



**APPROVED – MINUTES**  
**NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Held at the NRPC Office**  
**9 Executive Park, Suite 201, Merrimack, NH**  
**March 18, 2015**

**Members Present:**

Martin Michaelis, Amherst	Michael Croteau, Litchfield	Dan Kelly, Nashua
Mike Dell Orfano, Amherst	Thomas Young, Litchfield	Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja, Nashua
Susan Ruch, Amherst	Karin Elmer, Merrimack	Dave Hennessey, Pelham
James Battis, Hudson	Chris Costantino, Milford	Kermit Williams
George Hall, Hudson	Janet Langdell, Milford	
Richard Maddox, Hudson	Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon	

**Others Present:** Bill Watson, NHDOT

**Staff Present:** Tim Roache, Interim Executive Director Jen Czysz, Principal Planner  
 Karen Baker, Program Assistant

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

Chairman Elmer called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM with introductions.

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

There were no members of the public present.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 17, 2014**

The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of September 17, 2014. Langdell motioned with a second from Young:

THAT the minutes of December 17, 2014 be approved.

The motion **carried with 4 abstentions.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

***Executive Committee – Recommendation Regarding the Appointment of Executive Director***

Fimbel said there were 5 strong candidates for the position of Executive Director with the NRPC, but in the end Roache wowed the interview team. He also had the benefit of being familiar with the operation. Fimbel added that they have a proposal for Roache but approval from the full Commission would be necessary before presenting the proposal. Ruch filled the Commissioners in on the process referring to the special Executive Committee meeting that was called when Diers announced her resignation and the due process taken in searching for a candidate to fill her position. She added that she felt 150% confident in Roache. Hennessey also commented on the very fair and definitive process taken with guidance from Ruch for all the candidates. He added that they were easily able to compare candidates. After further discussion, Fimbel motioned with a second from Dell Orfano:

THAT Tim Roache be appointed as Executive Director of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC).

The motion passed unanimously.

Roache thanked the Commissioners and said he was very pleased with the effort put forward. Ruch asked that the group refrain from broadcasting this until it becomes official and said a press release would be issued once Roache has accepted an offer.

***Energy Facilities Advisory Committee (EFAC) – Update on Activities***

Roache summarized the EFAC came about from discussions at the December Commission meeting and approved at January Executive Committee meeting. At the February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting the Executive Committee appointed Kermit Williams as chair. Letters were sent to Town Administrators and BOS, BOA and TC Chairs to appoint a representative from their communities. The first meeting of the EFAC was held on February 27<sup>th</sup>. The committee is in an information gathering phase. Roache informed the group that Williams would be providing an update on the EFAC activities to date. Williams provided a PowerPoint presentation starting off with the [EFAC Charge](#) which can be found in its entirety on the NRPC Pipeline page located at: <http://www.nashuarpc.org/hot-projects/project-pipeline/>. Next he provided information on the activities to date as listed below.

- Lead teams created and assigned focus areas
- Dropbox created to store and share information and documents collected
- Tracking FERC docket to keep up with project changes, other inputs
- Meetings held with the state Office of Energy and Planning and staff of the Public Utilities Commission
- Meetings planned with Kinder-Morgan, FERC, others

Roache added that this is an opportunity for NRPC to show value to the communities impacted. Williams showed a preliminary map of sensitive environmental areas. Roache said that all affected communities were asked for resource analyses. Not all towns are able to do this so NRPC is assisting on behalf of those affected towns. He added that NRPC would meet with the towns to make sure they are comfortable with what NRPC submits. There was a question on how as a regional body are we going to respond if the committee comes up with an alternative plan. Roache said if a town draws a line, we can show what it is going through. A follow up question was if this would gel with all the communities if the EFAC came up with an alternative and how does it dovetail. Williams said that all committee members have been asked to bring information from their towns to coordinate. Hennessey felt that power lines should also be a part of this process and referred to the disconnect between Kinder Morgan (KM) and the power line company. Williams said that the EFAC would be meeting with KM, but was not sure how electric lines fit into place. Ruch felt that both were competing for the same space and that is Hennessey's concern. Maddox did not feel that an alternative route should be established. Roache said they would not be doing that.

Roache referred to the Merrimack Valley Liability Company (powerlines) and said he understands Hennessey's concerns and he would find out more. Hennessey felt that there was limited time due to their submission to SEC in the fall and construction scheduled for next year. Dell Orfano asked if there was a voice for the selectmen in this process. Williams said the ultimate decision will be made for the federal government based on all the information collected from the affected parties (towns that submit info to the docket).

