



MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
November 17, 2004

Members Present:

John Eresian, Chair, Hollis	Nelson Disco, Merrimack
Martin Michaelis, Amherst	Donald Wunderlich, Merrimack
Marilyn Peterman, Amherst	Karin Elmer, Merrimack
Bradley Vear, Amherst	Richard Roulx, Merrimack
Helen Fenske, Brookline	Bill Parker, Milford
Stephen Murray, Brookline	Pierce Rigrod, Milford
Howard Dilworth, Jr., Hudson	Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon
Suellen Seabury Quinlan, Hudson	Kathy Hersh, Nashua
Thaddeus Luszey, Hudson	Ram Maddali, NH DOT
Robert Kostecki, Hudson	Ansel Sanborn, NH DOT

Others Present:

Jeff Brillhart, NH DOT	Arthur LeBlanc, Town of Hollis
Bruce Hyman, Wilbur Smith Assoc.	Paul Newman, City of Nashua
Meredith Hatfield, NH Charitable Foundation	

Staff Present:

Steve Williams, Executive Director	Roger Hunt, Assistant Director
Ryan Friedman	Steve Schaffer
Betsy Hahn	Shirley Vance
Camille Pattison	Matt Waitkins

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

Privilege of the Floor

There were no members of the public in attendance who wished to speak.

Introduction of New Members

The Chair welcomed new Commissioners: Stephen Murray from Brookline and Robert Kostecki from Hudson.

Approval of Minutes - September 1, 2004

It was moved by Richard Roulx, seconded by Nelson Disco:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on September 1, 2004
be approved.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mid-Year Budget Revision

Steve Williams discussed the mid-year budget revision that was distributed. He explained the necessity of mid-year adjustments which are due to: increased carry-over funds from FY 04 grants; several new grants; contracts not yet available; and carry-over to FY 06.

He then introduced NRPC's newest employees: Roger Hunt is the Assistant Director, specializing in Land Use and Steve Schaffer is the new GIS Manager.

It was then moved by Marilyn Peterman, seconded by Nelson Disco:

THAT the midyear budget revision as presented be adopted.

The motion carried unanimously.



Input Session for the NH Department of Transportation Long Range Transportation Business Plan

Ansel Sanborn, from the NH DOT, gave a brief history and discussion of the NH Transportation Business Plan. Listening sessions have been held with all of the regional planning commissions in the State to gather input on the Business Plan. A slide presentation was given. The purpose of the Business Plan is to: identify key issues; articulate a transportation vision; recommend realistic strategies and actions; and develop policy and programming improvements for the DOT. The approach to the project will be customer focused, performance based, comprehensive and transformational. The project schedule started with the listening sessions being held during October and November. Visioning sessions will be held during March and April 2005 and a Draft Strategy is scheduled to be completed by November 2005.

At that point Sanborn turned the meeting over to Steve Williams who provided a summary of the issues that had been identified by NRPC staff.

NRPC Regional Issues

Process:

- The ten year plan process does not focus on either planning or regional priorities as identified by local officials and the MPO.
- There are far too many situations where we are asked to approve things without reasonable local input. This is primarily due to schedule conflicts involving the adoption of the 10 Year Plan by the Legislature, the required public input process at the regional level and the federal deadline for submittal of STIP and Air Quality Conformity.
- Takes far too long for small municipal projects to move from application to construction (up to 14 years)
- The process should give the MPO more responsibility for selecting and programming projects.

Communication:

- Difficult to communicate with NH DOT because there is no one point of contact

Safety:

- There is no method for fast tracking that will directly address identified safety problems.

Land Use:

- Conflicts between traffic and land use along state highways. This is particularly true of smaller communities where state roads carry regional traffic through/past sensitive land uses.

Mobility:

- East-West travel (crossing Merrimack River, NH 101A, NH 101)
- Locally important congestion points

Multimodal:

- The state is building a one mode system.

State Issues

- Mobility
- Safety
- Preservation
- Land Use
- Air Quality
- Funding

The discussion was then turned over to Bruce Hyman, a consultant from Wilbur Smith Associations who facilitated a discussion by the group on the issues that were most important in the NRPC region. Comments were taken and recorded by DOT to be included in the visioning sessions to be held next spring.



Among the issues identified were the following:

- There is a need for more regional implementation of bicycle facilities and better support of that by the DOT.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the complexity of the process for receiving funds for transportation improvements.
- Others expressed the concern that there needed to be better communication with the public in regard to the selection of projects and also the ultimate implementation.
- The New Hampshire population is aging and the transportation system needs to address that reality.
- Individuals stated that the New Hampshire Tomorrow plan was produced 30 years ago and identified many of the same issues, but the recommended solutions were never implemented.
- It was mentioned that the NRPC region is strongly connected to Boston and improvements in the options for getting to Boston need to be enhanced, including both commuter rail and other modes.
- The community master plans should be a source of proposed projects, and those projects should tie directly into the identified needs of the community. All too often that connection is not made.
- There was also the feeling that no vision was being expressed for the direction that the transportation system should be going.
- Others felt that the NH DOT Transportation Business Plan should be integrated with other major planning efforts at the state level.
- There needs to be better consideration of environmental issues of transportation projects such as salt and heavy metal impacts on watersheds.
- Improved access to Manchester Airport continues to be an issue and no one understands why the Airport Access Road is not underway.
- Due to the length of time the process takes, the consensus in favor of a project at the local level falls apart before the project gets implemented. Also, it is impossible to address the economic development needs of the state with such a long time frame.
- There should be better coordination between transportation and other infrastructure systems (water, wastewater).

It was then moved by Kathy Hersh, seconded by Tad Luszey:

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 9:20 PM.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Williams, Official Recorder