

Committee Members:

Al Allen, Chairman
Johnny Shelley, Vice Chairman
Johnny Vaught
Danny Hardee
Mark Causey
Johnny Gardner
David Gilreath
Ashley Cowen
Ronald Floyd
Danny Shelley
Blake Lanford
Benjie Andrew



I & R Subcommittee on Rural Civic Center
MPR B/C/E
Monday, August 7th, 2023
2:00 P.M.

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Public Input**
- IV. Approval of Agenda**
- V. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. May 24, 2023 *pgs. 1-11*
- VI. Discussion Items**
 - a. Market Analysis and Feasibility Study – Findings
 - b. Next Step “Master Plan”
 - c. Direction from Subcommittee
- VII. Council Member Comments**
- VIII. Executive Session:** If needed.

Approved 8/4/2023

David Gilreath, P.E., Asst. County Administrator/I&R Division

Approved 8/4/2023

The Honorable Al Allen, Infrastructure & Regulation Chairman

Approved 8/4/2023

Steven S. Gosnell, P.E., Horry County Administrator

**MINUTES
HORRY COUNTY COUNCIL
I&R Subcommittee on Rural Civic Center
MPR B/C/E
May 24, 2023
2:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Al Allen, Chairman; Johnny Shelley; Danny Hardee; Mark Causey; David Gilreath; Ronald Floyd; Blake Lanford; Benjie Andrew; and Ashley Cowen.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Johnny Vaught; Johnny Gardner; and Danny Shelley.

OTHERS PRESENT: Ashley Carroll; Steve Gosnell; Barry Spivey; Randy Haldi; Councilman Masciarelli; Taylor Smith; Reed Cooper; Charlie Smith; Charlie Johnson; Stan Dyson; Randall Cox; Tammy Stevens; and Thomas Bell. (Participating remotely were Major General Brad Owens, Phil Hamby, and Representative William Bailey)

In accordance with the FOIA, notices of the meeting were provided to the press stating the time, date, and place of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Allen called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m.

INVOCATION: Chairman Allen gave the invocation.

PLEDGE: Chairman Allen led in the pledge.

PUBLIC INPUT: None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mr. Hardee moved to approve the agenda contents. The motion was unanimously passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting, March 14, 2023: Mr. Hardee moved to approve the minutes of March 14, 2023, seconded by Mr. Causey. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Chairman Allen stated he had the pleasure of spending 30 minutes on the telephone the day before with Major General Brad Owens of the South Carolina National Guard, Mr. Phil Hamby, director of Government Affairs of the Office of the Adjutant General, and State House Representative William Bailey. They had a very interesting conversation about their desire to partner up with the county on about a 20 acre piece of land in theirs so that there could possibly be a regional training armory type center built. He believed that they had those three gentlemen on the phone. General Owens and Mr. Hamby were participating remotely via the telephone. While they were waiting for Representative Bailey to join them, Chairman Allen asked that they go around the table and let everyone introduce themselves. They had a lot of influential people present, and he wanted General Owens to hear from them. They went around the table and each person introduced themselves.

Chairman Allen stated that all the main players were present. They were very serious about this project and were all excited about pushing it forward as quickly as they could. He asked General Owens and Mr. Hamby to jump in and explain to the group about their conversation from the day before. General Owens thanked Chairman Allen, Horry County, and the committee members. He looked forward to being able to meet them in person in the future. He had their construction facilities management officer, Colonel Marty Hanks, on the line. Colonel Jim Roth was the director of Strategic Initiatives along with himself and Chief Todd Shealy, Administrative Support. The South Carolina National Guard tagged the adjutant generals number one priority in military construction after the projects that they had ongoing was to construct a regional readiness center multi-unit armory, as they used to call them, in Horry County. The way that the military construction worked at the national level for the National Guard was there was a pot of money that was given to the National Guard Bureau and states compete for those funds. What they were seeing over the last few years was the military construction budget at the national level was getting highly competitive, and the budget was being reduced significantly. He could remember a time when it was well over \$1.5 billion nationally. Now they were looking at about \$300 million so everybody was trying to get a project approved through the National Guard Bureau with a limited amount of supplies. There was an

