



**APPROVED – MINUTES**  
**NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Held at the NRPC Office**  
**9 Executive Park, Suite 201, Merrimack, NH**  
**March 16, 2016**

**Members Present:**

Susan Ruch, Amherst	Steve Brown, Lyndeborough	Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja, Nashua
Michael Dell Orfano, Amherst	Karin Elmer, Merrimack	Dave Hennessey, Pelham
Martin Michaelis, Amherst	Tom Mahon, Merrimack	Hal Lynde, Pelham
Jill Adams, Brookline	Anant Panwalkar, Merrimack	Jim Kofalt, Wilton
Venu Rao, Hollis	Janet Langdell, Milford	Kermit Williams, Wilton
James Battis, Hudson	Chris Costantino, Milford	
George Hall, Hudson	Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon	
Thomas Young, Litchfield	Dan Kelly, Nashua	

**Others Present:**

Commissioner Victoria Sheehan, NHDOT	James Vayo, Nashua Downtown Specialist
Nancy Mayville, NHDOT	George Skuse, Milford

**Staff Present:**

Tim Roache, Executive Director	Jen Czysz, Assistant Director
Sara Siskavich, GIS Manager	Karen Baker, Program Assistant

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

Chairman Hennessey called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. He pointed out there were a couple new Commissioners present and asked for introductions around the table and to include if they were first timers to the Commission.

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

The public present did not wish to speak. Ruch asked the group to give applause to Michaelis who had previously stated he has been on the Commission for 45 years.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – DECEMBER 16, 2015**

The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of December 16, 2015. Lynde pointed out on page 5 under the Commissioners Roundtable, it should be Sherburne Rd, not Sharon Rd. Michaelis also pointed out that Roache was no longer the Interim Executive Director as listed under Staff Present. After further discussion, Ruch motioned with a second from Young:

THAT the minutes of December 16, 2015 be approved as amended.

The motion **carried with two abstentions.**

**GUEST SPEAKER: VICTORIA SHEEHAN-COMMISSIONER, NH DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Roache introduced Commissioner Sheehan and provided a little bit of background on where she had worked previously. He informed the Commissioners that she would be providing an update of activities at the NHDOT related to projects of regional interest and related to the Ten Year Plan.

Sheehan thanked the group for having her and started off by sharing her thoughts on the DOT and how she looked at the DOT website before taking the position as Commissioner. She added that she would be providing information on what is currently going on and initiatives moving forward with the DOT. Sheehan provided a presentation which started off with “The road to success is....currently under construction. She stated the DOT Mission and the purpose “Transportation excellence in New Hampshire is fundamental to the state's **economic development.** The Department will provide **safe** travel options for all of the state's residents, visitors, and

goods, through a transportation system and services that are ***well maintained, efficient, reliable***, and provide seamless interstate and intrastate connectivity". She noted that the gas tax increase did help bring more money to transportation as well as the FAST Act program. She commented that the DOT is one branch of government that you can't avoid. In order to meet the mission and purpose, DOT focusses on:

- Safety – for the users of the system, our employees and our contractors;
- Stewardship - maintain the state's infrastructure in a state of good repair, while enhancing the environment and maintaining the unique character and quality of life;
- Customer Service – secure mobility and travel options for all of the state's residents, visitors, and the movement of goods; and
- Efficiency – provide a system and services that are efficient and reliable, maximizing the value of every dollar invested and establishing an environment that promotes innovation.

Sheehan noted that Stewardship is the most challenging. She added that DOT uses the balanced scorecard to demonstrate efficiency. She talked about the US Transportation Agency challenges of being asked to do more with less, when already struggling with an aging workforce and an increasing attrition rate and relying on institutional knowledge to get the job done. Sheehan talked at length about Asset Management as a way of doing business for DOT with the goal of maximizing value for long term sustainability of the transportation system, the strategies of maintaining the assets with and without maintenance, cost effectiveness over the lifecycle of the asset, and preserving, rehabilitating and replacing assets as necessary on schedule.

Performance Management is another focus for DOT and Sheehan stated that they use performance management to help employees understand how they will support achieving the asset management goals and then tying employee, section, bureau goals into the agency goals. She reviewed streamlining and process improvement and the challenges ahead and the issues that private and public sector are facing with the attrition rate increasing, the average age of the remaining workforce, underutilization of technology and the need for knowledge transfer. The Commissioner added that DOT is always looking at transportation innovations, referring to e-construction & document control, stakeholder partnering, asset management to mention a few. Sheehan referred to changes in systems operations and using real-time information to better manage traffic incidents and accidents as well as having an informed public which assists with travel plans by having better information to avoid delays.

