

North Fort Worth Alliance  
Monthly Meeting  
Feb 18, 2012

Guests in attendance: Representative Vicki Truitt, County Commissioner Gary Fickes, Councilman Sal Espino

President Rusty Fuller called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. He introduced the guests and speakers, Russell Laughlin, with the TRTC and I35 Coalition, and Michelle Underwood with the ER at Alliance. Also attending was Vic Suhm, Exec. Director of the TRTC. Rusty reminded that he had brought with him the video of what I35 will look like when the expansion is finished. It is a simulated aerial view of driving north on the freeway. It's a very good rendering of what the road will look like, and how it will work.

Rusty reported that the Re-districting committee has come up with a plan that balances districts and comes close to keeping existing representation of race percentages. They should have something to report to us at next meeting.

Rusty gave the following update on road construction in the area:

The City Council will take up the following at the Mar. 6 Council meeting:

- Beach from Timberland to Keller Hicks
- Section of Ray White 4 lane to N. Tarrant Parkway
- Shiver Gap (westbound area that was never widened)

Assuming executive approval is given on Mar. 6, these projects should begin in about 4 weeks.

Timberland Rd and Timberland Blvd gap should start soon, but is complicated by drainage issues on N. Caylor which are being resolved by the City.

The Ray White Gap in Crawford Farms is a City/County joint project – no specific dates at this time.

Rusty asked Councilman Espino if he could work on consistency of road names in our area. Things like Timberland Blvd/Timberland Road; Beach and Alta Vista and Ray White mingling together, etc.

Rusty pointed out that there has been some discussion about Salt Water Disposal Wells from the gas drilling activities in the area. The City will soon be holding a hearing on extending the moratorium on such wells in the city, which expires April 12. NFWA would like to take up this issue.

Currently the only recognized method of disposing of water from gas well fracturing, is injecting into the ground. Citizens are concerned about the waste of this precious resource, especially in light of recent draught. No effort is now made to recover the water – it is considered too expensive, and too time consuming. The technology is not yet there to achieve efficient, cost effective re-cycling. We propose that NFWA try to convince the State to force the cost of water re-cycling to be carried by the gas companies, and included in price of natural gas from the shale.

The current method is to install disposal wells, and either transport the waste water by truck, or put piping in the ground to carry water to wells outside of the City. There is much concern about the damage that is currently being done to City roads by the truck traffic. An exemption to the moratorium has been requested for a well in the Alliance area. Quicksilver already has pipes in the ground that could be used to transport water to this well. City staff has made some recommendations to the ordinance which seem reasonable to Rusty, and he has asked several others to look them over.

Rusty proposes that NFWA take up the issue of salt water disposal wells and an alternative to disposal of that water, encouraging re-use, as opposed to disposal. We suggest that the City's moratorium be extended, and that the exception for the Alliance project be denied.

Congressman Espino pointed out that currently, if you live on the border of the city, you could find yourself next to a well placed in the unincorporated areas. The county has no authority over the location of wells. They only have to follow RR Commission guidelines. The issue will probably come before the State Legislature.

Representative Truitt said that the Legislature is looking at it from the standpoint of granting counties zoning authority. Traditionally, rural people usually are opposed to county zoning/regulation. The sentiment among most legislators is they don't want to grant counties zoning restriction authority (historical tradition).

Comments from the audience included concerns over tremors, ground water contamination, as well as waste of water resources. Mr. Laughlin, who is employed by Hillwood, pointed out that the request for an exemption to the moratorium for the Alliance well, is not coming from Hillwood, but from Quicksilver who owns the well in question (not on Hillwood property). Hillwood installed piping for this purpose in early stages of development, based on a 50 year water plan.

Councilman Espino stated that the City does not have regulatory authority over oil & gas. They only have land use control. There is also concern that there may be a legal challenge to extending the moratorium, as a "moratorium" is temporary.

Comissioner Fickes had a question for Rep. Truitt - only 4 or 5 counties Texas have over 1 mil people. Most counties are rural population. That's why it's difficult to get legislation like this passed. Is there a way to do it through local bills, without naming the county?

Representative Truitt – you can't name the county, but you can name descriptive things that describe the county. There are many non metro residents to convince.

Rusty stated that we need to find the best way to structure our efforts, that will cover all contingencies. If anyone is interested in helping with this effort, he encourages them to contact one of the officers. We will need help to do this.

Michelle Underwood from the ER at Alliance gave a presentation on the ER. It is a division of North Hills Hospital, and is a stand alone ER located at I35 and North Tarrant Parkway. The facility is a full service ER with laboratory services, complete diagnostic equipment, and an on site blood bank. For more information on the ER at Alliance, please visit their website at [www.ERatAlliance.com](http://www.ERatAlliance.com). They also have a community room available for use by local

community groups. Rusty reminded us that our organization has had an impact on medical and ER services. We have focused on it in the past and now we are seeing results.

