



Small Cities Council Meeting Summary

Wednesday, May 26, 2021 | 9:00 AM

Jacksonville Community Center

Approved July 28, 2021

Meeting recording may be viewed at

<https://www.facebook.com/56041648536/videos/1125750981240559>

SCC Members Attending:

- | | |
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| 1. Mayor Sammy Hartwick, President | City of Greenbrier |
| 2. Mayor Mike Kemp, Vice President | City of Shannon Hills |
| 3. Mayor Bernie Chamberlain | City of Austin |
| 4. Mayor Charles Gastineau | City of Ward |
| 5. Mayor Sam Higdon | City of Guy |
| 6. Mayor Terry Mizer | City of Wrightsville |
| 7. Mayor Trae Reed + Mr. Jeremy Gosdin | City of Lonoke |
| 8. Mayor Terry Don Robinson | City of Wooster |

Metroplan Staff:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 9. Ms. Bernadette Rhodes | Community Planner |
| 10. Ms. La'Keshia Stewart | Planner/Public Outreach |
| 11. Mr. Tab Townsell | Executive Director |

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Mayor Hartwick called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. He welcomed the attendees and asked Ms. Rhodes to proceed with the agenda.

2. Introductions and Announcements

The attendees shared the following announcements.

Greenbrier: Mayor Hartwick shared that the city's sidewalk project was progressing and was awaiting one more signature on a right-of-way easement.

Ward: Mayor Gastineau summarized 5 projects taking place in Ward. The 319/367 intersection improvements, which will provide Ward with its first traffic light. 6 streets are being overlaid through the State Street Aid program. ARDOT is overlaying Hwy. 319 from Hwy. 367 to Faulkner County line. The City is moving 19 houses off a sewer vacuum system to a gravity flow system with grant funding. A 2015 sidewalk project is scheduled to start construction in mid-July. Sidewalks will be a continuation of the Safe Routes to School project

connecting existing sidewalks and leading from main highway into park. The City applied for grant from Arkansas Parks and Tourism to build new concession stand in park. The mayor cited high engineering fees for projects and advised the City had put out a new RFQ for engineering services. Mayor Reed concurred that cities can benefit from advertising a new RFQ for design and engineering firms to compare pricing.

Shannon Hills: Mayor Kemp shared that the city is working on creating an east-west sidewalk route across town using primarily Metroplan funding. Awaiting ARDOT approval to start advertising the construction bid for Phase I. The Metroplan-funded intersection project at Vimy Ridge and County Line Road was just completed. Safe Routes to School sidewalk project is at approx. 60% completion. Working on two other grant-funded sidewalk projects. The city's overall goal is to connect the city to the Southwest Trail and create amenities for SW Trail users. City has purchased two tracts of land adjacent to Trail. The mayor addressed South Alexander Road, which is the southern continuation of Hwy. 111 after it crosses into Shannon Hills' city limits. Residents are limited on that stretch and road maintenance presents a challenge. Engineers are working on design for bridge replacement on Shannon Hills Drive to increase its functionality and weight limit. Applying for park grant for new amenities, including disc golf.

Lonoke: Mayor Reed introduced Mr. Jeremy Gosdin, Lonoke's new Community Development Director and architect by trade. Mr. Gosdin is tasked with guiding the planning and permitting process as well as code enforcement and animal control.

Guy: Mayor Higdon expressed admiration of the projects occurring in other cities and concurred with other mayors regarding the barriers posed by high engineering costs.

Wrightsville: Mayor Mizer shared that several streets were approved for overlays through the Street Aid program, including Gannaway Rd (which runs parallel to the railroad), Zip Ln, and others. The city is working with the Arkansas Municipal League on learning how to spend American Rescue Plan money. The city held a COVID vaccination clinic a couple of weeks ago and vaccinated over 100 people. The city is also conducting food distributions through a grant from the Black Mayors Association.

