



**DRAFT MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Executive Committee
August 15, 2018**

Present:

Susan Ruch, Chair
Karen Elmer, Vice Chair
Jim Battis, Treasurer
Mike Fimbel
Janet Langdell
Bill Boyd
Dave Hennessey

Staff:

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director
Sara Siskavich, Assistant Director

Absent:

Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja
Sarah Marchant

1. Call to Order:

Ruch called the Executive Committee meeting to order at 6:07 pm. She offered congratulations to Siskavich in her new role as Assistant Director.

2. Business

a. Minutes: June 20, 2018

The Executive Committee reviewed the minutes from the June 20, 2018 meeting. Langdell requested grammatical and sentence structure changes on Page 3, section d and Hennessey pointed out a grammatical correction on page 2. Motion to approve the minutes as amended by Fimbel, seconded by Elmer. The motion passed 6-0-1. Boyd abstained.

b. June/July/August Dashboard and Financial Reports

Minkarah pointed out that the packet contained financials for May and handed out draft June financials. In summary the ending balance was high as anticipated, NRPC has not activated the credit line, and Minkarah is still working a change to the TD money market.

Jay summarized some take-aways from the annual Directors' Retreat. A theme was the need to better market the RPCs through the statewide association. The general lack of understanding is reflected in recent proposed legislation that would have had significant negative consequences. Fimbel concurred that there is particular misunderstanding of existing checks and balances that already govern the RPCs. Elmer pointed out that the upcoming NHMA webinar on the RPCs will be helpful.

The group discussed RPC challenges of staff retention and recruiting, then turned to a review of the web stats, noting a spike in web traffic in July. Siskavich speculated that could be driven, in part, by public interest in HHW events, as HHW pages within the website consistently see the most use.

Minkarah returned to the working budget whereby there are no substantial changes from adopted. The year-end Profit and Loss is where we expected with lots of activity in June. Many land use projects are wrapping up. Minkarah passed out draft year end totals. HHW was at 242% of budget. And while some projects such as the Mont Vernon Master Plan Phase 3 and

Pelham Master Plan didn't occur, local contracts overall are higher than anticipated. In terms of the UPWP, next year's budget has been adjusted to draw down the dollars which we didn't expend this year. For expenses there are areas of swing, and we adjusted for these going forward. In summary, for the year we are down \$23K, attributed to not drawing down the UPWP. Final year end reporting will be presented at the next EC meeting.

Ruch made a motion to accept the Dashboard and Financials as reported, seconded by Boyd. The motion passed 7-0-0.

At Boyd's request, the group discussed strategies to encourage use of budget set aside for staff development, which include providing all staff, both junior and senior, with information about eligible opportunities. Fimbel asked about the general well-being of staff. Minkarah pointed out there have been various temporary stressors such as staffing the Hudson CR contract at a time when the land use group is down by one staff person due to a short-term disability, all at a time when there are the usual staff absences due to summer vacations. Lastly, Tanya Reinert, Financial Administrator, has given her notice, and NRPC will have a temp on site until a permanent replacement is made for the vacant position. Ruch noted her accuracy and professionalism in the role.

c. Strategic Plan Review

The group discussed the need to return to the Strategic Plan. Langdell expressed particular interest in revisiting as RPC marketing efforts are considered. Minkarah agreed it should have been included in the packet, but he will circulate the link as it is online as well. The group considered various ways re-examine the plan, including the notion of revisiting the mission statement, a new SWOT analysis, and a fresh look at how NRPC should manage effective delivery of services in this time of agency transition. Minkarah suggested that some programs such as Transportation and GIS are relatively intact but need to be cutting-edge, and others can be strengthened through strategic hiring, and in general there needs to be greater cross-training across the staff so that key functions do not rest entirely in the hands of single employees. Minkarah reviewed some of the new positive initiatives such as bike-ped counting and some GIS work to support MS4 requirements, and Ruch reminded the group that these projects need to be promoted. The group decided to repeat this agenda item for next meeting.