algorithm at their bureau and points were awarded for various phases of the projects that were competing against one another. Points, for example, were given if it was tagged number one priority. Points were given if the environmental or design was completed. Various aspects like that. So what they had found in the past, specifically down at joint base Charleston and also at a military construction project that they had going on in Aiken, South Carolina, if they could get a real estate instrument in place, if they could get the environmental work done, and if they could get to 35% design, they believed with those 3 items with Horry County being the tags number one priority, that would score well in this metric and have a shot at putting a multi-unit armory in Horry County. They had been watching a number of metrics over the years. They were excited about the growth in Horry County, and they were looking to partner with the county and put a regional readiness center for at least 2 units. One thing he could not do was... The bureau would not give him a lot of money for infrastructure development. So he couldn't build roads to the location. He couldn't run water or wastewater or electrical. They had very finite limitations on the distances they could run the services away from the building. The other thing that he couldn't do was he couldn't promise that within 2, 5, or 10 years that they would have this project completed. The reason being was because he could not predict what the national military construction budget would be, but he did have assurances from the building and all the senior level staff that Horry County would remain the number one priority over time. With that said, he would leave it open for questions. Mr. Gilreath stated that there was mention of about 20 acres. Did he understand that correctly as about what they would need to move forward? General Owens replied yes, a minimum of 20 acres. Mr. Gilreath asked if he had any idea what the size of the actual facility would be just for the county's purposes. General Owens replied roughly about 55,000 square feet was what they were estimating. Then external support buildings like unheated storage and maintenance facilities and things like that. Mr. Hamby asked General Owens to describe a little bit of a scenario of what typically the use of the building might be used for. General Owens stated a National Guard unit was roughly about 150 – 180 soldiers, and they were talking double that at a minimum. So the facility would be designed for those 300 members to drill on a weekend and to conduct operations out of the location. On a typical Monday through Friday roughly 6 – 10 personnel would be in the facility. What they had done in the past was they had located their facilities with external partners so that they bring value to the State of South Carolina through the military construction program by letting other entities utilize their facilities, both in a paid status, or if it was the entity that provided them the land or helped them with maintenance or operational costs, then they basically allowed them to use the facility when they were not using it. There were a number of aspects to this building, to the building design, that were favorable to others. Large meeting spaces, classrooms, and the fact that the facility had a kitchen in it was a benefit to a lot of people. They would conduct military operations out of there, both in domestic response to hurricanes, and then use it as a power projection platform if their units were called up to deploy overseas or somewhere within the continental United States. Just to let them know, they had 9,300 soldiers in the South Carolina National Guard. They had 1,300 airmen at McEntire Airbase, and they had about 1,500 soldiers deployed now. Things were not slowing down for them as well as they were watching very closely what was happening with the southwest border and the national capital region. They were also moving into hurricane season so they were currently very busy. He asked Mr. Hamby if that answered his question. Mr. Hamby replied yes. That was exactly it, and he thought they may have just a few more questions down the road about in the event of a hurricane what that might potentially look like about the value of that geographic location in the event of hurricane status at the beach. General Owens stated with the facility that was designed at joint base Charleston, they were estimating they could get about 400 soldiers into that facility. Typically what they did was once they get the coastal counties evacuated with the highway patrol and reversing lanes and what not, they then would pull back to these hardened facilities such as the one they were planning on building in Horry County with their help. Then they would run immediate response personnel out of there. What they were currently after, just to let them know what their timeline was, the next round of competition, if you will, or data call with the National Guard Bureau was in about 6 months. So what they would like to do, with the county's approval, was establish a MOA for that 20 – 25 acres, basically a letter of commitment that the county was willing to offer, and then they would work closely with all parties in the future to secure the real estate instrument, to get the survey and design done, and to actually locate the parcel of land. Get the survey done. Get the environmental done. Then they would probably have to go to the state and ask them for some seed money to get the design work done to get them to that 35%, and then they would wait to see how well they competed at the national level. Mr. Gilreath stated their consultant, Mr. Charlie Johnson, had a couple of questions he would like to ask. Mr. Johnson said they were serving as consultants, and it was their sense that an association with the federal government on something like this could be very helpful. They already had contemplated a regional veterinary emergency venue, and then the electrical power venue was coming. One of the things that fairgrounds had been able to accomplish was get larger expo halls for FEMA purposes funded from the federal government. So what he wanted to understand two fold was once they had a relationship with him, could he help them with FEMA and other avenues within the federal government to contemplate supplemental investments that they would be strategic for life safety as well. General Owens replied they normally, at the senior leader level in

Columbia, work very closely with the Emergency Management Division. The Emergency Management Division worked very closely with the FEMA representatives in the state. Could they assist in opening avenues to better communications and more opportunities in the future? He would say absolutely. Again, he couldn't speak for FEMA, but what the South Carolina National Guard does with its external relationships and external partnerships was they try to enable others and bring value to the State of South Carolina. With a network force in just about every county in South Carolina it was pretty easy for them to enable others, and they would certainly do all they could do in support of their partners down in Horry County. Mr. Hamby added that whenever there was a hurricane or emergency event such as that, if they could imagine in their COIC, as it was called, there was a special conference room where the governor meets with head agency leaders on these events. He may be saying things they already know, but at that table, which was a relatively small table, was direct representation from FEMA during those events so their Emergency Management Division, which was a part under their umbrella of the South Carolina Military Department, they coordinate and communicate with FEMA directly at a state level and a national level very rarely. Mr. Johnson said one of the things he would ask Mr. Gilreath was perhaps when they needed to get more technical they have another offline call with their technical people. In the short term though South Carolina had a great respect for military, and they would have giant grounds. He was wondering if there was a way to bring federal events, flag marches and all those types of things. That could be very special. Equipment sales and things of that nature. That would fit here as a vertical with the military, and it would fit very well with the society and economy here. They wanted to see if they could use the grounds for other activities associated with the federal government as well. They take a proprietary interest in helping them land events. General Owens replied the way he was envisioning an equestrian area, a rural civic center, coupled with their readiness center, he believed they would have a perfect venue, and who wouldn't want to come to Horry County. Plus, it was of a team desire for them because of the high speed, because of the infrastructure, because of the interstate infrastructure and the close proximity to Hwy 22 and Hwy 501, and possibly the new interstate. So all those were things that bring national attention, and he thought they would be successful in the future if they established a collaborative environment that could gain attention at the national level.