Austin: Mayor Chamberlain is working on sewer upgrades. An ordinance to raise sewer rates is in its third reading. The water tower is being repainted and streets are being overlaid.

Wooster: Mayor Robinson stated that construction on Phase 2 of Church Street is finishing up – sod is being laid and the road is awaiting striping. Greenbrier city sewer is being brought into Wooster via an 81-pump low pressure sewer system. The City is awaiting Department of Health approval to continue laying the main trunk line. The pipe-laying process is about 50% complete. 2 new pump stations have been ordered. A 42-home subdivision waiting to hook up to sewer, as is an 18-house subdivision on Church Circle. The City installed pressure-reducing valve (PRV) upgrades and iHydrants, which monitor water use. Each development is required to purchase one iHydrant for every 5 homes being constructed. The City may install

the iHydrants wherever they wish. The mayor recommends the monitors to collect data and learn about system. Between Greenbrier and Wooster's water service district, over 1,000 residential lots are being developed, which will all be in the Greenbrier School District.

3. Summary of Previous Meeting

The summary of the March 24, 2021 meeting was previously emailed to the Council. Ms. Rhodes asked for comments or corrections. There were none.

MOTION by Mayor Gastineau, **SECONDED** by Mayor Reed, to approve the summary of the March 24, 2021 meeting as presented.

PASSED

4. Community Spotlight – City of Lonoke

Mayor Reed shared several of Lonoke's recent projects and accomplishments. Images are available in this meeting's PowerPoint presentation.

Sidewalks

- The City has mapped out needed pedestrian connections to its schools and prioritized sidewalk construction.
- 6,000-7,000 feet of new sidewalk was completed approx. 7 months ago and has been utilized heavily by walkers, bikers, and dog walkers. The sidewalks are 5' wide and buffered from the street. They have enhanced Lonoke's functional grid system.
- 1,700 additional feet of sidewalk construction has been approved for Metroplan funding and the city has plans to add more sidewalks to connect the rest of the city to the school system.

Master Planning

- The City partnered with Mississippi State's Landscape Architecture department to create a "Connecting Lonoke" plan for parks, drainage, and sidewalks, which formed the foundation for Crafton-Tull's work on a bike-ped plan for the City.
- The bike-ped plan's goal is to create safe north-south and east-west routes.
- 6 Adopt-A-Charger electric charging stations have been installed downtown. Those parking spots required painting and maintenance and prompted a parking study.
- Crafton-Tull also recently completed a downtown parking study for Lonoke. Metroplan provided initial maps, and Mayor Reed marked parking spots on the map, estimating that there were 200-400 parking spaces downtown. In reality, there were 1,000 within 10 blocks (private and public).
- Options to improve parking efficiency downtown include back in, head out parking (which has safety and corner visibility benefits), changing to angled 90-degree parking, or adding more parallel parking.
- The mayor is continuing conversations with business owners and launching a public information campaign to get buy-in for future parking solutions.

- The City's goal is to create a special gathering space downtown, which is aided by the City's excellent downtown street grid.
- Mayor Reed mentioned that Highways 70 and 31 can become congested when I-40 backs up and traffic starts to flow through downtown.

Hwy. 31 Bridge Reconstruction

- The Hwy. 31 bridge across I-40 is scheduled for an update in April 2022.
- The City Council, Planning Commission, and local representatives sent a petition to ARDOT requesting sidewalks on both sides of the bridge.
- Crafton-Tull emphasized the need for bike access and brought up the idea of a shared-use path on the bridge.
- If ARDOT constructs the shared-use path, the City would need to cover the \$500-600k extra for the path (possibly through a TAP grant) and the project might be delayed until the end of 2022.
- The ultimate goal is to extend the path down Barnes St. along the bayou to downtown. This 1-mile project is estimated to cost \$2-2.5 million.
- The need for a bike-ped facility across the bridge is clear – Walmart and other retail/services are north of the interstate. People currently walk or use wheelchairs in the roadway. The current bridge has no shoulder or sidewalks.