3. Old Business

a. NRPC Office Lease Update

Minkarah reviewed the search process to date, in that NRPC received ten proposals for 14 different suites. NRPC's current suite in Merrimack was one of the proposals, and the rest are located in Nashua. Minkarah speculated that this reflected the criterion to have easy highway access. The group discussed the relative difficulty in reaching the area's commercial realtors. Minkarah said we are not yet in the negotiating phase yet, but the goal remains to have a decision by September, though this is not hard and fast.

4. Transportation Programs

a. Amended UPWP Work Program and Budget

Minkarah reviewed NRPC's letter to NHDOT amending our budget for FY19. Originally the budget was the same as FY18, but due to under-expenditure there is a shift of \$65K to FY19, resulting in a staff-wide focus on transportation including the MTP, RSMS for two towns, and the NTS Expansion study. This shift will help offset the conclusion of land use projects and hazard mitigation grants. FY19 will also mark the kicking off of a new Housing Needs Assessment supported by a budget amendment for our OSI grant that will move resources from MS4 and allow opportunity for community engagement, such as a steering group. Hennessey said he would encourage involvement from the realtor community, and Elmer pointed out that college student input is critical if we want them to stay in the region. Minkarah is looking forward to new grant opportunities for Economic Development and mentioned that the new section is now public on the NRPC website.

b. MTP Update

Agenda item adequately discussed in 4a.

c. NTS Expansion Study Update

Agenda item adequately discussed in 4a.

d. Milford Freight Line

In response to NRPC's letter objecting to Pan Am's proposed de-commissioning of the Milford-Bennington line, Minkarah will be meeting with the Assistant Vice Pres. of Pan Am to discuss the region's freight needs. The group discussed the current condition and use of the line, its potential to support a recreational passenger line, and the potential impact of moving the line's freight to the road network.

e. Pedestrian/Bicycle Counts

Agenda item adequately discussed in 2c.

5. Other Business

a. Grant Updates

Minkarah reviewed the pending grant with USDA working with the Nashua soup kitchen, which would be premised on expanding access to their commercial kitchen for food-based entrepreneurs and for food service training opportunities. Boyd commented this would be similar to other successful coop facilities such as the one in Keene. NRPC is also waiting on word from the EPA Healthy Communities program on our proposal for HHW education, and we are collaborating with the other RPCs on a bike-ped infrastructure opportunity through FHWA.



The group discussed ways to bolster grant awareness and grant-writing resources for NRPC and member communities. Battis said this topic ties back to the strategic plan and suggested more future discussion in that context.

Elmer requested an update on the September Full Commission agenda. Minkarah is looking to arrange a presentation on SNHPC's age-friendly planning efforts. There are no major action items or items for approval.

Fimbel initiated a short discussion on the modifications to route 101 eastbound off-ramps on to 101a, as he's seeing culverts stacked up.

The group also discussed the upcoming NHDOT meeting on August 23 at 7pm, Merrimack Town Hall regarding pedestrian infrastructure along Continental Blvd. Boyd expressed concern about the logic of pedestrian improvements along 101A from Joeys down past Home Depot and the car dealership to Pennichuck Sq.

Fimbel reported on the EPA meeting at city hall a couple weeks ago to discuss the management of contaminated sludge at the tannery to support redevelopment.

Ruch pointed out she was able to attend the Moving Wall at the Souhegan High School in Amherst and it was a fantastic experience. She commended the Grella family for their efforts to bring the wall to the region.

b. New contracts and projects

Agenda item adequately discussed in 5a.

6. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A:3, II (d) Consideration of the lease of real property

There was not a need to enter into non-public session.

7. Adjourn

The next regular Executive Committee meeting will be Wednesday, September 19, 2018.

Motion to adjourn was made by Elmer with a second by Boyd. The motion passed 7-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:23.