

Present: President Robert E Wirkner, Vice President Thomas R White, Commissioner Jeffrey L Ohler.

Location: Carroll Golden Age Retreat, 2202 Kensington Road NE, Carrollton, OH 44615.

**IN THE MATTER OF
WELCOME**

7:01 P.M.

Commissioner Wirkner welcomed everyone to the Regional Transportation Improvement Project (RTIP) public hearing. Mr. Wirkner explained that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss Carroll County joining the (RTIP). He asked that every opinion counts and that position should be respected. Commissioner Wirkner recognized those public officials in attendance, Judge Gary Willen, Clerk William Wohlwend, and Assistant Prosecutor Steve Barnett.

**IN THE MATTER OF
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

7:04 P.M.

Commissioner Wirkner asked that everyone stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IN THE MATTER OF
PRESENTATION BY REP. KIRK SCHURING**

7:04 P.M.

Commissioner Wirkner introduced State Representative Kirk Schuring who penned the legislation making it possible to form an RTIP. Mr. Wirkner advised many questions would probably be answered during Rep. Schuring's presentation. But if someone had questions at the end, Mr. Wirkner asked that the person come forward, state his/her name and township of residence so everyone could hear.

Rep. Schuring advised he wanted to hear the public's concerns and hear questions, so he would keep his remarks short. Rep. Schuring advised he was the sponsor of House Bill 494, which passed by a wide margin, was signed into law late in 2014 and became effective in March 2015. Rep. Schuring explained that the essence of the law is to allow counties to form a partnership so they can cooperatively channel their resources to build regional highway projects. Rep. Schuring explained he visited five counties in the region to see if they would support a resolution indicating their interest in the RTIP. All five counties approved such a resolution, including Carroll County. The next step was drafting an agreement for all five counties to move forward with the project, which is called a Cooperative Agreement. Rep. Schuring advised Commissioner Ohler made a suggestion to change the Agreement to make it abundantly clear that no existing tax dollars would be used for the project. Rep. Schuring advised there are several ways to finance such a project, but the most appropriate is Tax Increment Financing (TIF). He explained that if you take an undeveloped piece of property and develop it, some of the new property taxes based on the improved value of that property will be diverted for debt service on a bond. Rep. Schuring advised it will take a significant amount of money to complete this project, but if you take Columbiana, Carroll and Stark Counties and possibly Tuscarawas and Wayne and start capturing some of the new property taxes from economic development, it will generate funding. Rep. Schuring advised once the Cooperative Agreement is signed, the next step is to go to the Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), Jerry Wray. Rep. Schuring advised he spoke with Mr. Wray and he encouraged such a collaborative arrangement. Rep. Schuring stressed there are many steps ahead and the first step, ratifying the Cooperative Agreement, is just one small part. And ratifying the agreement does not mean Route 30 will be built, but it does mean there will be a mechanism in place to work together and channel resources cooperatively to go to ODOT and change the conversation with ODOT.

Rep. Schuring introduced local State Representative Andy Thompson and thanked him for his support in this legislation. Rep. Schuring also introduced Mike Wawszkiewicz from HNTB (formerly of ODOT) and Valerie Croasmun from MS Consultants.

**IN THE MATTER OF
QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC**

7:15 P.M.

Rep. Schuring asked the group for questions.

Q: Unnamed person: What happened to Route 30 coming through northern Carroll County? Why was that not an option?

A: Rep. Schuring advised no route has been set definitely, but he believes ODOT would prefer that northern route. He pointed out there is a planned connector from Carroll County to the new Route 30.

Q: Unnamed person: Will there be a bypass around Carrollton anywhere?

A: Rep. Schuring advised there are no plans for a bypass at this time, but all of the details are not worked out yet.

Q: Unnamed person: What is the advantage of having property along that route?

A: Rep. Schuring advised you would have access to a major artery leading to US Route 30, economic development and a quicker, easier way to get to other economic centers.

Q: Unnamed person: Does it increase property values?

A: Rep. Schuring advised he was unsure.

