



MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
September 19, 2001

Members Present: Marilyn Peterman, Chairman, Amherst
Frank Bolmarcich, Vice-Chairman, Nashua
Diane Nilsson, Treasurer, Wilton
Martin Michaelis, Amherst
Paul Wenger, Amherst
Anne Krantz, Amherst
John Eresian, Hollis
Leonard Smith, Hudson
Ann Seabury, Hudson
Howard Dilworth, Jr., Hudson
Joe Wozniak, Hudson
Donald White, Hudson

Pat Jewett, Litchfield
Andy Prolman, Litchfield
Jean Weston, Merrimack
Tony Holevas, Merrimack
Richard D'Amato, Milford
Bob Wolf, Mont Vernon
Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon
Vicky Arico, Mont Vernon
Kathy Hersh, Nashua

Staff Present: Andrew Singelakis
Julie Cummings
Ray Guarino
Steve Heuchert
Koren Melfi

Angie Rapp
Shirley Vance
John Vogl
Steve Wagner

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Privilege of the Floor

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

Introduction of New Members

The Chairman introduced new Commissioners: Donald White, Hudson, Kathy Hersh, City of Nashua, and Anne Krantz from Amherst. She also reported that Steve Heuchert is now the Sr. Planner/Land Use Program Coordinator and Mark Archambault is the Hollis-Brookline Town Planner.

Approval of Minutes – June 20, 2001

It was moved by John Eresian, seconded by Dick D'Amato:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on June 20, 2001
be approved.

The motion carried with 3 abstentions.

Chairman's Report

The Executive Committee had talked about the possibility of holding a retreat for Commissioners. It will be discussed later in the meeting.

Discussion: Ten-Year Plan/Toll Studies

The Chairman turned the floor over to Andrew Singelakis to lead the discussion. As a side note, Andrew said that the December Commission meeting will deal with environmental and land use issues. The Circumferential Highway project has now been delayed in the State's Ten-Year Plan (STYTIP) from 2003 to 2009. This is a significant delay to a project which has been on the books for over 40 years. In his opinion, the Commission needs to formulate a response to DOT regarding the importance of this project.

The primary reason for the delay appears to be due to an increase in the projected costs of the I-93 widening, which has increased from about \$150m to over \$250m. That project is programmed for construction in 2004. That significant increase has moved many projects back in the plan. However, there is no project that has been subject to delays as long as the Circumferential Highway.

The Chair opened the floor to discussion. She also added that a Mayor's Regional Roundtable will be held on Saturday, September 29th at the Nashua City Hall Auditorium at 9:30 AM. All Selectmen and Aldermen as well as Legislators from the region have been invited. She asked those present to urge and encourage their representatives to take part in that meeting.

Several Commissioners strongly supported this project. Their message was that the longer the project is delayed, the more the towns will be suffering. The expansion of the airport will only increase traffic on local roads in Litchfield and Hudson. The NRPC has supported changes to both the Exits 1 and 2 project in Nashua and the Airport Access Road project. The Circumferential Highway project needs to be made a priority.

Andrew noted that there will be two hearings of the Governor's Advisory Council on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) in the region. Rep. Wheeler will be hosting a hearing on October 8, at 7:00 PM at the Nashua City Hall Auditorium, and Rep. Colantuono will host another on October 16 t 7:00 PM at the Hudson Town Hall. Commissioners were urged to attend these hearings.

Andrew then discussed a study entitled "NH Turnpike System, Potential Impacts of System Modifications and business Plan Analysis" prepared by the firm of Wilbur Smith at the request of the DOT. The study had four major components: 1) evaluation of Merrimack area toll removal; 2) impact of various Circumferential Highway scenarios vis-à-vis tolls; 3) evaluation of eliminating the Hampton Mainline Toll Plaza; and 4) a business plan for the elimination of the entire Turnpike system. There will be a meeting in Merrimack on September 25th with the Governor to discuss the study and its ramifications. The NRPC continues to support Merrimack on the issue of tolls. It was moved by Tony Holevas, seconded by Joe Wozniak:

THAT the Commission direct the Executive Director to send a letter to DOT and the Governor and Executive Councilors expressing the following:

- That the Commission reaffirms its support of scenarios that would result in the elimination of Exit 10 and 11 Tolls if completed in a revenue neutral manner, which is achieved by increasing the Bedford Mainline toll booth to \$1.
- This support is due to inequities in the Turnpike System that negatively affects Merrimack residents.
- State that while the NRPC region is subject to the State gas tax, a disproportionate amount of its projects are paid for through Turnpike toll revenues.

It was further moved by Diane Nilsson, seconded by Bob Wolf:

THAT the Commission direct the Executive Director to send a letter to the Governor's Council on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) or to attend the GACIT hearings on the Ten-Year Plan expressing the following:

- We appreciate that there are some hard choices to be made, and that we are not questioning the need for a widened I-93 or for the Manchester Airport Access Road.
- The Circumferential Highway has been on the books since at least 1959, and that we believe that Federal Highway funds will need to be used on that project.

- Express the importance of the project and the need to ensure that it is funded and constructed in a timely manner.

After further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Andrew gave a brief report on the status of two other transportation projects in the region.

101A Study: This study is being conducted by VHB of the corridor from Nashua through the Milford Oval. The project, while primarily a transportation improvements program will also focus on stormwater management, zoning and urban design issues. It will provide NHDOT with a prioritized list of transportation improvements for which \$17 has been programmed, will provide communities with a parcel specific plan for the review of development applications, and will also propose longer term solutions for traffic problems in the corridor.

There will be a meeting on September 25 at 6:00 PM at the Milford Town Hall to discuss the extension of Citybus to Milford from Nashua as part of the Access to Jobs program.

101 Study: This study will include the corridor from Bedford to Wilton. Bedford had originally obtained funds to evaluate highway improvements through the community, and the NHDOT has extended that contract to include visioning exercises to determine the characteristics of the roadway through Amherst, Milford, and Wilton. Wallace Floyd Design Group working with VHB has been selected as the consultant. An additional \$200,000 has been approved by the Federal Government to implement safety improvements along 101.

Commissioners' Retreat

The Chairman discussed holding a retreat similar to the ones we have held in the past. She suggested a Saturday from 9-4, which would include breakfast and lunch. It was the consensus of those present, that an evening during the week would be better. Perhaps we could use the Regional Plan as a topic for discussion. It was decided that this meeting would be scheduled for after the first of next year.

Commissioners' Roundtable

A Commissioner's Roundtable was held. The next full Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 19th.

It was then moved by Joe Wozniak, seconded by Dick D'Amato:

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Singelakis, Official Recorder