

*Minutes*  
*Meeting of the Executive Committee*  
*September 13, 2006*  
*Centralina's Conference Center*  
*Charlotte, NC*

*Officers Present*

Dumont Clarke, Chairman  
Bob Austell, Secretary  
Marie Moore, Treasurer

*Delegates Present*

Jack Roden  
John Torbett  
Mitch Abraham  
Carroll Heavner  
Lloyd Austin  
Pat McCrory  
Nick Bishop  
Brad Harvath

*Centralina Staff*

Al Sharp  
Barbie Biggerstaff  
Venecia Rock  
Rebecca Yarbrough  
Gayla Woody

*Others Present*

Bill McNair  
Gianni Longo  
Harold Shapiro  
Polly Jackson  
Rep. Eldridge Emory  
Wendy Bell

1. *Amendment to the Agenda*

No amendments.

2. *Report of Service Agreements (Information Only)*

The agenda contained a list of agreements entered into with member governments since August 25, 2006. Under these agreements, staff will provide contract assistance to the member government. No action was required.

3. *The Region's Future*

The greater Charlotte region, with a population of approximately two million people, is growing at an amazing rate. We share many opportunities and responsibilities with our neighbors to the south and have invited representatives from Catawba Regional Council of Governments to join us to plan and strategize about our combined future. Centralina and Catawba Regional are currently engaged in Phase I of a proposed three-phased regional visioning process. Gianni Longo, a principal of ACP and the consultant for this project, reported preliminary findings in this process and presented a draft of the values and themes that are emerging as the core of a regional framework (See Attachments #1 & #2).

4. *Preview of PowerPoint Presentation*

“What Centralina does for its clients—member governments, the region and the citizens.”

Al Sharp shared a powerpoint presentation on the services that Centralina provides to our member governments to the committee for their comments. The committee critiqued the presentation and gave positive feedback for the senior staff to adjust and prepare a final presentation template to meet with members and potential member governments. Listed are some of the comments made during the discussion:

- Include a pie chart with percentage numbers of member hours for projects.
- Economic development emphasis and support to member governments.

- Technical Assistance specific to jurisdiction and inform member governments of the number of hours and cost of the project
- Include the brochure on the website and the benefits to member governments
- Make it a selling instead of information document
- Customize it to the jurisdiction being visited.

5. *Comments from the Executive Director*

6. *Adjournment*

No further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Building on a Comprehensive Review  
of the Bi-state Greater Charlotte Region**

September 13th will be a very special joint meeting with members of the governing board of the Catawba Regional Council of Governments, and will be focused on a single critical topic—the future of our bi-state region. **Your input at this meeting is essential to the success of the regional visioning project. Come ready to discuss your perception and knowledge.**

As you know, Centralina and Catawba Regional have partnered on SEQL over the past three years, and are currently engaged in Phase I of a proposed three-phased regional visioning process. Mr. Gianni Longo of ACP, our consultant for this project, has been working with a citizen task force that represents all sectors of the region to glean from adopted public policy and regional documents common values that may form the framework of a regional vision. This is the first time in the nation that such an approach has been used, and it is yielding **significant results on a fast-tracked and very cost-effective methodology.**

We are now at a point where your active involvement is needed. At the meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup>:

- Mr. Longo will share with you the preliminary findings and a draft of the values and themes that are emerging as the core of a regional framework
- The COGs leadership will be asked:
  - For your input as part of a “reality check” on these values and themes
  - To discuss the appropriate next steps to unfold the values and themes and obtain broader consensus, including appropriate public input
  - To arrive at consensus on the best methods for reaching out to all the elected officials and to other civic and business leaders in the region.

Your participation in this process is needed at this formative stage. Why? Because the final visioning framework will be based largely on documents that have been adopted by our region’s individual governing boards, it will have significant public policy ramifications. We also do not want to fall prey to the complaint that has hounded so many other visioning initiatives —that nothing gets done with them. To ensure that something **CAN** be done with the framework, we need to have broad-based support, based on solid input from our elected leadership.

ACP has reported that they have found “a remarkable level of consistency in the region’s stated goals and values” in the documents. They have also found “an extraordinarily high level of consistency in the calls for long-range planning” and “the notion that collaborative efforts are necessary.” These statements speak well of the regional dialogue already prevalent in the region and the cumulative impact of SEQL. We look forward to your engagement in this meeting, as we expand that dialogue on the process that was introduced last month in Salisbury.

