



**APPROVED MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Executive Committee Workshop
July 13, 2016**

Present:

Dave Hennessey, Chair
Karin Elmer, Treasurer
Jim Battis

Janet Langdell
Tom Young

Absent:

Mike Fimbel, Vice Chair
Dan Kelly

Sarah Marchant
Susan Ruch

Staff:

Tim Roache, Executive Director
Sara Siskavich, GIS Manager

Jennifer Czysz, Assistant Director

The workshop commenced at 5:08 pm.

1. Review NRPC Draft Strategic Plan and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis and Discussion

Roached noted that the Committee last saw the Statement of Strategy back in May and asked if members had a chance to review the document sent out prior to tonight's meeting. Management staff conducted a preliminary Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis and the intent is to go through a similar conversation this evening. Siskavich noted some key updates since the May draft. Some sections have been reorganized for flow, a table outlining the information gathering process has been added, the overarching principle and critical requirements have been refined, and the SWOT analysis content is new. Siskavich walked through the SWOT as drafted thus far.

Marchant had emailed in a few comments on the SWOT Analysis for discussion at the meeting in her absence including:

- Strengths, paragraph 2: Editorial suggestions include "That being said" should be removed, bullet points not a running paragraph and they are each distinct thoughts. Just start with NRPC.
- Weakness, paragraph 1: "challenge to reach consensus on Commission's role" is well said, I think it's even more challenging to empower the Commission to take action on something. It's both defining a consensus on role and action/implementation of that role.
- Opportunities, paragraph 3: in regards to cost sharing the examples provided seem too specific, they are an action/implementation item and should be held for the goals/outcomes section of the Strategic Plan.
- Threats: Recommend adding another item in regard to communication between staff and Commissioners and Commissioners with governing bodies. Without a clear, consistent chain of communication it personifies the identified weaknesses.

Elmer noted in regard to staff training requests, we should be keeping track of what is requested, approved and turned down to determine what an adequately funded budget line item looks like. Hennessey noted that we should note that not all staff training entails travel, there are many existing opportunities for onsite training. Perhaps this weakness should be clarified that it is associated with offsite training and may include both organizational development and personal professional development.

Battis had a question on the weakness that states there is a “disconnect between the Commission’s mandates, community expectations, and the current budgetary reality.” How do you know what community expectations are? Roache noted that it is developed through two way communications. Hennessey noted that we are very weak on marketing and need to do a better job at communicating our “greatness.” If we don’t tell people how high quality we are they will never know. Langdell noted that the flow of communication is fractured. It would be helpful to have a selectman from each community serve as a commissioner. Additionally, TTAC is represented by staff that may or may not be speaking with commissioners and selectmen. Battis noted that as commissioners we need to recommend or request that selectmen meet with their commissioners at least twice a year. Elmer noted that when we conduct a new commissioner training we should also invite selectmen to attend as well.

Hennessey said we need a written piece that should be sent out to selectmen detailing what they should expect from their commissioners. Langdell said each of the commissioners needs to take the initiative to approach their select board and start the conversation.

Czys recounted conversation with S. Norton of the NH Center for Public Policy Studies who asked why non-profits get greater recognition than RPCs for similar work. Why aren’t we promoting our work once complete? Roache noted that we need to make sure that when we deliver a product we promote it in the newspaper so a larger audience is aware of the work that’s been conducted. Czys noted that we need to build the final report out and press release as a final step in each project’s outreach process and scope of work. Langdell noted that we need to empower staff to reach out to press. To further improve recognition, Hennessey reinforced the need for name badges for Commissioners.

Roache spoke to the Transportation Management Authority (TMA) authority potential that will give NRPC transportation projects programming autonomy. Logistically, there are \$4 million dollars in transportation funding per year that should come to the region for the Nashua Urbanized Area (UZA) that are currently programmed within the Ten Year Plan and TIP under NH DOT’s control. Those funds will need to come out of that process and be allocated to the TMA for independent programming.

The committee debated whether it is worthwhile to establish a 501(c)(3) status. The committee recognized that while the establishment as a non-profit isn’t onerous it could become difficult to maintain a separate board for the non-profit when faced with a limited number of potential volunteers.

Roached noted that sometimes our strengths can also be our weaknesses. Where being a neutral advisor is beneficial it can contradict the need to promote our work. Hennessey noted that we can be an advocate while still stating just the facts. Gathering and presenting facts is what we are about. Battis noted that we should state that we are a source of high quality unbiased data.

Siskavich shifted the conversation from the SWOT analysis to where do we go from here and how do we establish an implementation plan. Hennessey requested that on a quarterly basis we identify up to 5 things that we are going to do. Additionally, he requested we also identify tasks to discontinue because



they do not work. We need to limit our focus on implementation items because what we have is overwhelming otherwise. Langdell suggested we keep the action items very high level and then report out on progress made. By example she suggested that the NRPC Executive Director will coordinate with NH DOT to initiate the process to establish transportation programming authority. The committee returned to the November retreat report and acknowledged that many of the first steps to implement are outlined in that document.

Top actionable work tasks include initiating efforts on:

- Transportation Management Area Authority
- Economic Development Programming
- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- Communications

Additionally, but not discussed at the retreat, NRPC should continue work on Public Health efforts that demonstrate how transportation and land use planning can promote public health. Initial tasks include: create a fact sheet of general information and promote existing NRPC work products.

The next task is to detail the steps and time line for the next 6 months. A revised draft will be sent out in mid-August for committee comments. A revised draft will be included as part of the September Commission packet and meeting discussion.

The committee further discussed marketing efforts and the Old Home Days events.

The workshop concluded at 6:45.