

**Infrastructure Committee  
February 20, 2008**

The Infrastructure Committee met on Wednesday, February 20, 2008, at the Kurth Memorial Library at 10:00 a.m. with Henry Luke of Luke Vision. Present were Dorothy Wilson, David Collmorgen, Richard Joseph, Don Hannabas, Keith Wright, Rick Harrison, Tony Moline, Dorothy Thompson, Paul Parker, Mayor Jack Gorden, Susie Cardwell, Jane Ainsworth, and Henry Luke, presiding.

Jane Ainsworth opened the meeting with a review of the Oversight Committee meeting from the previous night and established the critical need for Job Growth for the next two years.

Henry Luke reviewed the Key Benchmarks and reiterated that Jobs Growth is the current and immediate focus. Keith Wright expressed concern that the City cannot find people to fill the jobs we currently have, and if we create more jobs where are the people coming from to fill those jobs. Henry acknowledged that Education C1 addresses this issue and explained that this is the key strategy of Education Foundation. Henry explained that Lufkin is not in this situation alone; other cities of similar size and smaller have the same problem. In addition, there are still many companies that produce only in the US and don't want to go outside of the U.S. or can't go outside of the US. There are also many family-oriented people that would love to come to Lufkin and/or Angelina County and live here. The question is...how do we find them?

Henry listed the Infrastructure strategies that were determined in the Oversight Committee to be the main focus for the next two years and the committee was in agreement. They are:

- **A1** – (short term)-Master Infrastructure Plan
- **B1** – (short term) – Develop downtown Lufkin
- **C1** - (short term)–Cleanliness and aesthetics including major entrances to the city
- **D1** – (short term)–Affordable housing
- **E2** - (long term)–Protect and preserve the natural resources

**What has Infrastructure accomplished and what is underway?**

Lufkin: Many projects are underway by the City of Lufkin toward accomplishing each of these strategies. Keith Wright explained that one of these is developing a new capital improvements program (a 5-year CIP) with \$30 million of general funds from bonds plus several additional million for water and waste. Jane stressed the importance of looking at all of Angelina County including the smaller unincorporated areas.

Diboll: Kenneth Williams, Diboll City Manager is trying to change from a general law type government to home rule type government. He is also coordinating with Ellen Temple on a Green Infrastructure plan and working on improvements to Diboll's major parks through grants (\$400,000 from Parks and Wildlife) that have been matched by TLL Temple Foundation. Diboll is also expanding its golf course and subdivisions. He met with a developer that wants to do a housing initiative.

### **What is being done or can be done in the short term to impact Job Growth?**

Lufkin: David Collmorgen of TxDot said Zachary Corporation will be coming to Lufkin for a 3-year \$38 million job and will be hiring local people for construction work. There will be a \$45 million job in about 2 years north of town. This will make the north side a little more attractive to development and will help Moffett Road to develop.

### **How can we creating jobs and more workers, resulting in keeping young people in our community? What can we do in the next year to re-distribute this CIP money?**

Lufkin: Barbara Thompson said the downtown renovation is bringing in contractors. There are 5 buildings plus the Angelina Hotel that will be renovated. This will bring in a lot of construction-related jobs.

Diboll: Diboll is looking at more retail and that will create more jobs. They are currently doing a retail analysis.

Lufkin: Keith Wright suggested building more houses in the \$100,000 range and more affordable apartment projects. Richard Joseph suggested that not all people in neighborhoods are in favor of the apartment/housing projects coming in. This is a difficult situation.

Lufkin: Mayor Jack Gorden mentioned that some of the largest annexation was done toward the Hwy. 58 area to help school districts and help build the population of Lufkin. How do you enhance building homes?

Lufkin: Keith Wright state that the CIP has proposed sewer infrastructure in the Fairchild area.

### **What is the main thing that would increase jobs?**

(1) It was suggested that Economic Development with the purchase of industrial park would quickly increase jobs.

(2) Mayor Gorden felt that the Retirement Initiative may be the best hope for getting the people here. We need housing for retired, job starts such as small businesses, outdoor trail systems, available continuing education for the retired such as pottery and hobby related activities and enrichment items. The potential

is phenomenal with the retirees as we are on the front end of the baby boomer retirement.

(3) Rick Harrison suggested the Lake enhancement, such as Cassells Boykin Park would increase jobs and attract people here and produce income. There is a grant of \$400,000 to start the project which would eventually have boat ramps, park land, and other facilities. He also mentioned that retirement in the Hudson area is tremendous. Retirees are moving into Angelina County and we urgently need to upgrade the road system and it's difficult without the funds.

Henry reminded the committee that there is a financial level that we must stay above with retirees in order for them to bring in income and pay their own way in the county. If they are below that level, they have to be subsidized.

Texas allows some tax breaks to retirees, as does Zavalla and Lufkin. Their property and school taxes are frozen. This is good for the individuals, but not good for the City and County.

The Parks and Recreation strategies of both Infrastructure and Quality of Life are very important. The retirees want to live in communities where there is a lot of activity for them and things to do. Employees and potential employees want quality activities available for their kids.

Jane reminded the committee that Ellen Temple's Green Infrastructure Meeting needs to be attended and they should look at this for the whole county, not just Lufkin.

### **How can this team pull the county and city together for a Recreation Master Plan?**

The Green Infrastructure should pull them all together. Would the commitment of this group be to have a county-wide master plan?

Henry closed the meeting stating that "Coordination" is key and Sam Rayburn may be a huge resource for all of Angelina County.

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