Sheehan continued with her presentation moving onto the Ten Year Plan Process. She briefly reviewed the process stating that previous plans were over programmed. She noted that the final 2017-2026 Ten Year Plan is scheduled to be adopted into law in June of 2016 with the stipulation that funding for the capitol corridor rail project be removed. Sheehan proceeded to review the current state of the infrastructure related to condition and history on pavement and bridges. For pavement, overall, 68% of NH's roads (state & municipal) are in good/fair condition, while 32% (1,345 miles) are poor/very poor condition. On bridges, of the 3,846 State & Municipal Bridges, 1,208 are 75 years or older, redlist bridges have trended upward over the last 3 years, on average 23 bridges have been added per year over the last 5 years, and 21 bridges per year have been removed from the redlist. As of 2015, 7% of the State's bridges or 153 are in poor condition.

Sheehan pointed out the priorities for the proposed TYP:

- Emphasis on Red List Bridges & Bridge Preservation and Pavement Preservation
- Dedicated TIFIA pledged funds for rural roads & bridges
- Completion of I-93 & Funding for Exit 4A
- Heightened Financial Constraint

Next the Commissioner reviewed funding and estimated program expenditures, noting that the 2017-2026 Ten

Year Plan is a fully constrained Plan using the Federal Formula. She commented that the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) was a huge impact on the plan being fully constrained. She stated that in January of 2015 NHDOT submitted a letter of interest to the USDOT & FHWA to use TIFIA and in May of 2015, will be the awarded a Rural Rate of Finance which enables NH to finance the \$200M remainder of I-93; pave 40 percent of NH rural roads and fix 23 red list bridges while costing NH \$20M less than financing the \$200M for I-93 alone through capital markets. She added the money is used much more efficiently due to this low interest rate loan with the first 9 years only for interest. This allows for the gas tax revenue to be used to pay for other repairs related to pavement and bridges. Sheehan reviewed the funding breakdown for the proposed TYP noting that the general projected outputs of the draft Plan result in an additional 200 estimated miles per year of pavement and 23 additional rehabs or replacements of red listed bridges utilizing the TIFIA.

Sheehan concluded her presentation reviewing the timetable for Major Turnpike projects' construction under the Turnpike System Capital Program with a starting point of 2017 out to 2032. She also provided a look ahead on bridge conditions stating that DOT expects move 244 bridges from the red list but will still see an increase. For road conditions, she stated that DOT is still playing catchup on this but are setting realistic expectations in the next ten years. She asked if there were any questions.

Williams referred to a red list bridge program and a Wilton red listed bridge and the issue that the Town can fix the bridge for cheaper than what DOT can and if there is any flexibility with that. Sheehan referred the question to Mayville who is the DOT Bridge Program expert. Mayville stated that for municipal bridges, State funding is 80% of design, construction and ROW. She added that most of the bridges are not in the federal world, so there is some flexibility. Additionally, she said there are guidelines and a basic process that is required, but a town can request design extractions, opt for rehab or full replacement. Mayville stated that often towns choose shorter than 75 year lifespans or addressing load capacity and opt to deal with abutment later. Williams referred to the cost Wilton came up with to replace vs. the DOT cost and asked what number they should be working with. Mayville said they can get estimates from DOT. Panwalker referred to the LPA process and cases he has worked with.

Lynde commented on the good relationship Pelham has with the State and the problems they have had with bridges in town and felt the process has been very good. He also commented that the problem solved in town with traffic flow by putting in the 2 roundabouts and how smooth traffic flow is now. Lynde noted that the Context Sensitive Solutions approach that was used and asked why the state does not use this more and roundabouts should be used instead of traffic lights. Sheehan replied that they look at the project and choose the best solution to remedy it. She added that the footprint plays a key role but they do look at every opportunity for the most efficient solution.

Langdell asked how long the TIFIA has been around. Sheehan replied that it is for larger scale projects and has been in place since MAP21 (about 5 years), but this is the first time NH has used it. Langdell asked if the 30M in municipal aid was an increase over the last TYP. Mayville said yes adding that 12% of highway revenues go toward block grant aid. Sheehan commented that you will not see this increase until next year. Langdell also asked about Nashua E. Hollis St roundabout project that was added into the TYP and if the project was prioritized by the region. Roache said yes.