Q: Unnamed person: Will there be a water line/sewer line along with this project and at an additional cost to the property owner?

A: Rep. Schuring advised that would be something to be addressed by the Commissioners, and that type of project falls under a different section of Ohio Revised Code. Rep. Schuring advised when it comes to TIF, there is no additional cost. Whatever property taxes you pay, you will continue to pay but some funds are diverted. No additional taxes are levied on the people of Carroll County.

Q: Unnamed person: How much land is needed to build this road?

A: Rep. Schuring advised it is too early to answer that.

Q: Unnamed person: How much will the project cost?

A: Rep. Schuring advised he cannot say at this point because we are not at that step.

Q: Ben Reece, resident, advised he spoke with emergency services and they have no problem getting around the County and have no need for a four lane. Plus Route 43 was just redone for millions of dollars. What if ODOT rejects the route? Do you have a Plan B? And will the people of Malvern want their new school right off of a four lane highway?

A: Rep. Schuring advised Mr. Reese is using conjecture on where the highway is going to go because it has not been decided where it is going to go. This project is about traffic wanting to go north and get connected to an east/west corridor, not local travel.

Q: Unnamed property owner on Route 43: If the route follows 43, it's very narrow between houses on both sides of the road, so how wide will it be? Since we own property and decide to build a garage, will we have to tear it down for the highway?

A: Ms. Croasmun advised the lines on the map are just connecting one place to another. There are a lot of factors and studies that come into play to figure out the final route, including the impact on houses. Ms. Croasmun advised there are public processes throughout the project.

Q: Debbie Herrington, Rose Twp. resident and Route 43 property owner: Is it anticipated to be a four lane?

A: Rep. Schuring advised it is planned to be a four lane, but where exactly it will be is still in the works.

Q: Unnamed person: He advised he read a newspaper article saying the proposed connector is 14 miles long and costs were estimated at \$369,133,600.

A: Rep. Schuring advised that is correct, and pooling resources is a necessity.

Q: Unnamed person: Carroll County does not have nearly that amount of economic development to support that cost. Will taxes be raised?

A: Rep. Schuring advised there are other counties involved to help with the cost.

Q: Unnamed person: If the route ends up not going through one of those counties named in the agreement, they can opt out bringing it back to the remaining counties, correct?

A: Commissioner Wirkner advised the project cost is listed in the Cooperative Agreement in Appendix A and page 16 identifies the formation of the RTIP which will come up with a match for the project. It was not anticipated that Carroll County would bear the entire cost of the project. Rep. Schuring advised the local share will be much greater than 10% as mentioned in the newspaper article. Mr. Wawzkiewicz advised this project will not all be borne by locals; there are federal grant programs, transportation bills, and other programs available to assist with the cost.

Q: Ryan Irwin, Brown Twp. trustee: Mr. Irwin advised the townships' funding has been cut and the townships cannot maintain the roads they have.

A: The township controls their own funds, and won't be required to spend any money on this project.

Q: Mr. Irwin asked what happens if there is not enough development to support this project?

A: Rep. Schuring advised there is nothing in this agreement that will take money from the township funding.

Q: Unnamed person: If someone builds on the vacant lot next to me, then my property taxes are going to go up.

A: Rep. Schuring advised it won't be as much as the person who built next to you. If they do build, part of the money will be channeled for the debt service on the bond for this project. Mr. Wawzkiewicz advised only commercial properties will be TIF.

Q: Lester Dodds: The power plant's taxes were forgiven, so what incentive is there for a business to build here under a TIF?

A: Commissioner Ohler advised the TIF business owner pays the same amount of taxes regardless. It's not an additional tax. Commissioner Ohler gave an example that if Mr. Dodds moved his funeral home to Route 43 and built a million dollar facility, that would mean about \$9,000/year on that property. A TIF is a negotiated contract with the schools that the Commissioners could say we have an economic development project and we want to TIF 50%. That 50% will be paid toward the project, and the rest goes to the agencies as before. The tax is still \$9,000, nothing more. Rep. Schuring advised the new hardware store on State Route 619 in Hartville was a TIF. Before improvements were even made, property was purchased and restaurants and hotels were built in anticipation of the improvements. Commissioner Wirkner advised on page 9 of the Agreement in Article V, Section 2 specifically states nothing commits existing tax dollars from any county.

