates on programming and budget concerns.
- Memory Assessment Clinic – one now located in Savannah - Savannah Neurology Specialists. Must be referred by a primary physician. Assess for memory loss/dementia. The assessment/screening is free, but follow-up is subject to cost (co-pay).
- AFLAC and 401k representatives were at the office in November for open enrollment.
- Planning & GIS - new contract with Sanborn (pursuant to their contract with DCA) for orthoimagery - \$304,222. Will be conducted January 10 – February 25. Available 6 months after acquisition. 6" resolution. Approx 2,600 sq miles. Used for addressing and building footprints. Glynn, Liberty, Long, and McIntosh counties. Ft. Stewart, Skidaway, DNR, and Sapelo.
- Planning & Zoning 101 and 102 training – conducted by Carl Vinson Institute. RH City Center Feb 20th and 21st. Deadline to register is Feb 7<sup>th</sup> and information can be found on our website.
- Terry Louk, CADDA CEO, advised they are updating their Five-Year RLF plan and will submit a request to EDA to include Screven County in their service area. This is possible because of defederalization. Not sure when approval (if any) may be granted.

- Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) – Pre-application process in December. Approved 30 of 82 projects in GA to advance and submit a full application. Six projects are in the CRC region. The SCRC Program Manager visited the region last week to do site visits for the projects; Jennifer Fordham attended as well. Anticipated that approximately half the projects will actually be funded.
- Approval of the Annual Aging Services Area Plan will be at the February meeting.
- Transportation Analysis is provided as part of the Finance update. Expecting amendment from DHS for additional funds for trips. Shaw McVeigh commended Kameron for the excellent letter and analysis. He stated the few lines that caught his attention were DHS revenue, membership dues, operating, and farebox revenue. He stated he spoke with the Liberty County Finance Director, and they are getting 3%; his calculation on ours is 1% and maybe that is an area we can look at. Fringe benefits and fuel costs are dramatically high, which we all know. He continues to hope that by publishing this analysis monthly, we can see where there are variations, and hopefully come to some conclusion about how we can manage this better and make it work for everyone throughout the CRC, and involve others, including politicians to help us make decisions. He noted the vast majority of revenue comes from government agencies, which is volatile and gets us in trouble sometimes.
- Allen's retirement celebration – March 13<sup>th</sup> immediately following the Council meeting. Drop-in style from Noon to 2:00 p.m.; heavy hors d'oeuvres/appetizers. Save the dates will go out this month.
- Annual Reports were mailed. If you have not received your Christmas gift today, please see Colletta.
- The CRC Office will be closed on Monday for MLK day.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** *(See Attachment 10, attached herein and made a part of these minutes)* A motion was made to go into Executive Session at 11:39 a.m. to discuss or deliberate upon the appointment, employment compensation, hiring, disciplinary action, dismissal, periodic evaluation or rating of a government officer or employee.

**Motion:** Steven Asplund  
**Second:** Commissioner Lance Sabbe  
**Vote:** Unanimous

**MEETING RECONVENED at 12:04 p.m.:** A motion was made to close the application process and authorize the Transition Committee to interview the two recommended candidates for the Executive Director position on January 17<sup>th</sup>, and to bring a recommendation for the hiring of an Executive Director to the Council at the February meeting.

**Motion:** Dan Coty  
**Second:** Chairman Donald Lovette  
**Vote:** Unanimous

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m., with lunch following.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be on February 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the Richmond Hill City Center.