

NOTE:

The following minutes contain links that enable you to listen to the audio for each item.

To listen to the audio of an item in the minutes, click on the blue highlighted date, page number and time that precedes each item.

**MINUTES OF MEETING
ST. JOHNS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
JULY 27, 2005 - 5:30 P.M.**

Proceedings of a special meeting of the Board of County Commissioners, held in the auditorium at the County Administration Building, 4020 Lewis Speedway (County Road 16-A) and US 1 North, St. Augustine, Florida.

Present were: Bruce A. Maguire, District 4, Chairman
 James Bryant, District 5, Vice Chairman
 Karen R. Stern, District 2
 Ben Rich, District 3
 Ben W. Adams Jr., County Administrator
 Dan Bosanko, County Attorney
 Robin Platt, Deputy Clerk

Proof of publication for a special meeting of the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners was received, having been published in *The St. Augustine Record* on July 8, 2005.

(07/27/05 - 1 - 5:36 p.m.)

Maguire called the meeting to order and established guidelines for the meeting and public comment.

(07/27/05 - 1 - 5:38 p.m.)

ROLL CALL

Maguire stated for the record that all commissioners were present, with the exception of Stevenson; and pointed out that Representative Dick Kravitz was present.

(07/27/05 - 1 - 5:40 p.m.)

1. ST. JOHNS RIVER CROSSING - THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT) IS CONDUCTING A PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL (PD&E) STUDY OF VARIOUS ALTERNATIVE CORRIDORS FOR A NEW ST. JOHNS RIVER BRIDGE CROSSING CONNECTING CLAY COUNTY AND ST. JOHNS COUNTY. THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE PD&E STUDY IDENTIFIED FIVE ALTERNATIVE CORRIDORS. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE STUDY, TWO OF THE FIVE ALTERNATIVES HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED AND ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE IS BEING ADDED FOR THE SECOND PHASE OF THE PD&E STUDY. THE CORRIDORS SELECTED FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO AS THE PURPLE, BROWN, AND PINK CORRIDORS. THE PURPLE CORRIDOR WOULD PROVIDE FOR A NEW BRIDGE CROSSING AT THE POPO POINT LOCATION AND CONNECT TO SR 9B, WHILE THE BROWN CORRIDOR CROSSES THE ST. JOHNS RIVER AT THE EXISTING SHANDS BRIDGE LOCATION AND CONNECTS TO SR 9B, AND THE PINK CORRIDOR CROSSES THE ST. JOHNS RIVER AT THE EXISTING SHANDS BRIDGE AND CONNECTS DIRECTLY TO I-95. A VARIATION OF THE PURPLE CORRIDOR, CROSSING AT POPO POINT AND PROVIDING FOR A DIRECT CONNECTION TO I-95, IS BEING ADDED FOR THE SECOND PHASE OF THE STUDY. IN ADDITION, A MODIFIED PINK CORRIDOR HAS ALSO BEEN IDENTIFIED THAT WOULD CROSS THE ST. JOHNS RIVER NEAR THE OLD SHANDS BRIDGE LOCATION, JUST SOUTH

OF THE SR 13/CR 16A INTERSECTION. THIS ALTERNATIVE IS NOT CURRENTLY AMONG THE CORRIDORS BEING CONSIDERED BY FDOT IN THE PD&E STUDY

Scott Clem, Assistant County Administrator, gave an overview of the issues involved with establishing a corridor for a possible new river crossing. He explained that the Florida Department of Transportation was conducting a PD&E study, and exhibited a PowerPoint presentation on the alternatives included in the study. (5:48 p.m.) Stevenson entered the meeting. Clem stated that travel demand and traffic diversion should be the overwhelming factors for the basis for a new corridor. He discussed capacity on CR 210 and recommended that the County select a new corridor. Clem further discussed hurricane and/or emergency evacuation, economic development, and the MPO's long-range transportation plan; and he reviewed each proposed route: purple, brown, pink, modified pink, black and the no build option. He gave a history of the Shands Bridge, reviewed the developments along the various corridors, discussed the Northwest Sector Plan, and possible actions open to the Board.

(6:19 p.m.) Maguire questioned when construction could begin on a new bridge; Clem stated possibly 2030, depending upon the availability of funding. Maguire stated that if there were a vote on the pink or modified pink corridor, he would have to recuse himself, as his family owned property along those corridors.

Public Comment:

(6:25 p.m.) Kevin Owens, 5440 Riverwood Rd. N., supported building a bridge between the current Shands Bridge and the Buckman Bridge.

(6:28 p.m.) Carrie Pack, 9950 Shands Pier Rd., did not support the modified pink route, but did not feel that the no build option was a viable option.

(6:32 p.m.) Leslie Miedema, 208 Belmont Dr., addressed the traffic on CR 210 and asked for details on the black route.

(6:33 p.m.) Sandi Carpenter, 604 Pineland Lane, President of the St. Johns Citizens for Sound Improvement and President of the St. Johns CSI Political Action Committee, supported the modified pink route.

(6:39 p.m.) Marilyn Doss, 5125 SR 13 N., did not support the pink route and submitted letters she had written to "all concerned parties" and the DOT. She supported the purple route.

(6:42 p.m.) Rodney Bodway, 1893 Village Glen Dr., supported the original pink route, as it was a more direct route to I-95.