A commissioner asked what roles each of the members played. Williams also reviewed the committee members and their roles as appointed members to the EFAC. There was discussion and concerns with duplication on what EFAC is doing where several towns have hired lawyers. Ruch commented that to recognize this process for what it is; making sausage and it's messy. She suggested a meeting for the public to voice their opinion and provide additional information, other than the normally scheduled meetings. Williams agreed there should be meetings at other times and explained that the current meeting schedule was based the best time for all, but would look into a night meeting. He added that he was not sure how much additional information members of the public might be able to offer. Maddox commented that the establishing the committee was a great process to provide straight information and that a good clearinghouse or dissemination vehicle is needed.

Dell Orfano asked if it made sense to have the EFAC notify all the different town governments as being the primary resource for towns for data collectors. He suggested a progress report or letter to build trust. Ruch had concerns that this may modify their role or initial charge set up for the group. She suggested sending a letter to the towns to make sure they have a link on their websites to the NRPC webpage. Elmer said that some towns prefer to spend their money in more than 1 place and referred to the Town of Merrimack, and some towns prefer to just let NRPC handle it. Langdell felt the letter was a good idea but suggested checking the websites first to see if there was a link already set up. Roache said he would be happy to send a progress report or letter

### ***Transportation Technical Advisory Committee***

#### **TEN YEAR PLAN (TYP) PRIORITIES**

Czys summarized the process to date saying that in January 2015 NRPC's Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) started the 2-year transportation planning cycle that updates the State's Ten Year Plan. One component of this process is to develop a priority list of projects for the region. To be eligible for consideration, projects must be feasible, have local support, and be eligible for federal funding. For this planning cycle the nine Regional Planning Commissions worked cooperatively with NHDOT to develop a consistent set of criteria and weights to score the projects.

At the February and March TTAC meetings, members worked to identify existing projects to be reviewed as well as new projects from submitted by communities. Projects were selected from the existing 2015-2024 TYP and the 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Projects in the current 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program have previously been established as priority projects, are currently in progress, and therefore have been excluded from this process. The focus of the review is on Federal Aid eligible projects.

Czys reviewed the projects under consideration and project scoring subcommittee which consisted of TTAC members from Litchfield, Hudson, Milford and Nashua who would be assisting NRPC staff in project scoring. Final results will be available for the April TTAC and NRPC Executive Committee meetings. Final priority projects are due to NHDOT by the end of April 2015.

As part of the prioritization process TTAC has recommended that NRPC score all projects, and then categorize the top priority projects that are not already listed in the current Ten Year Plan as follows:

1. *Projects most likely to be incorporated into the new TYP:* Top priority, most feasible, greatest benefits to the region, & not exceed total NRPC available funding (est. annual: \$2,381,665 or \$23.8m/10-yrs.).
2. *Priority projects that exceed the available funding:* for federal aid funding eligible but were further down the priority list or available exceed funding. Projects moved to "standby" status until additional funding becomes available.
3. *Projects that may be eligible for other funding sources:* A separate listing of projects that might be eligible for CMAQ, HSIP, TAP, State Aid, or Turnpike funding.
4. *Larger Policy Level Considerations:* Larger projects such as rail or highway widening that will need additional revenue beyond what is typically available in the traditional Ten Year Plan process.

There was talk amongst the group about the cuts and layoffs with the proposed budget and how this would tie in or affect the TYP project priorities and funding. Czys turned to Watson for elaboration. Watson discussed some of the proposed cuts to the working budget and the different monies that can be impacted. Dell Orfano referred to the criteria table in the TYP memo included in the agenda packet questioned why Freight Mobility had such a low criteria weight. He added that he felt this would be a priority. Watson said that was what all that were involved recommended. He elaborated some on how they compared all the criteria. There was further discussion from Watson and Czys on the data and criteria and the project list. Kelly asked how Exit 36

got scored against the other projects and what about funding. Roache said it scored well last round, but keep in mind that a good portion of the project is in Massachusetts and funding for that has not been worked out. Kelly did not understand the criteria from an economic standpoint. Watson explained using a similar project on the Seacoast as an example. Hennessey asked if a project can be re-adjusted quickly, referring to reconstruction of railroad crossings and Hitchner bringing 65 new jobs to the area due to a plant closing in Littleton. Watson said support is there through the HSIP. Langdell commented that huge projects need Tiger monies or special pool monies. Roache said he does not see some of the huge projects getting funded or into the TYP, but you need to keep building the case, but it can be in the MTP if funded and matched. Williams suggested all towns talk to your legislative delegation and express that you are not in favor of such big cuts.