Wayfinding

- Lonoke 2022, the City's volunteer corps, is working on a wayfinding project throughout town.
- The Street Department is replacing and detagging signs.
- Volunteers are repainting old concrete markers and artists are restoring the street lettering.

Mayor Gastineau volunteered to do July's Community Spotlight about Ward.

5. Metroplan Update

STBG

- Ms. Rhodes informed SCC members that Metroplan has an estimated \$16.8 million to award in its 2021 call for STBG projects.
- Funding proposals may be made in 1 of 5 tracts: 1) Municipal Street, 2) Rural Street, 3) Pedestrian-Bicycle Facility, 4) Jump Start, and 5) Alternative Tract.
- Metroplan can assist with maps, application review, and guidance on project selection.
- Letters of Intent due June 30th and applications are due July 30th, 2021 by 4:00 PM.
- Projects can be pre-engineered or engineering costs can be included in the project proposal.
- Mayor Reed clarified that cities pay 100% of invoices and receive an 80% reimbursement.
- Applications are scored according to a points rubric, which was shared with the SCC at its March meeting.

- Ms. Rhodes advised that the STBG Pedestrian-Bicycle Facility funding is targeted to create regional connections. Local ped-bike connections are good candidates for TAP funding, which will be released later this year.

County Caucuses

- Metroplan is convening county caucuses to solicit input from elected officials on potential projects to be included in ARDOT's Transportation Improvement Plan update.
- Pulaski County's caucus is taking place today at 10:00 AM in Metroplan's office.
- Lonoke County's caucus will be rescheduled in the near future.
- Saline County's caucus will take place tomorrow.
- Faulkner County's caucus was held two weeks ago.

Model Code

- Articles 1-4 of Metroplan's draft development ordinance, or model code, was included in each member's packet: 1) Authority and Purpose; 2) Establishment of Zones; 3) Uses; and 4) Development Standards.
- Two new zones have been added: Agricultural and Manufactured Home Residential.
- Mayor Robinson indicated that Wooster needs a PUD option (Planned Unit Development) in the model code.
- Mayor Reed asked if the model code required developers to install streetlights. Several mayors concurred that this was an important requirement, and suggested the code give developers a few options to choose from, ideally models that reduce light pollution.
- Ms. Rhodes asked mayors or key staff/commissioners to add comments to document.
- Ward and Austin requested a combined review meeting. Wooster indicated that a review meeting would be
- Lonoke is reviewing the code and gleaning elements for possible inclusion in its current Unified Development Ordinance.

Redistricting

- Census block data will be available in September. Redistricting will require a quick turnaround in time for Fall 2021 elections.
- Each ward must include roughly the same proportion of residents as every other ward. Each ward may be no more than 5% higher or lower than the mean.
- Cities that have had significant growth in one ward may be required to redistrict.
- Shannon Hills, Ward, Lonoke, Greenbrier, and Guy requested Metroplan's assistance with redistricting using the new 2020 Census data.
- Ms. Rhodes asked cities to provide Metroplan staff with their current Ward map on file at City Hall.

2022 Board Trip Timing

- Members indicated that late September/early October would be a good time for a board fact-finding trip.

6. American Rescue Plan Overview

- Ms. Rhodes provided an overview of American Rescue Plan funding opportunities and requirements, as outlined in the PowerPoint presentation.
- Mayor Kemp advised cities to send all their separate budgets to DFA (general fund, parks, water, fire, etc).
- Cities will receive approx. \$206 per person based on the 2019 American Community Survey population estimate.

7. Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Rhodes outlined future meeting dates:

- The next Small Cities Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 28, at 9:00 AM, location TBA.
- There will be no June model code work session. Instead, Ms. Rhodes will visit with first-round adopter cities individually.

8. Adjourn

MOTION to adjourn by Mayor Reed was **SECONDED** by Mayor Chamberlain.

Mayor Hartwick thanked members for their attendance. The Small Cities Council meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM.