



**APPROVED – MINUTES  
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
Held at the NRPC Office  
9 Executive Park, Suite 201, Merrimack, NH  
March 20, 2019**

**Members Present:**

Dave Hennessey, Pelham	Tim Tenhave, Merrimack	Karin Elmer, Merrimack
Ed Weber, Nashua	Sarah Marchant, Nashua	Tamara Sorell, Brookline
Hal Lynde, Pelham	Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja, Nashua	Dan Kelly, Nashua
Susan Ruch, Amherst	Janet Langdell, Milford	Chris Costantino, Milford
Dillon Dumont, Hudson	Bill Boyd, Merrimack	James Battis, Hudson
Mike Dell Orfano, Amherst	Kim Queenan, Litchfield	

**Others Present:**

Michael Licata, Liberty Utilities  
Susan Fournier, Brox Environmental Citizens  
Paul Patti, Nashua Resident

**Staff Present:**

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director  
Sara Siskavich, Assistant Director  
Gregg Lantos, MPO Coordinator

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

Ruch opened the meeting at 7:05pm with introductions.

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

No members of the public wished to speak.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – DECEMBER 19, 2018**

Ruch asked if there were any comments on the minutes of December 19, 2018. A small grammatical error was noted, after which Boyd motioned with a second from Lynde:

THAT the minutes of December 19, 2018 be approved as amended and placed on file for audit.

The motion **carried** with abstentions from Langdell, Elmer, Fimbel, and Costantino

**PRESENTATION: MICHAEL LICATA, LIBERTY UTILITIES: GRANITE BRIDGE NATURAL GAS PROJECT**

Mr. Licata presented the proposed [Granite Bridge Natural Gas project](#), which involves the construction of a new intra-state gas transmission pipeline along Rt 101 (a newly state-designated Energy Infrastructure corridor) as well as a liquified natural gas storage tank to be located in a 140-acre abandoned quarry property in Epping.

These proposed facilities will be sited outside of the NRPC region but will result in increased gas capacity for Liberty customers within the NRPC region currently served by the near-capacity Concord Lateral. Licata reviewed physical specifications of the proposed pipeline and tank, safety and aesthetic considerations, anticipated economic benefits including short-term job creation and longer-term stimulus from lower gas prices, and updated the group on the Project's status in the NH Site Evaluation Committee's approval process.

At the request of Tenhave, Licata explained that the project does open the door to possible new service in areas such as Candia, Epping and Raymond, though the franchise rights would need PUC approval. He went on

to explain that the 16" size is chosen in order to flexibly meet the predicted gas demand according to a 20-year planning horizon.

There was discussion regarding the capacity, size, and visual impact of the tank. At approximately 24M gallons, the proposed Epping tank would be roughly comparable to the C3 propane in Newington with storage of 22 million gals. The tank is 170 ft. tall, but will be set down within the quarry, and the wooded buffer around the site mitigates the visual impact, which is most noticeable on the overpass at Exit 6. Other visible spots include the Rockingham Rail Trail, where wetlands open out, and VHB analysis also predicts visibility on another 101 on-ramp.

In response to a question from Ruch, Licata further described the primary and secondary containment structures for the LNG tank, and what would occur if both were to fail. The site would be monitored 24/7 by on-site personnel and also remotely at the Londonderry control center. In the event of failure, the product would remain in stable liquid form, but failure would ruin the interior insulation. The product could be quickly vaporized and put back into the pipeline system if required. In the worst-case scenario, the product would collect in safety impoundment area where it would warm back to gas and go to atmosphere.

Weber asked if the concrete containment structures would be hermetically sealed, being that concrete is a porous material, to which Licata said he did not know.

Hennessey pointed out that Pelham has had a natural gas pipeline for 55 years and the slow expansion of gas service into town has been insufficient and frustrating. He pointed out that arguments for and against expansion are confounded by issues of both capacity and economic demand and both must be adequately addressed in this proposal.

Licata described the status of the siting. The Company is almost done with field survey to inform updated cost estimates and to further avoid sensitive environmental areas. An important distinction between this project and other recent proposals is that the proposed pipeline alignment is physically within the entire NHDOT ROW, as apposed to parallel to it. NHDOT negotiations are underway. They want the facilities on the edge of their ROW, and they have asked for some design changes that have increased the number of directional drills and some switching of sides of the highway.

In terms of the permitting process, the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) is very rigorous and they have not yet filed the project. There are eight communities impacted and hopefully they will all be supportive. At the request of Battis, Licata laid out the construction timeline after approvals: it would take two construction seasons for the pipeline, three for the tank, but they would run concurrently.

Lynde asked for discussion on the project's impact on the propane market. Licata declined to speculate, as propane prices are generally regional in nature and it's not their line of business, but that he didn't think the project would be putting propane companies out of business, for example.

There was discussion about the impact of the project on rates. Licata stated that without additional capacity, the customer base will remain static, and costs are escalating. Several in the audience questioned whether the project would result in any customer cost savings. The \$2/month/residential customer project cost is just one component of the rate, and Licata explained that rates must be justified and approved in PUC rate cases.

Tenhaven asked if any impacted communities had been actively negotiating with the Company for things like fire equipment. Licata answered in the negative.

Boyd asked for specs on the pressure of the Concord Lateral. Licata said it is not their facility so he couldn't say for sure, but he thought it was operating at about 750 psi which is nearing its max operating pressure. Lynde pointed out that distinction needs to be made between capacity of the pipe versus supply limitations. A discussion of compressor station boosting ensued.

### **ADOPTION OF THE 2021-2030 NH TEN-YEAR TRANSPORTATION PROJECT PRIORITIES**

Lantos reviewed the TYP process to date. Through the spring of 2018 NRPC worked with member communities to develop a potential list of projects for inclusion in the Nashua Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the State's 2021 – 2030 Ten Year Transportation Plan. The region is allocated \$6.175 million in federal Surface Transportation Program funding per biennial period for the programming of new projects within the region.

In the fall, the initial list was sent up to NHDOT, who reviewed proposed costs for the projects. NHDOT estimated the Milford project and the Nashua Kinsley project costs to be higher than estimated by the communities, leading to a shortfall for all projects for the biennial period of \$857,170. In response to Langdell's question about why towns are receiving these cost estimates just now, Lantos said NRPC received the information from NHDOT yesterday, on March 19.

NRPC will explore the various options with its municipalities to close the funding gap, including modifying project scopes, adding more local funding and moving portions of funding to the following biennial period. The Region must address the deficit so that we can get a finalized list to NHDOT by May. Tonight, however, we must take action on the list, and authorize the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the full MPO to meet this deadline.

Boyd asked if communities are being asked to increase their project match, to which Lantos answered no. Locally-managed projects are capped, however, so project increases are, in fact, the responsibility of the community. In response to Lynde, Lantos said the 80/20 reduction would be done dollar-for-dollar.

Tenhaven asked if there was a potential for another project to get slotted if final list approval is done by the Executive Committee, to which Lantos replied no.

Ruch suggested that the Commission could call a special meeting for the adoption. Langdell suggested that instead, if authority is delegated to the EC, all Commissioners could be invited to participate in that meeting.

Dell Orfano moved, with a second from Kelly:

THAT the Executive Committee be granted authority to adopt NRPC's final Ten-Year Transportation Project listing.

The motion **carried**.

### **GENERAL UPDATES:**

On account of time, Minkarah suggested the UPWP agenda item, the overview of the new two-year transportation work program, be deferred to the next meeting

**Staffing Update:** Minkarah mentioned that John Goeman is now on staff and is settling into his Wilton circuit riding duties. He will also be working on the Pelham master plan and the regional housing needs assessment.

**Update on Move to 30 Temple St:** Minkarah reviewed the timeline for the upcoming move to 30 Temple St. The physical move will take place March 25-26. While all staff will be reporting to duty, please be patient if they are somewhat slower to respond. The next commission meeting will be in the new space, but there will be an open house tentatively planned for April. Ruch acknowledge efforts of the office search committee volunteers and staff.

**DISCUSSION OF PENDING LEGISLATION:**

Minkarah then turned to the NHPA Legislative Watch list that he shared in hard-copy. Discussion centered around SB300 affecting the removal of FEET Exit 11 tolls, SB306 which establishes a statewide housing board of appeals, and SB152 relative to third party inspections conducted pursuant to a planning board approval. Boyd expressed his support for SB300 but noted that he does not support 306 because our current system provides adequate checks and balances. Elmer also expressed her concerns regarding the bill. Marchant offered a dissenting opinion, stating that the current process is long, onerous for communities and very stressful to abutters. Hennessey stated that the Board of Realtors is taking a strong supportive position, considering a call to action. Lynde stated the process should play out in Concord and hoped the voice of the realtors doesn't affect amendments to the bill.

In response to SB152, Dell Orfano suggested the wording, "most qualified" would be preferable to lowest cost bid. Weber concurred, adding "competent," and "responsible" are important attributes in terms of vendor choice. Labor issues and misclassified workers are problems known to afflict low bid jobs, which are often at risk of project overruns.

Ruch asked if there was any discussion needed of other pending bills. Dell Orfano mentioned SB244, an important bill sponsored by Sen Chandley and others that provides for the exclusion or exemption for distributions or transfers from publicly offered real estate investment trusts from certain types of taxation.

Kelly mentioned the importance of SB241, relative to funding for the project development phase of the capitol corridor rail project. The bill, if passed, would allow access to Boston UZA Formula Funding to complete the project development phase of the rail project.

Minkarah reminded the group that the Commission does not lobby, but as an advisory body we are able to take a position on issues or provide comment if the bills affect the orderly development of the region. Hennessey stated he preferred not to restate the Commission's position on rail at this point in time. Dell Orfano reminded the Commission that during the Kinder Morgan pipeline project, the Commission was steadfast in not taking a position on the project. Ruch said that the Commission can point out the effect of the bills without crossing the line into lobbying. Hennessey concurred, saying that consensus was clearly lacking during the Kinder Morgan proposal and similarly, we don't have consensus around the housing bill and thus should not vote. By contrast, the Commission has already taken action on rail, and in terms of SB300 and the tolls, we are not "plowing new ground." Boyd agreed that the value of taking a position is eroded without consensus on an issue.

After further discussion, Boyd motioned, with a second from Tenhave,

To authorize Minkarah to author a letter indicating the Commission's support for SB300 and SB241.

The motion **carried** unanimously with no abstentions.

**COMMISSIONERS ROUNDTABLE**

**Amherst (Dell Orfano):** Proposed warehouse on North Hollis Rd before the planning board, represents possible regional impact.

**Pelham (Hennessey and Lynde):** May 22-23 an affordable housing charrette is scheduled in Pelham, also the Moving Wall will be coming over Memorial Day; Forestry Committee mapping project with NRPC; three major road improvement projects.

**Merrimack (Tenhave and Boyd):** The Fidelity solar farm on its way; Souhegan Seaverns Bridge erosion issues, blockades so cars don't get too close; Fields Farm (Ireland property) option to acquire 80 to 100 acres; road projects at Bedford Rd, Wire Rd, Pearson Rd; April 3, 5-8 pm health fair/PFAS outreach event at Merrimack High School.

**Milford (Langdell):** Everything passed on warrant; BOS working on solar farm on Brox property; revitalization represented by new businesses coming into town, e.g. farm to table, micro-brewery, retail.

**Nashua (Golja and Marchant):** City is working towards final design on performing arts center; also out to bid on a new community space design for the library courtyard area; recently completed a very successful participatory budgeting exercise in the Tree Streets, resulting in the choice of a new futsal court and community garden beds; Greeley park boat ramp improvements will offer significant improved access to Merrimack River.

**Hudson (Dumont):** Town meeting, 22 articles passed including all zoning articles; there will be formation of a Capital Improvements committee.

**Litchfield (Queenan):** Community design chapter complete, transportation chapter in process; key warrant article approved land purchase near recycling center, otherwise biz as usual.

**Brookline (Sorrell):** Trails fb group; Alamo restaurant, looking forward to involvement in regional economic development initiatives.

After the Commissioner Roundtable, Ruch recognized Suzanne Fournier who expressed her concerns related to the proposed solar array on the Brox property.

**ADJOURN**

Motion to adjourn came from Boyd with a second from Langdell. The meeting ended at 9:18 pm. The next Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 19, 2019 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director: \_\_\_\_\_