Mr. Masciarelli referred to Messrs. Johnson and Smith and stated they wanted 20 – 25 acres. It sounded like there could potentially be a lot of benefit to it, but in the initial plan that they had laid out, was there going to be any downside to giving up that acreage that down the road may hurt the initial mission of what they were trying to accomplish that they were going to then say why did we give up that 25 acres. Mr. Smith stated at this point and this phase they were only dealing with bubbles and really hadn't gotten down to acres yet. He didn't foresee that being an issue with the amount of acreage they had at that point dependent on the amount of loss they might have to wetlands or other areas. In the next phase when they get into the master planning phase, they would get into topography and environmental and all those issues, and they would know about it, but at that point he didn't see a problem.

Chairman Allen stated they would look for a motion to have staff put together a resolution to send to full Council in order to send a letter of commitment to the South Carolina Military Affairs Office for this amount of land for the possibility of future development of it. **Mr. Hardee moved that they send a Letter of Commitment from Horry County to partner with the guard, seconded by Mr. Causey.** Chairman Allen asked if there was any further discussion about it from the Coop or Clemson. Anybody want to comment on that. Mr. Floyd stated he thought it was a good idea. **The motion passed unanimously.** Chairman Allen stated staff would put together a resolution to send to full Council so that Council would be able to adopt and send a letter to the State of South Carolina committing the 25 acres for this purpose as discussed. He asked how that sounded to General Owens and Mr. Hamby. General Owens replied that was excellent and thanked them. They appreciated their support of the military. Chairman Allen told them they appreciated their time and their service in this and looked forward to having a good productive future relationship. Mr. Hamby stated they appreciated it very much. He gave a quick shout out to Representative Baily. He had been instrumental in getting this to move forward, and also Councilman Allen and Mr. Brandon Wagner. They had had very good conversations, and they definitely appreciated their pushing this forward. He again thanked them for their support. If they needed any other details or specifics in the drafting of the resolution, Councilman Allen had his contact information, and he would get them to Mr. Brad Owens and get them whatever details they may need. Mr. Gilreath stated just so everyone was aware they understood Representative Bailey was online and probably heard all their conversation. It was his understanding that he was there.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Market Analysis and Feasibility Study – Interim Presentation: Mr. Johnson stated they had the two most common named consultants in America, but also two of the most knowledgeable fairgrounds and event center consultants in America. That conversation was indicative of where they were at that point. It was the time to be creative once they were comfortable that the market existed for this project. They were going to demonstrate the role that this played over the course of time in the community. One hundred fifty years ago other counties were placing fairgrounds. He and Mr. Smith had worked on probably 30 that had all of a sudden become urban venues. The cities grew up around these rural areas, and when they were planning this they had to think 100 years in his mind. His suspicion was if this was well done and managed well, this could have a life of over 100 years, but it would change over time. What they were trying to understand in their market assessment was was there market potential overall for a venue like this. What they just heard was if they lock into verticals that made sense to their economy, one, they could do other things on top of that. This was a military state and having a ROTC or reserves venue associate them with the federal government and the military. The next question they would ask was how do they double down on that vertical. The reason he asked the question about FEMA, all of a sudden this could be one of the more unique fairgrounds or rural event centers in America. By them associating the reserves venue combined with Horry Electric combined with the animal venue, and they were set. They would be one of the best locations for emergency services. That was a background agenda, but it was the one that could probably get them resources to get this project done. When they had a vertical like that that made a lot of sense. The textile industry was a driver in this market historically. He worked on the Palmetto Expo Center. That was a giant expo center that was built. Now that the textile industry moved, they were still trying to figure out what to do with that. It was 300,000 square feet, and it was big. It didn't have all the amenities that other convention centers had. So what he was trying to portray to them was as they go through their market analysis, getting the product right in the first instance but contemplating where this would go over the course of time was really the work that they were doing that day. Currently they would discuss some of the verticals that they thought made most sense for them to get started in, and then they were more than willing to talk about and answer questions that they may have. He then presented a PowerPoint presentation for a market analysis and feasibility study for a multi-use sports and recreational complex. They were half way through on a project where this would only be 10% through. To give them a sense there would be a whole host of decisions being made, but the first ones that they would make now was the creative one as well as the economically responsible one. They hadn't measured the economical responsibility yet or the outcomes that were going to happen, but they had determined that there was market support for something like this, and they wouldn't determine that if they couldn't be in the upper at least half or upper quartile of performance opportunity. When they set the stage, as they talked about this he asked that they remember that they had a lot more work to do, and they hadn't run financials or economics yet. They knew so many other fairgrounds that they had done those on that they could have clues about how well it was going to perform here. This was not necessarily a natural equestrian market but what happened was there was a good core here and that was what they build on. What was happening now in the industry was there was a consolidation, and there was growth in horses. They would see that there had been overall population growth in the horses that were managed on farms around the country. The vitality of it, back in the old days people bought horses because they used them like their cars today. So it meant a lot. That was when a lot of the fairgrounds came about. That was when the horse racing was real popular because that was their vehicle. That was not the case anymore so it was more of a hobbyist sport, and the incomes for hobbyists were all up and down. There was a concentration, and then there was a distribution among incomes. It was very much a mainstream sport. It was just a thin market. So once you penetrate that market, and it was a good market and a high economic market. They did have equestrians. They did have agriculture in the state. They had a success story in Aiken already. It was their sense that the infrastructure platform in greater Myrtle Beach and Horry County was so great that they had the opportunity to lever a lot of those things. Will the horse people be big beach people? Not necessarily, but will the venue and the people who see the equestrian or animal shows be beach people, you bet they will be. Then if they opened this up to do a broader, which was what they would always do was do a broader cross section of events. Those were the ones that were going to appeal and lever the infrastructure in Myrtle Beach. So they wanted to make sure that if they build something like this, there was a logical market in the area that extended from New York all the way to Florida. If they build quality facilities, that was what had been the lynchpin to success was the quality of facilities. They wanted to make something that was distinctive, that was unique, that really served the audiences that they were trying to get to as well as have this being something that was going to contribute to the wellbeing of all the people. The way you did that was through the cross sections of events. Everybody present had interests and hobbies. Some of the things happen at the convention center, but some of the things would happen out here that were different. This edge of the county was very well resourced in terms of outdoor recreation, rivers, lakes, and forests and things of that nature to the extent that they could kind of have