Russell Laughlin gave a summary of transportation developments in North Fort Worth, including the North Tarrant Expressway, and the I35W corridor. The TRTC is a large group of elected officials and local business leaders, covering a large geographic area. They are committed to ensuring that resources get spent on development in our area, and include long term planning. Mr. Laughlin's job with Hillwood is focused on economic development and transportation is a very important component.

Russell has worked with NFWA for a long time. The learning curve is huge on transportation issues. Transportation is complicated and it's always about the money. But this is where we, as a group, can have an impact. We can influence elected officials by sending emails and letters expressing support or opposition.

Currently funded projects include the 35W/North Tarrant Expressway, which is a 36 mi roadway piece from 121 East of the airport through 820/35W. It is a result of legislation and public private partnerships. It is toll based, in a unique configuration, always including free lanes with the toll lanes.

There are three parts to upgrading 35W from I30 north to 170 (county line). Funding is 25% federal or state, 75% private sector. The first phase from 820 to 287 will be completed by 2015, and the next from I 30 to 820 by 2016 if funded this year. The third phase is just now in preliminary financing and design, and maybe scheduled for 2017 or 2018.

How can we have an effect? Be educated, don't be emotional, prioritize. Money is what we're talking about, and we can have an influence on getting the dollars spent in Tarrant County instead of some other county.

The 35W Coalition is a group of major businesses located up & down the 35W corridor. (AA, BNSF, Hillwood etc) They provide business knowledge of what is needed to help business grow in Tarrant County. They take that message to the TCRTC.

Our local representatives in the Senate & Congress are good, they understand economic development. It is important to understand that needs outstrip available money by 20 or 30 times. In recent years, existing funds have funded about \$10 billion per year. But 60 to 70 percent of that goes to maintenance. New roads have to be paid for by other dollars. We need to work on keeping local dollars local!

Russell also gave an update on Alliance Town Center development. There are 7 new projects in Town Center this year, including the hospital. They are working on development of another HCA hospital in the area where the Alliance ER is located, and Cook Children's is interested in a facility in the Alliance area. Other projects include senior assisted housing, FAA's office building at Heritage and 35, which will include 500 new jobs. The next retail phase will push the Town Center piece. There will be more multi family housing, and North Riverside Dr./Old Denton Road will be finished in 1 1/2 yrs all the way to THR hospital at Golden Triangle.

A question was raised about HOV lanes not being included in the transportation plan. Russell said there is a plan to vary the tolls in the toll lanes for high occupancy. He pointed out that

HOV is not the focus for the future in terms of having fewer cars on the road. That emphasis is on Rail development.

Councilman Espino said that the public is clear on not raising gas taxes. Creative financing is the only way to build new roads. Elected officials have not even been given options to propose new revenues in other areas, like fees.

Russell emphasized that local solutions are what is needed. We should not wait for federal or state legislation to solve our local problems.

Representative Truitt asked Mr. Laughlin's opinion on people saying there is money to build roads, by re-allocating government spending, eliminating waste, fraud and abuse, etc.

Russell believes that is a mis-representation of the facts. Moving money around doesn't create more money. For example – part of the current gas tax goes to education. If we take it away from education to put it into roads, then we'll be short in education. (The education allocation is part of the constitutional guarantee of public education)

Russell pointed out that Hillwood offered legislation to tax themselves an additional 10 cents in ad valorem tax, if it could be guaranteed to be put back into transportation in this area. It would not pass.

Rusty reported that some new communication is going on regarding Gold Triangle project. Thanks to Representative Truitt & Commissioner Fickes, who got City, County, State, and hospital people talking to one another. They are aware that the public is unhappy about progress.

Next month someone from the THR hospital will be here to talk about their services and future plans. Also in April, Mark Youngs, with Keller ISD will speak about budget issues, and how we can work with the legislature for more effective education funding. (We hope to have the same type of presentation from NWISD in the future.)

One thing we need everyone to do is give us your email address, so be sure you complete the sign in sheet. Then when we send you a request to write a letter to elected officials, we need you to write it, then ask two others to do it, and have them ask two others, and so on. This is how we can make a difference.

Representative Truitt invited everyone to her Coffee Tour, which will be in our area on Mar 1, 2012 at Double Shots on North Tarrant Parkway from 7:00 am to 8:30 am. She would love to buy you a cup of coffee, and chat about any area of concern.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40.

Respectfully submitted,  
Fran Rhodes, Secretary