



MINUTES
NRPC Executive Committee
December 15, 2004

Present: John Eresian, Chair
Howard Dilworth, Jr.
Mike Fimbel
Marilyn Peterman
Frank Bolmarcich
Andy Prolman

Absent: Kathy Hersh
Nelson Disco
Bill Parker

Staff: Stephen Williams, Executive Director
Roger Hunt, Assistant Director

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Minutes of the November 17, 2004 meeting

The minutes were reviewed by the members of the Executive Committee. Group consensus was that the minutes were appropriate and acceptable. Motion by Peterman, second by Eresian to approve the minutes; passed unanimously.

Closed Session to Discuss Personnel Issue

Eresian indicated to the Committee that the next agenda item would fall within the permissible criteria for discussion in closed session under New Hampshire law.

Dilworth moved that the Executive Committee move into closed session under RSA 91-A:3(II)(c), for discussion of matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of a person. Bolmarcich seconded the motion. A roll call vote produced the following result: Peterman, yes; Dilworth, yes; Bolmarcich, yes; Prolman, yes; Fimbel, yes; Eresian, yes. The Committee entered closed session at 6:12 pm.

The Committee returned to open session at 6:39 pm. Peterman moved that the record of the closed session be sealed for an indefinite span of time. Bolmarcich seconded; the motion was approved unanimously.

Acknowledgment and Appreciation of Frank Bolmarcich's Chairmanship

Eresian noted Bolmarcich's exemplary leadership of the Executive Committee and the Planning Commission. In honor and appreciation of his tenure, the Committee presented Frank with a gift and the thanks of the organization.

NHARPC Proposed Legislative Positions

Williams briefly explained that the New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions had formulated a list of potential priority issues that the Association might encourage the legislature to approve. He distributed a matrix showing which issues were supported or not supported by five other RPCs in recent weeks.

After brief discussion, Peterman moved that NRPC not support Item #3, regarding school costs. Bolmarcich seconded; the motion passed unanimously. In the interest of efficiency, the Committee agreed to consider and vote on the remaining recommendations as a group.



Peterman expressed reservations about #2, regarding authorization of mandatory preliminary review for site plans. She indicated that Amherst had tried this and found it cumbersome, and that a more informal discussion with applicants seemed to produce better results. Prolman suggested that it would be helpful to distinguish between major and minor subdivisions for purposes of mandatory review. Williams pointed out that the proposal was to allow towns or cities to choose whether pre-review would be mandatory or voluntary. After discussion, the Committee consensus was that #2 was acceptable.

Considerable discussion took place concerning the gas tax increase. Prolman said that he didn't view taxation as an RPC issue. Peterman expressed reluctance, describing Amherst's experience with local funding for state highway improvements. Williams noted that NRPC is also an MPO and that gas tax is directly relevant to transportation planning. Fimbel asked how the money would be allocated if an increase were to be approved; he expressed support for this item as long as it brought new revenue to the NRPC region. Eresian asked if a two-cent increase was sufficient. Several members discussed the possibility that the tax could be indexed. After discussion, the general consensus was that the gas tax item was supportable as drafted.

Regarding inclusionary housing (#1), Eresian said he had a strong favorable opinion on this item, and pointed out that Hollis has very little affordable housing. Peterman commented that without a brake on housing costs, we are making it difficult for our children to live in their own communities. She added that conservation-driven land purchases used to focus on environmentally sensitive land; now some towns tend to buy developable land, with resultant housing impacts. Williams described how affordable housing legislation functions nationwide, noting that unless a local government requires an affordable-housing component, it usually isn't built—i.e., voluntary incentives typically have not been successful. The Committee consensus was that Item #1 was needed in our region and should be supported.

Brief discussion resulted in consensus support for state RPC funding, LCHIP funding, groundwater reporting, strengthening regional impact standards, and GARVEE funding for the state's I-93 project. Members did not oppose in concept the barn preservation/restoration item, but felt that other funding needs should take precedence.

Williams summarized the Committee's discussion as follows: Committee agreed to support #1 (mandatory inclusionary zoning); #2 (preliminary site plan review); #4 (increasing state RPC funding); #5 (strengthen regional impact criteria); #6 (reporting large groundwater withdrawals); #7 (LCHIP funding); #8 (gas tax increase); and #9 (GARVEE bidding for I-93). The Committee declined to support #3 (school funding) and #10 (barn restoration). Fimbel moved to adopt the priority list as described by Williams. Peterman seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Williams summarized progress toward the February 24 Legislative Forum at Budweiser. He suggested that we invite another speaker in addition to Governor-elect Lynch, since last-minute conflicts often arise for governors. Williams put forward the possibility that David Soule also be invited; Soule is a former NRPC director who now teaches at Northeastern University, and is a good speaker. Committee consensus was to ask Soule to come also. Prolman will make contact with the Governor-elect's transition team regarding his availability.

Adjournment

There being no further business, several members simultaneously moved and seconded adjournment; motion carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.