a hat on this as being that kind of orientation. That was a vertical that he thought could be a celebratory element of their demand picture. As they started building these verticals, they started looking at what kind of demand picture they would have. They did think that over time this was going to be a very successful building. They would penetrate the animal market, and they would be able to do other things along this nature. He would talk about some case studies as well as their market work. He thought it was very important to understand small community, small market, when they looked at the overall state. Georgia and Perry was one of their case studies. Georgia had 10 million to 11 million people. It was growing like a weed. Horry County had 3.5 million and was growing like a weed. So they had to anticipate that, but also, they had to anticipate the size if the state wanted to be real bold and put their flag down and go into this economic development strategy. They might want to do this across other cities and counties in the state as well just to dig in, or they could build a superregional like Perry did. Those were kind of the debates that they should have as well. Slides were presented with discussion on market attributes – population, market attributes – age & income, market attributes – employment & unemployment, market attributes – hotel market, market attributes – event facilities, market attributes – equestrian participation and associations, case studies – Georgia International Horse Park – Canyons, GA, case studies – T. Ed Garrison Arena – Pendleton, SC, case studies – Georgia National Fairgrounds and Agricenter – Perry, GA, case studies – The Ranch Events Complex – Loveland, CO, case studies – comparable facilities summary, initial program recommendations – overview, initial program recommendations - facilities/buildings, initial program recommendations – amenities, initial program recommendations – miscellaneous uses, and site analysis summary. Mr. Smith stated their entire team knew the site very well so that when they stepped into the next phase they could start to take those elements that Mr. Johnson was identifying and actually put them to scale on the site to develop the master plan. Mr. Johnson stated they would be shocked at how small the buildings they were talking about were so there was plenty of room for expansion and upgrades. This piece of ground would be a park, effectively, a green space for the community for hundreds of years. So the touching that they do with this today was going to be very important for the future. People would flock to this because one of the things it had was organization and safety. A lot of times people were fearful to get out into the woods so if they had nature trail exposure, they would start opening up people's eyes and be safe. That was what this project was all about. He thought big picture they felt comfortable that the market was there. Mr. Gilreath had requested that they prove it more, and they would be doing that. They thought this was the right direction to start with. It solved the exceeded arena need. It kind of got them started in the expo space, and it got them started in a new line of business. Mr. Smith stated Mr. Johnson started about the exhibition and expo space, they were calling these facilities exposition parks now. Exposition meaning year round uses, commercial uses, money making and park, more park block. Mr. Johnson stated in some markets that they had worked on, the quality and the imagery, they had an opportunity to create some imagery. The gateway that goes into an event ground like this would be something the community could create. They would jump in and have this beautiful design for historical look or whatever it was. So the community engagement here, he thought, could be interesting, and this could be a lot of fun for the community. It made sense that something like this was in every county in some way or another.

Mr. Gilreath stated that finished up the market analysis and feasibility study. Next on the agenda was the review. This was where the committee reviewed with the consultants on what they thought, what they were getting right, what they needed to take another look at or needed more information on. This was for them to give them some input, and then after this, they would start talking about giving them some guidance, giving the county some guidance as to where they should continue to go. Then they would ultimately come back. When they got through with the meeting that day they would come back one more time, and they would present their final feasibility study, their analysis, business plan models, and final recommendations. After that, if they chose to go forward, there would be a master planning effort for the site. That was when all the pretty pictures and everything started to come in and the more detailed discussions as to where they locate things, and how they make certain venues interact and the parking and all of that. They would get into those details more so then. What they currently wanted to focus on was what facilities did they need to include so that they had a very good business plan going forward so that this makes money. Maybe a little bit primary driver was to get people here without losing money. He didn't want to put words in the mouths of everybody, but he thought they were not here to make a big profit. They were there to have something that was sustainable that could develop and grow over time on its own merits, and then get people to come here. Get people that live here to enjoy what they have here. That was where they were. They needed their input that day and would incorporate that into their models.

Review: Mr. Gilreath stated he would start it off. Event space. They talked about fixed, or did they want flex

space. He thought they were recommending the flexible space with automated bleachers on the periphery, if he understood it correctly. Mr. Johnson replied that was correct.

