



**MINUTES – APPROVED
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Held at the NRPC Office
9 Executive Park, Suite 201, Merrimack, NH
September 18, 2013**

Members Present:

Michael Dell Orfano, Amherst	Karin Elmer, Merrimack
Martin Michaelis, Amherst	Janet Langdell, Milford
Brad Vear, Amherst	Kevin Taylor, Milford
Robert Larmouth, Hollis	Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon
James Battis, Hudson	Dan Kelly, Nashua
George Hall, Hudson	Dave Hennessey, Pelham
Thomas Young, Litchfield	

Others Present: Nancy Mayville, NH DOT Alderman Diane Sheehan, Nashua

Staff Present: Kerrie Diers, Executive Director Karen Baker, Program Assistant
Tim Roache, Assistant Director Camille Martineau, Regional Planner
Camille Pattison, Principal Planner

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Chairman Elmer called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Elmer introduced new member to the Commission Kevin Taylor from the Town of Milford who is a member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. She also informed the group that James Battis of Hudson had agreed to join the Executive Committee. Fimbel informed the group that there were still 2 vacant seats on the Executive Committee and that someone from Nashua would be good to fill K. Hersh's position. Fimbel pointed out the commitment for being an Executive Committee member is only 10 meetings a year, usually August off, with meetings running for 1 to 1 ½ hours. Elmer asked for introductions around the table.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

There were no members of the public present that wished to speak.

REGIONAL FORUM PRESENTATION: NRPC BROADBAND PLAN

Michael Blair, UNH Broadband Mapping Program

Blair introduced himself and provided a program overview of the Broadband Mapping Program. He explained the group that this was a 5 year project that will end in about a 1 ½ at the end of 2014 with a mission of improving Broadband access in New Hampshire. He informed the group about the many partners in this program including UNH GRANIT, UNH Cooperative Extension, all 9 Regional Planning Commissions, NH Department of Resources and Economic Development, and NH Office of Energy and Planning. Components to the program include Mapping, Planning, and Technical Assistance. He noted the definition of Broadband as 768 kbps down and 200 kbps up, although not really adequate for many of today's applications. Blair pointed out the projected employment increase, the economic benefit and productivity growth as reasons for needing to improve Broadband. Broadband is in 2013 what electricity was to New Hampshire in the 1930's - a necessity. Blair discussed mapping broadband availability using the data submitted to UNH from 50+ broadband providers in the state, including DSL, cable, fixed wireless, mobile wireless or cell, fiber, and satellite providers and then how the data is aggregated to the census block level. The next step is to conduct independent data verification using consumer surveys, speed tests, drive tests, town maps verification, and other data sets. The final product will be maps identifying all the locations served and underserved by Broadband. Additionally, all community anchor institutions such as town halls, libraries, hospitals, schools and other municipal facilities have been mapped to come up with a statewide layer of associated broadband access

information. Lastly, rural addressing data collection was completed with the goal of developing a statewide GIS point file of addresses at the census block level. Additional data collected for this program are cell tower locations, WiFi locations and a cable franchise agreement inventory. Blair concluded his presentation touching very briefly on Broadband Planning, Capacity Building, and Technical Assistance and Training. He informed the group that the Online Interactive Map Viewer would be launching the next day. He asked if there were any questions.

Kelly asked where NH stacked up with other states. Blair said it depends, but NH ranked #2 in Broadband adoption with Utah being #1 adding that the problem is high speed availability and the gaps in service. Vear asked about getting the information where the fiber is located. Blair said it is on the poles and the data is fairly sensitive to companies. He added that he has asked for the data, and was able to get the last mile and some middle data. Vear said this was a sore point for him as he has asked for info on where fiber is from Fairpoint and has never heard back from them. Blair said the only way to solve the issue is to do a statewide pole inventory and there is nothing to make them provide the info or even participate in the program. Larmouth said it is considered proprietary. Alderman Sheehan added that she came from a telecommunications background and part of the problem is that a supplier's license can be challenged if they tell others and they also lose business. Langdell said if we can count birds and homeless, let's count poles. Pattison added that cable companies are not regulated by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), but by the Securities and Exchange Commission and that is part of the issue. Dell Orfano had concerns with the quality of service being advertised vs. what you actually get. He conducted a test on his home service and it consistently underperformed and so was his entire street. Excuses were all he got and no help from the PUC. He later found out it was a software problem inherited by Verizon of which he had to pay a substantial amount to have Comcast put in infrastructure to get Broadband. Blair said there have been similar experiences in many cases and that is why it is important to do the verifications. He had himself gone to providers with similar issues and some have been fixed. Hennessey said he has experienced lower than advertised speeds as well and asked if Blair was verifying claims of providers to which Blair replied yes and this does reflect in the maps. Young expressed the difficulty of getting Comcast in Litchfield due to the cost.

Camille Pattison, NRPC Principal Planner

Pattison provided an update on the Broadband Plan for the Greater Nashua Region. She summarized the NRPC efforts beginning with forming the Broadband Stakeholder Group (BSG) for the region that consisted of representatives from primarily western communities. Steve Hoffman played a big part in getting data from Mason, one of the towns where there are the most service barriers. The final outcome or goal of the project is a NRPC Broadband Plan by 2014. To do this, the group identified barriers such as costs to extend fiber lines, providers not interested in upgrading, limited choices of service providers, towns that have no service at all, and the need for more accurate data. Needs were also identified which included improving quality of existing data, expansion of service areas, increase choice in service providers, and promoting wireless. Lastly, the BSG identified possible solutions, and developed educational materials for general public and planning boards.

Public outreach goals included educating the community and local businesses about the benefits of the project and marketing the speed test, sector analysis and the on-line survey. Regional goals identified were to provide near universal coverage of reliable, affordable, high speed broadband internet access throughout our region and focus on providing wireless service to our rural communities in the western part of the region while continuing to improve the technologies available in areas that are currently served. Pattison touched on the key findings and types of services identified through the UNH Survey done in July 2013. She also informed the group of the effort put forth as part of the mapping verification project where each community received a map to note discrepancies in service. The western part of the region had the most changes. Final results will be incorporated into the final maps. She expected the draft plan to be ready by early October for review by the BSG and submitted to OEP at that time. She anticipated the final plan by the end of 2013 and then incorporated into the State Broadband Plan. She asked if there were any questions.

Langdell asked how many surveys were conducted for the region. Pattison would verify region surveys, but said statewide, just over 2000 were conducted. Pattison asked Blair to provide a definition of Terrestrial Wireless Mobile. Blair said it is cellular and this is the name NTIA calls it. He added that Terrestrial Fixed Wireless is areas with smaller towers. Kelly asked the range on this. Blair said 10's of miles; it depended on the technology of the antenna and whether it is repeated with multiple towers. Kelly asked how you do a speed test and Blair referred to www.iwantbroadbandnh.org. Dell Orfano asked who Carol Miller is. Blair answered that she is the Director of the Broadband Technology, and is directing the capacity building and technical assistance part of the project. She manages the Technical Advisory Board and works with a lot of the providers. Dell Orfano asked if Vear should go to her with his fiber problem. Blair said she would refer back to him and that he would not stop working on this fiber issue. Vear asked for Blair to ask for a map of their fiber. Blair informed him that they have the central offices mapped. Blair added that this is a voluntary program and that all providers that have given data are part of this program. Langdell suggested that an action step be to map the poles. Pattison said she could include this as a need in the plan. Diers thanked Blair for his presentation. Martineau passed around postcards and invited the group to the upcoming Broadband training session with Andre Garron from UNH Cooperative who would present on *3 Free Ways to promote your City or Town via the Web* on October 30th.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – JUNE 19, 2013

The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of June 19, 2013. Fimbel referred to page 5, 3rd paragraph under FY2014 Budget & Work Program. The sentence beginning with "Gleason" that appeared to be missing a word. Also on page 6, first full paragraph, first sentence "...was needed and thank Diers" should be "thanked". It was moved by Langdell and seconded by Battis:

THAT the minutes of June 19, 2013 be approved as amended.

The motion **carried** with 1 abstention.

BUSINESS MEETING – TEN YEAR PLAN UPDATE (TYP)

Roache informed the group that in April 2013, the NRPC submitted Federal Aid Highway project priorities for the draft 2015-2024 Ten Year Transportation Plan to the NH Department of Transportation (NH DOT). The project priorities were established by a subcommittee made up of Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) and Executive Committee members who evaluated and scored 22 projects using criteria that was cooperatively developed with the NH DOT to ensure consistency across all nine regional planning commissions (RPCs). In July, NH DOT distributed a prioritized list of the seventy-one NHS projects that they evaluated; eight of the twenty-two projects submitted by NRPC were included in the list. Roache pointed out that in the Bedford-Merrimack F.E. Everett Turnpike Open Road Tolling Project that the word "relocated" had been omitted from the project listing.

On September 5, 2013, DOT released the 2015-2024 TYP. Roache referred to the GACIT (Governor's Advisory Council on Intermodal Transportation) hearings scheduled in September and October for folks to attend to provide their input on the TYP projects. District 3 Councilor Chris Sununu, representing Pelham, and District 5 Councilor Deb Pignatelli, representing Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Lyndeborough, Mason, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua and Wilton will holding these hearings in the region. Roache asked Mayville if she had anything to add. Mayville said it was important that folks attend these meetings as they are informational as to how things work. She added that the hearings are running about 1 to 1 ½ hrs. Langdell said Milford Selectmen were asking how the red-listed bridges were going to be managed. Mayville said that if it is a municipally owned bridge, there is a state aid bridge program which will reimburse 80% of the design costs. The town has to come up with the other 20%. She added that this program funds 10 projects a year and currently there are 353 red-listed bridges and 270 near red-list. Mayville also said that towns are required to maintain reports on their bridges, and DOT will do inspections on municipal bridges free of charge. Dell Orfano

asked if Mayville was on the inner circle of the 4% a year over the next 3 years proposed gas tax. Mayville said she was not on the inner circle, but just 1 penny will generate \$7 million revenue. Sheehan asked what the new anticipated date was for the Capitol Corridor feasibility study to be completed. Diers said she was waiting for more information on this and would get back to her.

BUSINESS MEETING - NASHUA REGIONAL PLAN UPDATE

Diers referred to the regional plan update included in the Program Highlights and informed the group of the recent mailing of the "A Progress Report on the Regional Plan" that went to all elected officials and town boards and is also available electronically on the GSF website. Diers said in addition to the topical workshops which have been held over the summer, we have also been holding community conversations with people who wouldn't otherwise have a chance to participate in the planning process. All data that has been gathered from the workshops, community conversations, review of all 13 Master Plans along with what we have heard from communities will be analyzed. Currently, various sub-committees that were formed from the workshops have been meeting and the NRPC will hold meetings with the planning boards in the neighboring towns for a sub-regional view. She asked the Commissioners to let her know if their local planning boards would be interested in hosting one of these meetings.

In addition, Diers informed the Commissioners of the current contest we have going on where there is a chance for one of the towns in the region to win FREE Land Use and Planning Handbooks. To participate, all they have to do is visit our online forum and pinpoint a specific location on the interactive map and tell what you love about it or what could make it better. Or, provide your input about a particular topic like housing or jobs and the economy. The town with the most pinpoints will win FREE land use and planning handbooks for their local land use boards.

Kelly asked if the Transportation Workshop that was recently postponed due to a scheduling conflict had been rescheduled. Roache said not yet, and to avoid confusion wanted to wait until after the GACIT Hearings, sometime between November 1st and Thanksgiving.

GIS Programs

Diers informed the group about the new GIS Live Maps which would be currently being worked on and hoped to have a demo by December. Additionally, all our data would be online and have capability to link to small communities' assessing data. This would enable you to develop an abutters list and do searches by address. Diers said some demos to Town Administrators already and we hope to be online with this by the end of the year.

8:35 PM - COMMISSIONER'S ROUNDTABLE

The Commissioner's Roundtable held at 8:35pm.

ADJOURN

The next NRPC Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 18, 2013 at 7:00pm at the Nashua Regional Planning Commission office in Merrimack. Litchfield will be highlighted at this meeting and will be here to share their experiences with other communities. Motion to adjourn came from Dell Orfano with a second from Battis. The meeting adjourned at 8:44pm.

Respectfully submitted

Kerrie Diers, Official Recorder: _____