Maddox asked if the sidewalk projects in Hudson could be switched out for a right turn lane. Roache commented that the sidewalk projects will go into a different pot. Czysz said it can be done.

#### **PASSENGER RAIL STUDY UPDATE**

Czysz informed the group of the recently released Final Report of the Capitol Corridor Rail that analyzed the benefits and costs associated with various rail and transit alternatives connecting Concord to Boston. The study focused on three rail alternatives and one bus option, as well as the no-build maintenance of status-quo. The four alternatives are:

- *Manchester Regional Commuter*: Extends existing MBTA service from Lowell, MA to Manchester, NH with stops at South Nashua, Nashua Crown Street, and the Manchester Airport. Service would include 16 weekday trains for Manchester and 34 for Nashua. The report concluded while this was one of the most expensive options, it provided greater benefits.
- *Nashua South Commuter*: The minimum service possible would extend existing MBTA service to Nashua, operating 20 weekday trains. This was the least expensive of the rail options and would provide the least benefit, however, is the first phase of the Manchester alternative.
- *Intercity 8*: Four daily intercity passenger rail round trips between Concord, NH and Boston with stops in Manchester, the Airport, Nashua Crown Street and South Nashua. While one of the most expensive options overall, this would be the least expensive option to provide intercity service and provide a basis for expanded service in the future.
- *Bus on Shoulder*: This option is a low cost and low benefit alternative that would depend upon a decision from Massachusetts to allow for construction of bus on shoulder highway lanes.

Czysz said this was discussed at the March 11, 2015 TTAC meeting. TTAC members made a motion to recommend that the NRPC Commission support the Manchester Regional Commuter Option given its potential to provide the greatest benefits to residents in the region, potential to reduce traffic along FE Everett Turnpike by providing rail options in both Manchester and Nashua, and in recognition that rail is essential for clean air. Further, TTAC members moved that a statement of support also include the recommendation that during the next phase of feasibility studies, more consideration be granted to investigating where to site rail stations to maximize connections with transit routes, tie into the airport and lay over facilities to ensure minimal disruption to residential neighborhoods.

Dell Orfano asked if she was looking for motion. Roache explained that TTAC's responsibility is to make these recommendations to the full Commission. Dell Orfano asked if staff agreed with their advice and if NRPC felt this was the best option. Roache said yes. There was further discussion from Ruch and Hennessey on layover stations, linking stations, where trains park, water use, and push for having the best measures in place for the least amount of impacts. Maddox said that NRPC needs to be a source of information first. Assemble the information for towns to disseminate and not push them to make decisions without having the information

first. Hennessey agreed to not take a vote and that information should be passed onto towns first. Kelly felt a ridership analysis was needed first and how it is going to be paid for. Ruch suggested tabling this until the next meeting so the group could become more familiar with it. Roache said he would send out a small report as well as a list of the TTAC members per request from Langdell.

**UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)**

Roache explained to the group what the UPWP is. He said it is basically a scope of work for DOT on the activities that NRPC does. It is informational and no action is required on it. New items identified in this UPWP where the Regional Plan and MTP could be implemented as well as TMA Certification. Roache added that he would be meeting with DOT this week to talk about funding. Langdell questioned whether NRPC was awarded a grant on developing a regional needs assessment for NTS. Roache said yes and pointed out the page within the UPWP where it is located.

**8:20 PM - COMMISSIONER'S ROUNDTABLE**

Elmer asked if all Commissioners were receiving the NRPC newsletter. Battis, Fimbel and Ruch said they were not. Baker would check on this. Roache informed the group of an inaugural Commissioner Convening in Laconia on May 21<sup>st</sup> from 2:00-8:00pm. All Commissioners from the 9 RPCs in the state should have received an invitation. He added that it is a thank you for the work you do and for serving as a Commissioner. There will be a Commissioner roundtable, dinner, and Thomas Burack will be the speaker. Roache said the goal is to get 10 Commissioners from each region. Elmer said if they get enough, a carpool can be made available. The Commissioner's Roundtable held at 8:15pm.

**ADJOURN**

The next NRPC Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 17, 2015 at 7:00pm at the Nashua Regional Planning Commission office in Merrimack. Motion to adjourn came from Battis with a second from Kelly. The meeting adjourned at 8:57pm.

Respectfully submitted

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