

Minutes

JACKSON COUNTY SPLOST 5 CITIZEN'S REVIEW COMMITTEE

Nicholson Follow-up Meeting

July 17, 2015
10:00 a.m.

A: Call to Order:

Vice Chairman Elton Collins

Chairman Adam Pethel was away on business.

B Review City of Nicholson SPLOST 5 Expenditures:

Elton Collins began by giving an overview of the aerial map showing the James Maxwell Road are being broken down into four distinct sections. Section 1 is the "upper" section of the roadway referred to as both "Old James Maxwell Road" and the "driveway and parking pad area". Section 2 is a section that was jointly paved with the County and has been shown as a Nicholson city roadway that adjoins the realigned road section from Hwy 441. Section 3 was paved sometime previously by unknown parties and unknown funds. Section 4 remains gravel to the cul-de-sac and begins just after the dog kennel business.

Jackson County Finance Director Logan Propes reiterated that the committee's job was only to review areas relating to the use of SPLOST 5 funds even though there may be questionable spending on Section 3.

Elton Collins explained that the committee went out and reviewed the road(s). Ralph Brooks stated that he did not personally visit the road but reviewed the material. Collins and Propes then reviewed the map pertaining to section one and noted the measurements performed by County GIS. County Manager Kevin Poe stated that there is DOT right-of-way on the tax maps but not a deed to the city for the old road bed. Collins then proceeded to define the scope of the discussion by framing whether or not the paving was an appropriate use of SPLOST funds.

Tom Walden explained his opinion that none of the paving was appropriate in any of section 1 even in the abandoned roadbed section, particularly the cut through where the old Chicken House stood previously before being removed at some point.

Tony Beatty again asked about the scope of the expenditures to review and whether the committee has any authority over this matter. City of Commerce Finance Director James Wascher explained that the City of Nicholson ultimately has the legal level of control and it is there responsibility to first ensure the appropriate funding source before it reaches the review committee, not the other way around. The committee is just to review stated SPLOST expenditures thereafter.

Tony Beatty says that if there is existing right-of way then it is not private property in some portions in question. Poe says some of this is called "public platted streets" and ownerships are shown on the map by color code and by percentage. Beatty elaborated on his views of legitimately using abandoned right-of-way for public projects.

There was some discussion back and forth from all members as to whether the DOT right-of-way was a legitimize expense. It was noted that there were storage buildings are sitting on DOT and private property. Probes noted 2% is on private property, another 41% was DOT surplus where the north south chicken house was. The discussion then centered on the north-south cut through as it not being legitimate.

Vance Hollified then stated there was no other purpose for paving this abandoned right-of-way than to service the business and one house. Beatty thought that this was acceptable on the old roadbed but not the cut through section. Beatty wanted percentage split for the vote that Collins was working the discussion towards.

The discussion led by Collins shifted to the committee splitting the total paving cost as eligible and appropriate vs. ineligible and inappropriate based along the measured lines from the map. (42% appropriate vs 58% inappropriate as measured by County staff and then quantified by Chairman Adam Pethel as earlier relayed to Collins.)

Vance Hollified noted there was no signage on the road that was considered a public roadway by the City. Tom Walden noted Fire Dept. approved address signs at the entrances of the roadway/driveway along with advertising signs for the business.

Chairman Tom Crow noted that a parking lot was not a road and should not be considered a road. Collins agreed along with the committee members that the parking pad was not legitimate.

Ralph Brooks asked, "If the project had come to the committee beforehand, would the committee have approved the project as it stands today?" Collins said he doubted it. Crow then asked "Would this have been a priority project?" Peggy Kriegal stated each "owner" should pay for their own piece including DOT. James Wascher then elaborated on the road grading system which usually includes number of residents served.

Collins then asked for a motion for a vote on splitting the costs 42% eligible vs 58% ineligible as noted above. This is a recommendation to the BOC to take further action on.

Crow then interjected that DOT didn't pay for anything. Further discussion ensued about the other three sections. Section 2 tree removal was discussed as legitimate. Section 3 was obviously paved before sections 2 and 1 but from what source the committees were unable to determine, stated Propes.

Discussion then moved back to a call for a vote by Collins on a 42/58 split. Hollifield interjected to make a motion that 100% of the paving expense should be declared as ineligible for SPLOST 5. Tom Walden seconded the motion. Collins opened for discussion. Brooks asked, "what was the old road bed use?" It was discussed by several members that it is used as an entrance to a business and one residence but primarily for a business.

Collins called for the vote. Collins counted 5 in favor of the motion and 4 opposed. (Technical Committee members met after the meeting and clarified there had been a miscount and the vote was 5-3 as there were only 8 citizens committee members present.) Collins noted that based on the motion a recommendation would be sent to the Board of Commissioners that the paving costs should be reclassified from SPLOST5 and reimbursed by the City of Nicholson. This would be presented the following Monday at the regular BOC meeting.

Votes in Favor of 100% reclassification:

Vance Hollifield
Tom Walden
Ralph Brooks
Debbie Gammon
Elton Collins

Votes Against of 100% reclassification:

Tony Beatty
Peggy Kriegal
Janice Minish

Poe then asked about the other expenditures from SPLOST such as Christmas decorations and camera. Propes then noted that the committee took action at the previous meeting that this should be reclassified. Propes then stated that each City must be responsible for their own books and reimburse themselves as the committees cannot do that for them, but only review and make recommendations. The committee does not audit their books. Wascher again stated that the committee should not be in charge of initially giving approval for all SPLOST expenditures. Collins agreed. Beatty said he would make sure this (the reimbursement) is taken care of before the next meeting.

Adam Pethel had previously agreed to deliver a written recommendation to the BOC based on the committee vote.

F: Adjourn: Tom Walden made a motion to adjourn followed by Vance Hollifield