Dell Orfano referred to the 101 Bedford to Amherst project and how Amherst is looking into changing the zoning to commercial and how every intersection fails along this corridor. He asked if this was discussed for recommendation. Roache said not in this round but it is carried in the NRPC LRTP with a cost of 50M and small repairs have been done along the way, but not as 1 project. Roache added that NRPC would be going out on the road to discuss these gorilla projects. Dell Orfano elaborated some and commented that they are having a hard time getting approval from the State to put a traffic light in for safety. Sheehan stated that if there is an accident safety issue, you can work with your RPC to conduct a Road Safety Audit and possible short term

solution. Dell Orfano added that this makes it difficult for land development along 101 for economic development due to the safety issue. Sheehan suggested articulating together the needs to the state, to advocate for funding. She referred to the I93 major development planned along that corridor and the partnering with industry and business to set realistic parameters.

Brown referred to the 1700 population in Lyndeborough where half of their roads are gravel and the struggle they have as to where they belong. He stated his concerns in regards to the traffic congestion related to the TYP 101A project and the discussion of economic development along the corridor and his reluctance to have that type of issue in Lyndeborough. Hennessey spoke about 101a and his constrained desire to have his business there and the need for the project. He questioned if this was the purpose of the Commission; to promote urban sprawl and if this is what we do as a board; support economic development. Sheehan explained that economic development comes in many forms, understanding what business is coming into the region and how to deal with it from a transportation perspective. Roache commented that it does not have to look like Nashua. Hennessey talked about the impacts to Peterborough and lost value in homes due to factories and economic development entities that left.

Fimbel followed up with a question to Dell Orfano's question asking how it works at the State level for economic development. Sheehan said similar to the Town process adding that they make efforts to work with developers for safety and congestion.

Kelly commented that 68% of Nashua would want rail and why with that rationale would it not be supported. He added that it is good for economic development, so what do we do in Senate to fix this. Sheehan noted that the committee was split and there was funding available for certain parts. She added that there was concern with the amount of money spent in the southern part of the state. There was discussion on getting rail costs and fully evaluating them. Sheehan stated that she was a big advocate for transportation but there is only so much money to go around. There was further discussion on what money can be committed, FTA funds and funding availability. Roache talked about money that was being appropriated to NH as a TMA. Williams said there are too many representatives that don't want it to look good and have concerns as to whether it would be a sound investment. Hennessey said there should be a conversation with the legislators on rail.

Sheehan said that other transit modes need to be advocated for also as part of the economic development component. Vayo asked if there was a funding mechanism for non-motorized transportation in the TYP. Sheehan commented that extending sidewalks could be folded into projects but there was not a dedicated program.

Lynde referred to the proposed increase in the gas tax of 14% to meet NHDOT's needs and if it was still the same. Sheehan said we together need to answer the question, is that enough and that DOT would be advocating for additional funding but it would be up to the legislature. Her estimate was another 16 cents to get where we need to be.

#### **PHSMA GRANT UPDATE**

Siskavich provided an update on the NRPC's pipeline safety planning grant awarded through the US DOT Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) program. PHMSA pointed out that PHMSA's regulatory jurisdiction begins where FERC's ends, which is, once a pipeline is constructed and is operational. Siskavich thanked the Town of Brookline, the Town of Pelham, the City of Nashua, and the full NH Congressional delegation who wrote letters in support of NRPC's application. Siskavich also pointed out that while the motivation for NRPC's application was driven by the Northeast Energy Direct proposal, the grant activities apply regionally as to prepare our communities uniformly for any proposal that might come in the future.

NRPC's successful award is multifaceted and reaches a variety of safety stakeholders through four main strategies. To advance inter-agency data exchange, NRPC gathered GIS pipeline data from a variety of sources including PHMSA, Tennessee Gas, and Granit. NRPC mapped large medical, schools, daycares, camps, and other difficult-to-evacuate locations known by PHMSA as "identified sites." This information compilation is now available on maps and as GIS datalayers through NRPC's new Open Data Portal: [data.nashuarpc.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets](http://data.nashuarpc.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets)

To engage local first responders, NRPC is working in conjunction with the Nashua Office of Emergency Management (OEM) who provides fire mutual aid to the region. Nashua OEM will be providing pipeline safety training to first responders and public officials, and will also be developing two planning templates: a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) template for fire, and an "annex" on pipeline safety which can be added to community Emergency Operating Plan (EOP) documents, both of which will be available in the public domain. For communities that wish to implement either template, Nashua OEM will provide the necessary implementation assistance. Lastly, Nashua OEM will also conduct outreach, marketing, and promotion to support all these grant activities.

The last safety strategy to be followed under the grant, geared towards local government, is to promote land use planning best practices. Sound land use planning increases community resilience from pipeline hazards, and there is a large body of general guidance, none of which has been widely implemented in NH. NRPC is currently evaluating what of this best practice literature is practical for the Region to consider, and will be preparing educational materials for member towns as appropriate. Lastly April is Safe Digging Month. NRPC is in touch with the NH Dig Safe office and will conduct a media campaign piece to encourage safe digging in the Region.