Q: Unnamed person: Is severance tax from oil going to pay for this like I read in the paper?

A: Rep. Schuring advised no, there is no severance tax channeled toward counties within the shale clay as of right now.

Q: A. Wallace Anderson, Brown Twp. resident: If the four lanes are side by side, how much total width would be required?

A: Ms. Croasmun advised it is a maximum of 180 foot width but that figure can vary.

Q: Unnamed resident on Route 43: If the project uses existing 43, it will destroy my house. Is now a wise time to sell my property and how long will the project take?

A: Rep. Schuring advised it is just speculation right now where the route will be, but they try to be sensitive to situations like that. Ms. Croasmun advised it will be years to study the project, figure routes, probably 10 years. Mr. Wawzkiewicz advised the Portsmouth project took 25 years, but things could accelerate more quickly; there is no way to get the project done in less than 5 years but it will probably be more like 10 years. Rep. Schuring advised the motto of the project is "30 by 30", meaning Route 30 by 2030.

Q: Unnamed resident on Route 43: Is there any compensation for loss of property?

A: Ms. Croasmun advised absolutely.

Q: Unnamed person: What is the timeline involved?

A: Commissioner Wirkner advised the timeline is outlined in the Agreement on page 17, Appendix A, Figure 2.

Q: Unnamed resident on Route 43: Could you address the water and sewer line project and the cost for that?

A: Commissioner Wirkner advised these are two separate projects. The water and sewer project is in the process of getting grants and funding for that. Commissioner Ohler advised the cost for the water and sewer project is about \$6 million from Malvern to Arrow Road on Route 43. The property owner will have a cost for the utilities (the water/sewer rates), and possibly a hook up fee. There are always hardships to the residents along the route to be improved as our County does not have infrastructure in it. People will not be required to hook up to water.

Q: Lester Dodds: Article I in the agreement lists the term of contract at 30 years or until the road is built and bonds paid back. Page 10, Article 7 says any county...cannot withdraw until all bills are paid. If we can't use existing tax money, where will the funds come from?

A: Rep. Schuring advised it will come from the TIF and other sources talked about earlier.

Q: Lester Dodds: The agreement lists the fiscal officer as coming from the most populous county.

A: Rep. Schuring advised they just keep track of the money – they don't spend it.

Q: Unnamed person: When do the Commissioners make a decision on whether to adopt this Agreement?

A: Commissioner Wirkner advised it will be discussed in open session with fellow commissioners. They are trying to decide what will be best for Carroll County. Columbiana and Stark Counties have yet to have their public hearings, and the Commissioners would like to see what happens at these hearings first. Commissioner Ohler advised the Agreement is not necessarily final, and he will not allow the County to fund a project that will create a financial burden for the County.

Q: Jack Huebner, Brown Twp. resident: He advised this is not going to be easy, and some will suffer more difficult burdens than others. He encouraged more meetings like this down the road, and he believes improvements are needed. Rep. Schuring advised that even if Carroll County adopts the Cooperative Agreement, the other counties need to adopt it and then ODOT needs to approve the project.

**IN THE MATTER OF
ADJOURN**

8:08 P.M.

Rep. Schuring closed the meeting and advised that he and the Commissioners would be available for any additional questions.

Carroll County Commissioners

/s/Janice E. Leggett
Janice E. Leggett, Clerk Supervisor
(PREPARED BY)

/s/ Robert E Wirkner PRESIDENT
Robert E Wirkner
/s/ Thomas R White
Thomas R White
/s/ Jeffrey L Ohler
Jeffrey L Ohler
/s/ Robert E Wirkner PRESIDENT
Robert E Wirkner

We hereby certify the foregoing to be true and correct.
/s/ Janice E. Leggett
Janice E. Leggett, Clerk Supervisor