Mr. Dyson stated at the end of the last meeting he thought they had discussed possibly having an exhibition type building for the other things and an equine complex. Had that been shuffled to one? Mr. Smith replied it was shown as one of the facilities. It was not shown as Phase 1 currently, but he was intrigued about the armory idea because in the history of fairgrounds around North American they use those a lot as well. He was just wondering how much space they might have as open space in there as the expo building itself. Mr. Gilreath asked if he was asking if... He had said at the end of the last meeting they had a planned equestrian event venue and then a separate exhibition hall. Mr. Dyson replied he thought that was brought up. Mr. Johnson stated that was recommended as the master plan. They felt that they could get in a new line of business quicker if they had the equestrian venue built, but both of those should be built multi-purpose so they could serve as that exhibition space. What was going to happen was they would fill that thing up too fast, and then they would (inaudible) the exhibit hall. He saw it happen every day, all day long. Mr. Dyson said when he was going over it earlier he thought he said he was looking to have possibly 3 horse shows a year. Mr. Johnson replied 18 – 20 and that was not including rodeos. Mr. Dyson said they were hoping to book the equestrian center year round. Williamson had already booked theirs for all of next year. Every weekend. Mr. Johnson stated he didn't see that not being the case, but he just wanted to be a little more conservative. They hadn't projected their numbers yet, but they were going to be good. Mr. Dyson said since the last meeting he had talked with some people from various states that had attended shows where he had been and some people in and around the immediate area. His son used to work at the Dixie Stampede, and he traveled around to their 5 sites around the country. He said they didn't have concrete under any of theirs. The people he had talked with, the ringing people that come with the dirt and all, the people running barrels, they don't want concrete under their stage. Mr. Smith stated it was a perceived issue. Normally, if you get about 16 inches of dirt on there, you were never going to touch that concrete, but they get it into their minds and were concerned about it. Mr. Cox stated they had hit it. They had hit the concrete at 18 inches deep. Mr. Smith said they may have put 12 inches or so. Mr. Johnson stated here was the compromise. Perfect discussion. If they were to have non-concrete floors, it had to be quadruple downed. It was only going to be really for horse events and other types of things. They could do all kinds of dirt events and those types of things in there, and it could be used for graduations, but you would have to put surfaces on it and those types of things. The expo hall could get them into some horse business, but it was going to be concrete floor. It was not going to get them a whole book of business. It was going to be a secondary use. They felt it was important to get the horse component or the animal component done, but make it so it could be used as the exhibit hall. If they were going to be using that every weekend, and they hadn't come to that conclusion yet, but would get there, but if there were no dates available for other things, then they were not serving everybody. They were serving primarily the equestrian and the animal market. Mr. Smith stated they keyed into the expo hall to go ahead and get it started. That was that Phase I and Phase II. Mr. Johnson said if they had the financial capacity to pull off an expo hall, and that was their capital stack, all three of those elements would be the right things to do. They just thought it was going to be lower used until they build up business. So they felt that having the show have the concrete floor that could seed some of the bridle shows and all the things would start setting up. The Myra Starneses of the world would start bringing shows out here. So those were the things that they saw as happening, and they just don't have the capacity to do both in one module. So do they want to double down and do both at one time... Mr. Gilreath stated if they looked at the facilities that had been built over the last decade or two, what was the predominate configuration. Mr. Smith stated he would say 50/50. He had one that had a concrete floor that had never seen the light of day because they put the dirt on it, and they just rolled the dirt down hard as concrete, which you can do. It takes about \$5,000 - \$7,000 to take the dirt out. They were not at that point yet, but it may be that it was a dirt floor that was rolled down hard. They could still put carpet and floors and ice and that kind of thing on it, and then do the expo hall that had the concrete floor. It was a great debate. They were not there yet and were not saying definitely concrete versus dirt, especially if they could get the expo hall kicked into an early phase. They just say okay this is a dirt facility and then the other one would be a hard facility. Mr. Johnson said if it was dirt, it would be a better equestrian venue. No question about it. It would appeal to people more, but you really had to work hard to enter that market. They would be entering a rotation of probably 30 buildings around the country, but they were not there yet. They had a base. They had these weekend other events and then the horse shows to (inaudible). Mr. Cox stated non-permanent walls, and the concrete under the bottom was going to handicap the equestrian industry. They just said that. Then, you go with a multi-purpose building. Then every other weekend or week they were spending \$6,000 to take the dirt out, but you were going to put the dirt back in to swap events. How profitable was that going to make the facility? Mr. Johnson stated it was a lot of work. What would happen, it would discourage the flat shows from coming in. He thought the hard pack was a strategy because all you do then is just bring a roller in to... Mr. Smith stated what that did was it

encouraged them to move into the expo hall quicker. Again, this armory building was the expo hall of the past, and they could get into the design of that and maybe that was a smaller expo hall to begin with that they could use for special events until which time they had enough business on the expo side to do the expo building. Mr. Johnson told Mr. Gilreath as he asked were there scenarios they could run. He thought there were, and he thought they should run both of those doubling down on dirt and doing the expo simultaneously, and then one versus the other and see what the consequences were. He thought they could present that... Mr. Gilreath told Mr. Cox they had the issue of striking the concrete floor at Raleigh. Did it happen at other venues that he was aware of? Mr. Cox replied Raleigh and Asheville. What people don't realize was you were running multiple horses. No, one horse would not penetrate that soil, but when you had ran 400 horses through and the tractors had been going through, it would have a tendency to get un-level. By 250 - 300 horses, instead of 18 inches in areas when it was not properly groomed by the tractor, which was everywhere you go, you may be lost 6 inches of ground. When you were disking a field or plowing a field or bottom plowing a field you were going to get holes that you had to eventually come back and smooth back out. When you were running a tractor across this facility for 400 horses it was going to get thinner, and then when it gets thinner, then you had issues. Mr. Smith said luckily they were not going under constriction tomorrow. They were in the analysis phase, and from there they would move into the master planning phase and these subjects would come up again because they would have specific user group meetings when they were going to be setting down talking specifically with his group and other groups. Then they would get into the design phase which was 2 steps from then. So they had a lot of sorting out to do. Part of it had to do with running the numbers, and they had seen the numbers, horse show numbers versus expo numbers, and see what was generating the uses of the different building types. Mr. Johnson stated his suspicion was a lot of the weekend events would be smaller, and they probably would like to have a position, kind of an equestrian training center. Then you could do some of the smaller shows over there and that would be different. Then they had multi-purpose buildings. It had to be an evolution so they wanted to work with them a little bit more. This was a debate that happened every time. They had a natural horse, and you don't have a large expo. Can they kill 2 birds with one stone effectively to start with, or should they contemplate doing something very robust in the equestrian market and have the expo hall here. That was the right answer, but he didn't know if it was affordable. They would like to get to that point, and then there would be other buildings that would evolve over there. They could meet his request, but it would just be an earlier capital spend to get both functions going in his mind.