Kelly asked if we received data on the demand. Roache said that info is out of the scope of the grant. He added that the FERC process is still ongoing.

Dell Orfano asked if we could get information from the utility companies on their safety plans or guidelines. Siskavich said she is aware that Tennessee Gas has to comply with integrity management regulations dictated by PHMSA, and also recently they conducted a workshop in Hudson for first responders. She pointed out that Nashua OEM's activities were not meant to duplicate the utility company's trainings and information, but to expand upon it.

Fimbel asked if Liberty would help fund if the training complimented what they have to do federally. Siskavich could not say for certain.

Langdell expressed concern that emergency responders across towns do not have compatible communication equipment. Czysz commented that this general concern has been raised in the planning documents she has seen as well as corrective strategies. Langdell reiterated that in her opinion, KM and Liberty should be held to an expectation of community betterment. Siskavich said that general recommendations on this problem can be reinforced in the templates under development. Siskavich also reminded the group that while the risk of pipeline failure is very low, it is important to appreciate that all the strategies being pursued can also be applied to gas distribution, which in many ways represents a more significant threat to public safety.

Williams asked if each town would benefit with coordinated GIS data. Siskavich said yes, this support was very much a capacity-building opportunity.

#### **PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

Roache summarized the Probe Data work that NRPC is working on and briefly explained the map included with the paragraph in the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Program Highlights. Its main component is to find congestion spots. The full

article can be found in the highlights located here: [http://www.nashuarpc.org/download\\_file/view/1736/209/](http://www.nashuarpc.org/download_file/view/1736/209/)

He summarized the MPT Projects Update piece and informed the group that NRPC would be visiting the towns in spring and summer to find out what the true needs are for the MTP LRTP related to transportation. Both local and larger projects will be looked at. To read the full article, use the link below:  
[http://www.nashuarpc.org/download\\_file/view/1736/209/](http://www.nashuarpc.org/download_file/view/1736/209/)

Baker provided a brief summary on the 2016 Household Hazardous Waste Collection season which will kick off on April 23, at the Nashua Public Works Garage in Nashua from 8-Noon. She also mentioned the May 7<sup>th</sup> Milford event as well as the 7<sup>th</sup> event added this year to be held in Pelham NH on August 27<sup>th</sup> from 8-Noon. Lastly, she informed the group that participation continues to grow each year. Also, latex paint is not accepted at the collections, Electronics have been suspended from the collection events this year, to visit the website for more info or to call NRPC with any questions. [http://www.nashuarpc.org/download\\_file/view/1736/209/](http://www.nashuarpc.org/download_file/view/1736/209/)

### **8:39 PM - COMMISSIONER'S ROUNDTABLE**

The Commissioner's Roundtable was held. Below is a brief summary of what each community had going on:

- Litchfield - Young: Mosquito Control District Meeting makes news, UTube.
- Hudson – Battis: Maddox not re-elected to BOS, budget passed with NRPC dues. Hall: All pay raises approved except Town Clerk, Track repair passed for Alvirne.
- Brookline – Adams: 3 new businesses in Brookline. Flower shop, Car Repair, BBQ Restaurant.
- Merrimack – Mahon: Traffic issues on primary day, Teflon in water problem, Redlisted bridge fixed, CC will deny surveying to KM, New Pennichuck building / Elmer: Marijuana dispensary approved, 2 closed bridges (Bean & McCaw).
- Pelham – Everything passed. 1000 acres of open space acquired, 2000 acres for forest management.
- Wilton – Williams: Voted to hire Town Administrator, Eco Dev key for new person.
- Milford – Langdell: Town Meeting results: Default municipal budgets for town & school, No capital improvement money, South St improvements moving forward, Nashua oval improvements, Pumpkin Festival maintained.
- Nashua – Melizzi-Golja: Make It Labs new facility open on Crown Street, tours every Thursday. Kelly: Open forum Monday, March 25 on rail. 50,000 capital improvement for Master Plan, Atlantic Mgmnt looking at Dow Property.
- Amherst – Michaelis: Had same accident on stretch on 101 where Amherst resident killed years back / Dell Orfano: Planning Board activity-Expansion of Labelle Winery (BB, Restaurant, Distillery, Hotel Accomodations). Ruch: Hazen parcel for open space, losing Community Development Director.
- Mont Vernon – Fimbel: Space needs assessment in town, Looking at business district.
- Hollis – Rao: Centralized system coming to fruition, warrant article to ask for money.

### **ADJOURN**

Motion to adjourn came from Mahon with a second from Dell Orfano. The meeting ended at 9:03pm.

Respectfully submitted

Tim Roache, Official Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_