

## **Outer Banks Transportation Task Force**

### Minutes of the meeting on Aug. 26, 2004, Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce

Members present: Anna Sadler, Carl Classen, Gary McGee, Cheryl Byrd, Kevin Schwartz, Jody Crosswhite, Debbie Moore, Gwen Cruickshanks, Dan Scanlon, Willo Winterling, Lori London, Chris Layton, Sammy Moore, Buck Thornton. County/Chamber staff: Chuck Poe, Jeff Itell, Norma Mills, John Bone. Guests: Jud Lawrie, David Stein, Jerry Jennings, Carolyn McCormick.

Called to order at 9:00 by Chairman J. Crosswhite.

1. Introductions of members and guests -- J. Crosswhite introduced first-time attendees and J. Lawrie and D. Stein from NCSU.

2. Approval of minutes -- The July 22 minutes were inadvertently tabled.

3. NCSU Transportation Study Proposal -- J. Lawrie and S. Stein presented the proposal from the NCSU Institute for Transportation Research and Education, which had been redrafted based on the input from TTF members at the July 22 meeting. J. Lawrie discussed the context for the role of ITRE, as well as an overview of the tasks contained in the proposal.

D. Stein indicated that it was important for the issues the proposal dealt with to be talked through until there was broad public agreement so that elected officials had the backing to follow through on whatever recommendations it produced. He indicated ITRE's goal was to develop implementable short- and long-term solutions, not just a study that sat on a shelf.

There was extensive discussion about the proposal, its focus and getting it funded. C. McCormick asked what questions would be asked in a public survey? J. Lawrie responded that they would ask people about choke points in traffic, where they were coming from, going, how often, etc ... they needed to know the exact days, times and hours of the problems. C. McCormick questioned if that information was already available, and J. Jennings of DOT said that while they had traffic counts, they had never surveyed those in the traffic. C. McCormick pointed out that Visitor Bureau survey found that new visitors did not consider the traffic a problem, only those who visited year after year did. She indicated that they were to do a visitor survey, and questions about travel here could be added.

B. Thornton said that the major problem was too much compression of check-in days, and that the market was right for the rental industry to address that. A discussion of the check-in issue ensued, with B. Thornton concluding that it would only take a 10-20 percent change from Saturday levels to be effective. J. Crosswhite suggested that as part of the scope, ITRE could talk to various tourism industry groups about that and other issues.

C. Poe suggested the study could be phased, as its 14-month time frame and broad scope may frustrate those who have looked at the problem being studied so long with no solutions forthcoming. G. McGee suggested the TTF needed more DOT involvement since it would play such a big role in any likely solutions. J. Jennings said he would direct the TTF to the appropriate help in the Public Transportation Division. C. Classen said the study scope was a good integrated approach that needed to be done at once, rather than in phases. D. Scanlon said there had been enough studies, and that the focus needed to be on solutions and what to do with the traffic when

it got here. It was not good enough to wait until Nov. 2005 to have some solutions, and could the project not be compressed. C. Classen, D. Scanlon and G. McGee said they would have difficulty selling the proposal to their boards in its current, broad form that appeared to be heavy on data collection. C. McCormick also said it was too heavy in data collection and could not recommend it to her board for funding in its current form. J. Lawrie indicated that some solutions could be forthcoming in time for implementation for the 2005 tourism season. N. Mills said that for solutions to have any credibility and gain public support, there would have to be data collected to support them. W. Winterling said that something needed to be done in Corolla now.

D. Stein and J. Lawrie pointed out that the problem had a number of solutions, but they had to be implemented in an integrated concept or one solution could cause other problems. For instance, buses are nice, but useless if they are in the same traffic jam with everyone else. The project could not be focused too narrowly. Transportation issues could not be solved just by looking at transportation. People's behavior needed to be studied as did land use issues. There had to be a broad approach to find the right, complementary set of solutions. The proposal could be made cleaner to understand, and solutions could be offered sooner than 14 months.

J. Crosswhite asked if each represented entity would e-mail him with recommendations for refocusing the proposal. C. Classen suggested rewording the two-page introduction to accomplish that. N. Mills suggested refocusing the scope to the movement of people within the Corolla/Dare Outer Banks Corridor. ITRE representatives indicated they were willing to refocus the proposal, and urged that the group not abandon the quest, even if it did not use ITRE as the issues faced here were enormous.

J. Crosswhite asked that the TTF reconvene at 9 a.m. Sept. 9 at the Chamber office to consider a reconfigured proposal.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned until Sept. 9.