Mr. Masciarelli asked when they said that they had places that were booked every weekend. Where were those exactly? Mr. Cox replied Williamston, North Carolina. He had their schedule in his hands. Williamston was in a very... They were way more developed than Williamston. It was very rural. Their facility was built primarily for a horse facility. It had permanent walls in it, which was a necessity for rodeos. Major rodeos were not going to come in where you don't have permanent walls. Mr. Masciarelli stated he got that, but he was trying to understand. Where was that area in relation to Raleigh? Mr. Cox stated Greenville, North Carolina. Mr. Masciarelli stated okay, so that was a horse area. Mr. Cox said it was about 30 miles north of Greenville. Mr. Masciarelli asked what other ones did he have that were booked every weekend. Mr. Cox replied Asheville, but Asheville was not always booked with horses. What he was getting to was Williamston. They were not always booked every weekend with horses. Even though they had the permanent bleachers and the permanent walls and dirt, they book it for farm shows, dirt bike races, dirt events, not concrete events. Not events that could be held at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center. Mr. Masciarelli referred to the Asheville Center and asked if that was concrete or all dirt. Mr. Cox stated he was pretty sure that was all dirt. He thought it had a base under it, coquina, rock, whatever, but he didn't think there was concrete under it, but they had got into the rock before, the base. Mr. Johnson stated they were listening to that very carefully. They heard them. Mr. Cox stated what he was getting at about Williamston was they had a lot of events other than horse events that don't require them spending \$10,000 during the week taking the dirt out and putting the dirt back in. That was a big expense in his opinion. Mr. Masciarelli stated the reason he was asking this, and he was for this just so they knew. What he was looking at and had mentioned to Mr. Hardee was do they need 2 arenas. His family had competed in the motorcycles, and he mentioned the motorcycle races indoors, the indoor horse arenas. This area was not a big horse area so were they going to be able to compete with these other areas where there were a lot of these horse folks. Were they going to come to the beach to compete, and how were they going to compete to pull those people out of those areas to come here. Were they going to be able to book this up every weekend, and if they were, they were going to have a second arena if they were going to pick up income revenues from other types of business. Mr. Johnson stated they were actually talking 3 venues. When you had an indoor area where all this big stuff happens, there had to be a practice area. That could be outside. It could be covered. If they could have the same size practice area to the same size of the competition arena, that was what they were looking for. Then the rodeos, either one of these could do rodeos. Either one of these could do big shows or small shows. Mr. Masciarelli asked if he thought this area could book almost every weekend some type of horse competition, even though this was not a

horse... Mr. Johnson replied yes.

Mr. Cox replied the Hippodrome in North Augusta was closing. The people that put on the shows at the Hippodrome had been calling and begging to come to this facility. One of the biggest barrel industries in North and South Carolina, the man that runs it had been calling begging for a place to go. Mr. Dyson said they wanted to know how soon they were going to have it built. Mr. Cox said they were having shows at Lumberton, and they had no stalls. They can't bring people in. The last weekend they had a major event at Lumberton. Half the people that needed to be there couldn't be there because there weren't any stalls for them to be there. The Lake was a wonderful facility. He loved it. It had permanent walls, and they had good rodeos there. It was old and dilapidated. They had to bring in stalls to bring in people. The last time they were at the Lake they had to bring in over 100 temporary stalls to bring the people in. They needed a facility that could do what Lake Waccamaw and Lumberton can't do. The closest thing that should be able to compete with this facility should be Williamston, Perry, T. Ed Garrison Center, and Clemson. Mr. Johnson said that level. Mr. Cox replied yes. There shouldn't be nothing else to compete with this anywhere close so they should bring half of North Carolina. When they go to shows in Lumberton there were people there from Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina at almost every show that they were at in Lumberton. Lumberton was 45 – 60 miles. Lumberton was full almost every weekend with some type of cutting show, barrel show, pleasure show, or whatever. Lumberton did not have the facility to do what they were doing. The county would have. That was the key. They would pull Lumberton's people. Mr. Johnson said that was the key. That was quality. Mr. Smith stated that was good input.

Mr. Johnson said at the same time they didn't want to hurt Lumberton. They would overflow. The trucks would stay in Lumberton. They would use that as a staging area sometimes for larger shows. So there was a role for smaller venues. Ideally, they get better as you start ramping up the equestrian market at the state level. That was a process. You were either in the business or you were not. Kentucky said they were in the business, and they had all kinds of animal associations. They had really gone after it. The county could do it if they go after it.