(6:44 p.m.) Nick Meiszer, 252 Redfish Creek Dr., speaking on behalf of the Orangedale Community Assoc., supported a new bridge north of Orangedale.

(6:49 p.m.) Steve Conger, 8431 Hardwood Landing Rd., discussed the environmental impacts of the proposed corridors, and stated that it would be premature to vote on anything tonight without the black route being presented.

(6:51 p.m.) Don Girvan, 5417 Riverwood Rd., stated that a new bridge was definitely needed, and suggested looking at placing the bridge much further south.

(6:54 p.m.) Jade Brown, 1897 Village Glen Dr., supported any option that was north of Orangedale. He displayed a map comparing the pink and modified pink routes and he said that he supported the original pink option.

(6:57 p.m.) George Boatwright, 9915 Shands Pier Rd., supported the purple or the original pink corridor.

(6:59 p.m.) Phyllis Abbatiello, 1133 River Birch Rd., displayed a comparison of the purple and pink routes, and stated her and the St. Johns County Community Coalition's support for the pink option (original or modified).

(7:06 p.m.) Hartzell Smith, 8642 Ranchwood Lane, supported the no build option, or the Po Po Point (purple) option, in lieu of the no build option.

(7:09 p.m.) Marc Sokolay, 8461 Hardwood Landing Rd., suggested other options to building a new bridge, i.e. widening the existing bridge and improving local roads.

(7:10 p.m.) Nicholas Morris, 5661 Crosswinds Ct., President of the Orangedale Community Assoc., suggested that the bridge be built north of Orangedale, or that the no build option be employed.

(7:17 p.m.) Louise Thrower, 288 Orange Ave., commented that none of the options reduced the trip count for the Buckman Bridge and she displayed various exhibits to support her position for a new southern "red" route. She also supported the no build option, a more southerly route or the widening of the existing Shands Bridge with an east/west connection to I-95.

(7:26 p.m.) Theo Johns, 5155 SR 13, asked the Board to rely on the expert analysis that was done by the DOT when making its decision. He overwhelmingly supported the purple route, or else the original pink corridor.

(7:32 p.m.) Tom Runck, 4837 Nahane Way, speaking for the Florida Trucking Assoc., supported the pink route because it made the most sense for the trucking industry, as it would connect the major highways.

(7:34 p.m.) Jan Morsch, 2046 River Oaks Dr., spoke on the offers to donate land and "backroom deals."

(7:38 p.m.) Phil Wyrick, 3451 Babiche St., stated that the purple route seemed to protect Clay County's interest more than St. Johns County's interest: He supported the original pink route, with a slight adjustment.

The meeting recessed at 7:41 p.m., and reconvened at 7:49 p.m.

(7:50 p.m.) Clem, responding to questions raised during public comment, stated that at the time he had no information on the black route from the DOT. He gave the web address to get information and updates on the progress of the studies: sjrbridge.com. He commented that the Federal Highway Administration would not approve a project that required the use of public parks or recreation, wildlife refuges or historic sites, unless there was no other feasible alternative, and that the impact would have to be minimized through planning.

(7:55 p.m.) Bryant suggested waiting to make a decision until the black corridor was set. Clem reported that the black route would not be identified until sometime in September. Rich agreed that it would be best to wait to have all of the options available

before making a decision. Maguire agreed, but stated that he had heard rumors that the black route was not seriously being considered. (8:00 p.m.) Stern said that she too had heard those rumors, but that she was ready to state her support for a corridor. Stevenson addressed the criteria for having any new route; discussion ensued on the various routes.

(8:14 p.m.) Stern stated her support for the modified pink route. (8:15 p.m.) Stevenson stated that the "no build" option was not a reasonable option, and that she supported a combination of the two pink routes.

(8:18 p.m.) Maguire questioned whether the Board needed to make a motion to state its position, or if a consensus would suffice. Dan Bosanko, County Attorney, recommended making a motion.

(8:21 p.m.) Rich supported the "no build" option, and polled the audience with various questions. Bryant stated that it was the responsibility of the Board to make these difficult decisions, and that whether land was donated by developers or paid for development would occur, and that the "no build" option would be irresponsible.

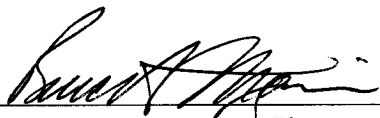
(8:30 p.m.) Stevenson commented that the county was drowning in traffic and that it was in the long-term best interest of the county to encourage the DOT to choose an outer beltway corridor. Bryant addressed the Corp. of Engineers not issuing permits in a timely manner and stated his support for the modified pink corridor.

(8:34 p.m.) **Motion by Bryant, seconded by Stern, to support the modified pink option.** Maguire recused himself from the vote, discussed criteria, said he would not support any option that had a 9-B connection, and stated his support for the modified pink option. Discussion ensued on the Northwest Sector Plan. (8:43 p.m.) **The motion failed 2/2, with Rich and Stevenson opposed and Maguire recused from the vote.**

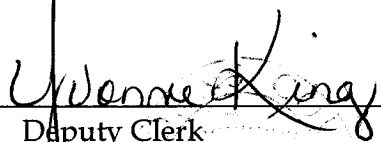
(8:44 p.m.) **Motion by Rich, seconded by Stern, carried 5/0, to adjourn the meeting.**

Approved September 6, 2005

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: 
Bruce A. Maguire, Chairman

ATTEST: CHERYL STRICKLAND, CLERK

By: 
Deputy Clerk