



**APPROVED MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Executive Committee
February 15, 2017**

Present:

Dave Hennessey, Chair
Mike Fimbel, Vice Chair
Karin Elmer, Treasurer
James Battis
Janet Langdell
Susan Ruch
Tom Young

Absent:

Sarah Marchant

Staff:

Tim Roache, Executive Director
Jennifer Czysz, Assistant Director

Guest:

Jenny Maxwell

1. Call to Order:

Hennessey called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Business

a. Minutes – January 18, 2017

The Executive Committee reviewed the minutes from the January 18, 2017 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes as submitted by Battis, seconded by Young. The motion passed 5-0-1.

b. December/January Dashboard and Financial Reports

Roache reviewed the Dashboard noting that staff have been busy as the New Year commences. Roache attended the NH Rail Transit Advisory Committee and NH Association of Regional Planning Commission meetings, NRPC held its annual Legislative Forum, Siskavich attended the GIS Technical Advisory Committee meeting, Czysz and Meno visited Neighborworks Southern NH for a tax credit tutorial, Meno presented the Climate Health Action Plan to the Nashua Public Health Advisory Committee, and Roache the CMAQ committee meeting.

We continue to have a healthy bank balance that supports two to three months of operating expenses. The payables and receivables remain current to be paid or received within 30 days. As an update on the NHDOT FY13 adjustment, Roache submitted the letter to NHDOT and has provided updated information to the agency. We are still waiting for resolution but may be getting closer. There were no significant changes to the FY17 working budget.

The profit and loss shows nothing out of the ordinary. We remain in the black however DOT billing is still a bit behind. We have adjusted staffing assignments to ensure we hit our DOT contract targets. Additionally, we have a RFQ out for transportation engineering services for some programmatic items where we need additional expertise, such as freight and ITS planning. This will also give us an on call safety valve should a request come in that we need assistance. The RFQ is set on a not to exceed basis, and may result in nothing but at least provides us options to fully meet community needs.

Battis made a motion to accept and place the report on file, second by Young. The motion passed 7-0-0.

3. Old Business

a. Executive Director Evaluation

Roache shared the evaluations questions and policy approved in 2013. Hennessey requested that the evaluation be on the March agenda to simply discuss the process and ensure there are no changes needed to the evaluation form. Langdell also suggested that the March meeting provide opportunity for those new to the process to ask questions. Committee members will complete their forms after the March meeting. Hennessey requested that the actual review be conducted at the April meeting. Langdell said we will need the self-evaluation sooner than later so that the chair has it when he merges the individual committee members' responses.

b. Executive Committee Vacancy

The vacancy announcement was sent out after the last Executive Committee meeting. No additional responses were received. The one volunteer is willing to make the time commitment. The board's only consideration was that there is already a committee member from the same community. Committee members were not opposed to doing so.

Fimbel made a motion to appoint Bill Boyd of Merrimack to fill the vacancy left by Dan Kelly, as per the bylaws the term would be the time remaining in Kelly's term, second by Young. The motion passed 7-0-0.

c. Legislative Forum Wrap Up

Roached noted the staff held a wrap up conversation at their regular meeting. A few ideas came up including the recommendation to replace posters with a slide show of work products on the large projection screens. Hennessey also reiterated that we should be recording the presentations and distributing the video online and to local cable access television stations. Other staff suggestions included having a handout folder with information such as speaker bios, NRPC services, etc. in lieu of the tables of work product handouts. Additional thoughts included utilizing evites or other messaging to boost attendance.

Committee members discussed possibly changing the structure of the event in order to elicit legislators to speak about their proposed legislative initiatives as used to be the format many years ago. Another suggestion was to consider the event more of an annual meeting. This would be more of a name change. Hennessey noted that the legislative forum was more heavily attended by representatives of Nashua than the surrounding communities. Ruch asked if there is anything that we are missing from having a theme and panel opposed to having legislators discuss items of interest in the region?

Roache asked if in prior years Committee members personally invited their legislators to attend. Langdell noted that the two legislators she personally invited did attend. Perhaps all Commissioners are encouraged to do so for future events. Additionally, we should reach out to municipal staff and ask them to encourage attendance of local boards and committees that may be interested in the event topic.

Additional comments, feedback and suggestions included:

- Speaker presentations should be posted online
- Put reserved signs on a couple back tables to force people to fill front tables
- Have a wider presentation table with a seat for the moderator
- Ensure there are steps at both ends of the podium

- Make sure the end chairs aren't too close to the edge
- Make sure presentations include something for all communities whether small or large
- Use different microphones or eliminate buzzing from the existing set

Committee members enjoyed sitting with and getting to know staff. Fimbel noted that it was interesting to hear the various items that need to be in place for economic development projects to succeed, particularly reducing energy costs and ensuring adequate housing options. All in all committee members said it was an excellent event. After noting the chair's NRPC name tag and reflecting on prior requests for nametags, Elmer and Ruch requested magnetic name tags for all Executive Committee members.

Elmer made a motion to purchase magnetic names tags for all Executive Committee members, second by Young. The motion passed 7-0-0.

4. Other Business

Fimbel asked if we wanted to discuss any of the legislative items from the NHPA list. Roache noted that Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director in Nashua, previously served on Massachusetts based regional planning agency's legislative affairs committee that reviewed and recommended policy positions based on the regional plan. If NRPC were to have such a group it could draft position statements based on consistency with the regional plan. This might be a more effective method of monitoring legislation. Langdell suggested that we need to be able to respond on large items of regional impact and that commissioners need to speak with the board that appointed them to be able to shape NRPC's position. Hennessey added that not all our communities unanimously agree. Fimbel agreed it is up to commissioners to maintain dialogue with their selectmen or council members, but perhaps we can prompt commissioners when something important is coming to notify them they need to touch base with their town. Committee members will think about whether to form a legislative affairs committee. Elmer suggested posing the question at the full March Commission meeting. At that time we could inquire whether there is any interest in forming such a committee and if there are any volunteers willing to do so. Hennessey suggested picking a couple bills at most to send to commissioners in advance of the meeting and ask each member to check with their town to see what their stance is.

Ruch asked about what the protocols are for correspondence and when correspondence comes from the chair versus the director. Hennessey agreed we should have some guidelines. Roache suggested we need to decide based on the content, if the correspondence is based on a motion from the commission or is issued on behalf of all 13 communities, then it may be more appropriate for the letter to come from the chair. Administrative items certainly should be signed by the chair. Sometimes both may sign dependent on the weight of the issue. Ruch suggested that when we decide to issue a letter we also need to decide who should sign the letter as part of the same motion.

5. Adjourn

The next regular Executive Committee meeting will be March 15, 2017.

Motion to adjourn was made by Ruch with a second by Young. The motion passed 7-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:05.