Mr. Smith asked if Messrs. Dyson and Cox had any comments about the general direction of the layout. Mr. Cox replied no. Mr. Smith asked if that seemed to be heading in the right direction because initially getting into the next step in the master planning they wanted to be sure they were all moving in the right direction.

Chairman Allen asked Mr. Lanford if he had a comment. Mr. Lanford referred to Clemson in general, Clemson Extension in particular here in Horry County, had been studying this type of facility for years. Everything they had revealed that day confirmed everything that they had discovered in terms of opportunity. He definitely thought they needed something that was versatile. He was particularly intrigued by the outdoor recreation piece because they had done other economic analysis or impact analysis for outdoor recreation in Horry County as an underutilized asset. This goes well beyond horse, equestrian, and that kind of thing. This county was ripe for outdoor recreation development, particularly in the western portion of the county. The education aspect also was very intriguing to him. He wouldn't undersell the impact of that. Their 4-H centers... They had a 4-H camp in North Myrtle Beach that could consider using something like this as a hub. He visited a facility in Florence ran by Florence School District 1 that morning which was a hub for their farm to school program. Fabulous facility. Mr. Johnson stated Florence had done an outstanding job because they had gotten the state... What they did in Florence caused QVC and Onus to move there. SiteTech was there at the arena. It was a conference center that was aimed towards training people. If they could do something like that, that would fit here perfectly. Mr. Lanford stated they had referenced the incubator farm type element. He saw an opportunity for that particularly if they started to collaborate with the school district to do activities. They had some outdoor recreation type educational facilities already, but farm to school type programs had ballooned across the country, especially in this state more recently. He was super excited about everything they had proposed. He was no expert at what they do at Garrison. He didn't have any involvement in the creation of Garrison or the management of Garrison, but they were always adding elements to Garrison. Their most recent was the expo center. They had, and had had for years, barns and the arena. The question for Clemson becomes does the university want to embrace Garrison as part of its campus, or did they want to utilize Garrison more as a rural economic asset for Anderson County. It was not necessarily part of Clemson's university framework so that was something they would have to deal with over time. Mr. Johnson told Mr. Lanford that he would like to have another interview with him if they could, and Mr. Lanford replied absolutely.

Mr. Smith stated when they stepped into the master planning process they were going to give them a list of the people they normally like to sit down with one on one and have what they called stakeholder and user group interviews. It was a good time for them to spend some quality time with different groups and get down to the

details.

Chairman Allen asked Mr. Shelly how they felt about it. Mr. Shelley stated he was impressed they had gotten this far so fast. It had been 7 weeks since their last meeting, and they would have more discussion in maybe 14 weeks. Mr. Johnson stated maybe in a couple of weeks. Mr. Shelley stated he appreciated them getting together and updating them on this. He thought they were going in the right direction, and if they got the school board involved, they had some money so make sure they get some of that money. Mr. Johnson stated that was a very good idea. They were trying to make this a people place. They wanted to serve everyone from 0 – 105. They really wanted this to be that kind of place. Mr. Shelley said they had talked about the water and sewer and paving roads and development. You put the water and sewer in and you won't have to worry about development. It was coming. You better start worrying about the zoning. Mr. Smith stated that future road system was really exciting. That would have people coming in from much longer distances than they originally thought.

Mr. Andrew said he had a couple of things he wanted to comment on, and he wanted to ask Mr. Dyson if it was true that there were more horses per cap in the State of South Carolina than there was in Texas. Mr. Dyson stated that was what the study said. Mr. Andrew told Messrs. Johnson and Smith that they had been speaking about these events that were full in Williamston and Asheville and Lumberton. Those people needed to stay here, and he thought with a new facility they were going to draw people from there, and he thought it would stay full. He was not a horse person, but he had friends that he asked where they were going for the weekend and it seemed like 80 – 90% of the times they were going to North Carolina to a roping event. That was sad. Mr. Johnson said that was flight to quality. Mr. Andrew stated it needed to be here. They had the population here, and that facility needed to be out there. If they needed to do 2, they needed to pursue it. If they needed to do an equestrian center, that was the way this thing was sold to begin with. They could do an equestrian center and work on getting the other facility beside it or whatever. He asked about the facility in Kentucky that they spoke about that had 1,000 event days. How far was that to the nearest interstate. Mr. Johnson replied it was on an interstate. It was basically real close to downtown Louisville. Mr. Andrew stated they had heard it in the past at their past meetings about the Garrison Arena when it was first designed, and now they had a problem that they didn't design enough parking. He wanted to make sure that that egg didn't get on any of their faces to where they don't have enough parking for whatever goes on out there because he thought it was going to explode when it happened. He was probably there because of the Ag Commission, and they want a state funded farmer's market in there. He had done a lot of work on it for 3 – 4 years, and he thought he could get this thing funded. He was not promising them anything, but he thought it could be with staff and the facility. All they needed was the land. Mr. Smith stated it was very compatible. Mr. Andrew said it didn't need to be a yard sale facility. It needed to be a state farmer's market. They had to expand the one in Greenville twice already. If there was anywhere in the State of South Carolina that had the most restaurants, he promised them it was 25 miles from the site. Not Florence. Not Greenville, and they had had to expand already. The county had the restaurants, and he was at the beach all the time. All he ever saw up and down Hwy 17 were wrapped produce trucks from North Carolina. It needed to be coming from Hwy 22 and Hwy 501. So that was why it needed to be state funded, and it needed to be a place that was accessible so the trucks could get in and out of there and service the restaurants at the beach. Every restaurant owner can't drive somewhere to get their produce so they needed to keep that in mind.