## Why a Regional Vision Now?

Our bi-state region is growing by leaps and bounds. The region is proud of our growth and economic vitality, as well as the many natural and built features that make our region a great place to live and work. However, we also recognized that this growth has brought with it a number of challenges. We are facing air quality and water resource challenges, increasing traffic congestion, shortfalls in transportation and other infrastructure funding to meet our region's needs, and projections of continuing growth. We are "growing together"—jurisdictions that used to be miles from Charlotte are now much closer—because both Charlotte and the surrounding municipalities are growing in area as well as population.

A number of jurisdictions in our region such as Charlotte, York County, and Salisbury have recognized these issues, and have stepped forward with thoughtful, citizen-inclusive processes to look at where they, as a community, want to be in the future, and how to get there. Leadership in these jurisdictions have made considered judgments that without a shared destination and a road map, they cannot be proactive toward the future, and may get a future they don't want.

Our Councils of Governments and other organizations with regional interest also have worked to address the future. Centralina and Catawba Regional jointly launched the Sustainable Environment for Quality of Life (SEQL) program three years ago with the help of US EPA. This project has successfully engaged over 80 of our local governments to undertake actions that will help to promote a sustainable future for the region—economically, environmentally, and in terms of livability. The Charlotte Regional Partnership's recent studies and strategic planning have focused attention on economic development, but also underscored the importance of quality of life as a key factor in continuing economic prosperity. The Lee Institute's 2004 forum, "The Region Speaks" brought together over 150 regional leaders and citizens to talk about what is important to the regional future from their perspective.

Now is the time to weave those good works, and others like them, into a regional vision for the future. Because *a region is more than the sum of its parts*, our region is not just a collection of cities, towns, and county governments. In its geography, sense of place, shared values, and connections we are drawn together. In many cases, it may be also a set of shared convictions, desires for the future, and principles that can provide a foundation for longer-term collaborative action. By highlighting common values and principles, we can work to protect our assets for the future, expand our opportunities, and may well discover that through regional discussion we can realize our community visions more fully.

Moreover, *our visioning process will be unique in the nation*. This process will build on the excellent work that has already taken place in the majority of our communities, using adopted municipal and county visions and/or comprehensive plans, as well as several regional documents regarding the region's potential future. Centralina and Catawba Regional COGs are working with ACP Planning and Visioning, one of the premier national firms in this field, to comb these documents for areas of consensus around goals, objectives, and values, as well as differences. A regional visioning task force, working with the consultant, will then use this work as the basis for crafting a core vision based on consensus, and recommending processes to move that agreement into action.

We hope that this will be the first phase of a proposed three-phase process, summarized below:

Phase I: "Take stock" of the degree of commonality of the visions, plans, and policy documents of the key public and not-for-profit organizations that have visions for the region's future. Identify differences (topically and geographically) and gaps. Validate findings with the Regional Visioning Task Force of citizen "opinion makers" and local government professionals. With the Task Force, develop the core values and common vision elements to form the basis of a broader regional vision. Also with the Task Force, develop a process for advancing the core vision, addressing differences, and filling gaps. Phase I is underway and will run through October 2006.

Phase II: Through a process to be determined in Phase I, vet the core values and common vision statements with the broader public and elected officials. Work toward consensus in those areas where consensus is close and deemed achievable. Gain momentum for moving forward with implementation activities of priority consensus items, and vet proposed methods for addressing issues around which no consensus exists but which may be deemed critical to regional collaboration. Phase II is expected to run from approximately January 2007 through the fall of 2007.

Phase III: Adopt and implement the shared vision and establishing any approved processes for continuing the discussion. This phase ideally will be ongoing. The third stage of widespread adoption by policy-making bodies and significant stakeholder groups for those areas of consensus, should allow us as a region and its non-governmental partners to actively pursue what we all value.

Based on a trend of increased regional collaboration in this region, as well as increasing need to work multi-jurisdictionally on a range of issues, the two Councils of Government and key regional partners believe that the time is right to engage in this discussion. Governmental, private, and not-for-profit leadership have all recently focused energy and creativity on regional projects. Most other metro regions of significance—Southern California, Metropolitan Washington, Denver, Orlando—have already adopted or are underway with developing cross-sectoral visions, and are marshalling their resources to maintain their regional advantages. We believe that our continued competitiveness and regional desirability rest to some extent on our willingness to engage in this type of integrated planning together.

This will be one of the first times our region as a whole has engaged in this level of discussion, and we may find that we do not agree on all points. However, by engaging in a discussion of how we want to grow, and what we want to be in the future, we can work toward avoiding unintended consequences, missed opportunities, and reactive approaches to our future. We can identify policies and actions that support our shared values, and actively focus on achieving our shared priorities.

- What do we value so much that we want to preserve it for our children and their children?
- How do we want to live our lives in this region 25 years from now? How do we want the region to look and feel?
- What do we need to do to get where we want to be?

This process will provide the opportunity to answer those questions.