

MINUTES

FULL BOARD MEETING
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS CONFERENCE ROOM
FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2016 – 10:30 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dennis Claramunt, Neil Smith, Joe Dill, Ted Mattison, Francis Crowder, Mack Durham, Cindy Wilson, Ed Elliott, Rufus Foster, Henry Jolly, David Cauthen, Grady Butler, Butch Kirven, Don Godbey, Lillian Flemming, Gaye Sprague, Willis Meadows, Brandy Amidon, Ernest Riley, Bob Winchester, Reg Dexter, Bill Brockington, Neil Smith, Margaret Thompson, Neal Collins, Mike Forrester, Elbert Tillerson, Jane Hall, and Loretta Smith.

GUESTS PRESENT:

Joel Dill; Jill Burroughs, Regional Director, Greenville Area Small Business Development Center; Mary Hipp, Chair, and Ryan Smith, Board Member, Upstate Food Hub; Mike McGirr, Founder, Feed and Seed; and Laura Turner, Sen. Lindsey Graham's Office.

STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Pelissier, Don Zimmer, Doug Burns, Chip Bentley, Dirk Reis, David Shellhorse, Lance Estep, and Debbie Courson.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Claramunt. The invocation was offered by Mr. Tillerson. On motion by Mr. Godbey, seconded by Mr. Brockington, the minutes of the April 22, 2016, meeting was unanimously approved with two corrections. Mr. Elbert Tillerson and Mr. Brockington were present.

Upstate Food Hub Initiative to Support Local Farmers

Mr. McGirr, Upstate Food Hub, gave a presentation on their initiative to support local farmers. He stated the small scale nature of farming in the Upstate makes it challenging for farmers to develop products on a scale large enough to attract commercial and institutional buyers. The purpose of the Food Hub is to overcome this challenge by managing the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of food products primarily from local regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demands. The market place is a new 40,000 sq. ft. facility that will be called “The Commons”. One new tenant will be Feed & Seed, a nonprofit group established to create a food distribution system for regional farmers, which will occupy 12,000 sq. ft.

Mr. McGirr, founder of the Feed and Seed, stated that the space will feature outdoor demonstrations gardens, retail space for the public, a commercial kitchen, butchery, and food processing. Other tenants include Community Tap Trailside, The Parker Group, Ridgeline Construction, Outdoor Sports Marketing, and Carolina Triathlon.

Mr. McGirr also stated that two city-owned buildings near the property are expected to be torn down to create green space for gardens and public use, and a connector to the Swamp Rabbit Trail is planned.

Greenville Area Small Business Development Center

Ms. Burroughs, Regional Director, of the Greenville Area SBDC, stated that the Greenville Area SBDC is a valuable economic development resource in our region. She stated that for more than 30 years, entrepreneurs have turned to South Carolina Small Business Development Centers (SCSBDC) for help expanding an existing business or starting a new enterprise. Through free consulting, low-cost seminars and links to resources, the SC SBDC helps startups and makes existing businesses thrive. The SC SBDC consultants work with companies in all stages of development – from a person with an innovative product but no idea how to move forward, to the owner of a company looking to capture new markets. The SC SBDCs offer free, confidential consulting on financing, marketing, employee management, importing and exporting, technology, market expansion, bookkeeping, manufacturing, government procurement and nuclear industry opportunities. There are also programs for veteran and minority-owned businesses. She stated that the SC SBDC programs are constantly evolving to meet the needs of an ever-changing economy, providing much needed services to South Carolina’s small business community.

Appalachian Region Long Range Plan Transportation Update

Mr. Estep stated that the draft update of the 2016–2040 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan has been completed. He briefly gave an overview of the key issues and challenges in the rural transportation system and a summary of projects being proposed for inclusion in the plan to date. Staff will bring the completed Long Range Plan to the Board for approval at its June meeting.

2016 South Carolina Legislative Update

Mr. Burns provided an update on activities of the South Carolina General Assembly, with emphasis on items of interest to local governments, which included: roads bill, ethics, and solar power. He stated that a new abortion bill was passed and is on the Governor’s desk for signature.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon

Chairman

THE SOUTH CAROLINA APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS HAS
COMPLIED WITH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IN SCHEDULING AND
CONDUCTING THIS MEETING.