Mr. Johnson stated it was interesting the trends were trying to... They didn't know what was going to happen in the world, but food safety was number one and bringing that sourcing was coming closer. So that was ahead of the curb if they did something like that. It was hard for restaurants... Back in the olden days there were the markets and the mongering that went on. The fish markets and all that stuff. America had gone away from that, and when they had them centralized by the airports and things like that. He thought he was on to something that maybe kind of a distribution center that was more localized. They needed the volume. Orlando, Las Vegas. A market like this may work so they had to think about that. Mr. Andrew said in this area of the county they were very diversified. You were at the Grand Strand and 20 minutes later you were in what used to be a tobacco field. Tobacco was gone. There was some here and yonder, but a lot of these farmers, Mr. Shelly included, had diversified into produce and doing other things with their farms. He thought it would be very beneficial to them to bring their product to this place out here that restaurants could come and get it because they don't have the means to truck it around Myrtle Beach. That was not what they do. They farm it, and they need somewhere to get rid of it, and not take it to Florence or Columbia. Chairman Allen stated that was a good point.

Mr. Cooper stated he didn't want them to forget what they were there about. That was the equestrian center, but he was extremely excited to hear the National Guard that day bringing that in. Mr. Webster was not present, but they had fought a few storms together throughout their careers, and if they could really get the National Guard,

get FEMA, get that federal and get that state with Horry Electric, again the equestrian center was what they were talking about, but it seemed very feasible to be multi-use. They just mentioned parking. That was what they needed during a storm so he was very pleased of what he was hearing from around the table. It sounded like they were talking about all the things they needed to be talking about but still accomplishing what they originally started this for. So he was just glad to be a part of it. He was glad Horry Electric Coop was a part of it.

Mr. Causey stated he like where they were headed. He thought they had done a wonderful job. They picked a great team from that point forward. Taking in everyone's comments and taking them with stride was always good to see. He looked forward to seeing some more. He knew they would ask the committee to meet with different industries, and he thought that would turn out really well. He thanked them for what they had done so far.

Mr. Hardee stated he was overwhelmed. When this thing started they always got pushed to the back of the room when they started talking about it. They didn't even want to look at them and to get it moved this far to the stage it was currently at and hopefully in a short period of time could start seeing some end results, he was excited it was here. He thought they would find anybody in Horry County that would help in any way they could to make this a reality.

Mr. Smith stated he made a good comment. He was glad to hear he was excited about this part because this was the grunt work now. This was the digging down in the numbers and the analysis. When they turn the corner and start showing the plans and pictures, that was when it really got exciting. It got other people excited as well. Mr. Masciarelli stated he thought it all came to fruition.

Chairman Allen stated he had been on Council and was the senior Councilman now with changes from the last election. It made him feel old. He had always dreamed of something like this. Mr. Dyson had been on him that the county needed an arena. They needed something to draw people. With the business that he was in he had seen that all around the country. When they started to work on this hard about 7 – 8 years ago, occasionally they got pushed to the side about like Mr. Hardee said. He was so excited about this because he only lived about 4 miles from that site. He couldn't wait to see this thing come to pass. Hopefully he would still be here. If not, good enough because their children and grandchildren needed this. Horry County needed this. He didn't want this thing to slow down. He had been on Mr. Gilreath about it to set up meetings or whatever it takes. Keep this bus rolling and this train moving because it had to be done. They needed it done as soon as they could get it done and have a quality site for the people of Horry County and outside of Horry County. They appreciated the work that they were doing.

Direction from Subcommittee: Mr. Gilreath stated he wanted to confirm that they were going forward with what they had presented that day for the modeling purposes. They may bring in other portions of it when they get into the modeling of the business to figure out what mix worked. Substantially it would be what was in the presentation that day. If they had any questions come up, send them to him, and he would get them compiled. He would compile whatever comes in in the next few days and get those to them. If they had any one offs, don't hesitate. Send them to him. Any ideas or concerns that they forgot to mention they would get to the design team so they could incorporate that into their models because nothing was more important right now than to get this thing to a successful mix of uses. That was what they had to do now. All the easy stuff would come when they started doing the actual layout, but they had to get this business plan right.

Chairman Allen stated Ms. Carroll or Ms. Stevens would keep everybody informed by email. If they didn't have their contact info, make sure they had it. They would have another meeting as soon as they could and as soon as they had something for them.

Mr. Gilreath stated the plan was to finish this up at the end of June. They were getting into vacation time, and it would be more difficult. It wouldn't be early, July but he was guessing mid-July because they were not going to book something on the week of the 4th so somewhere mid-July was his guess for the next meeting.

Mr. Smith thanked everyone for their comments. This was the beginning of a great project, and he had sat in these meetings on 260 of these facilities. It was a great time to get things started but don't hide their thoughts. Be sure that they get those to Mr. Gilreath so they could get their input. They had a ways to go, but it was a great beginning.

Mr. Shelly thanked them for the meeting. It was very good and a good update. Horry Electric would be glad to

help them pay for the shovels when they get ready for them.

Chairman Allen stated if he was not present, Mr. Shelley was the Vice-Chairman of the group, and he would be up there with Mr. Gilreath keeping things moving. Mr. Shelly thanked their staff too.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS: None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURNMENT: With no further business, Mr. Hardee moved to adjourn at approximately 3:58 p.m. There were no objections and the meeting was adjourned.