



MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
December 20, 2006

Members Present:

Marilyn Peterman, Amherst	Nelson Disco, Merrimack
Martin Michaelis, Amherst	Donald Wunderlich, Merrimack
Bradley Vear, Amherst (A)	Noreen O'Connell, Milford
Jay Hennessey, Amherst	Janet Langdell, Milford
Helen Fenske, Brookline	Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon
Linda Saari, Brookline	Brian McCarthy, Nashua
Susan Durham, Hollis	Kathy Hersh, Nashua
Howard Dilworth, Jr., Hudson	Leo Thibeault, Pelham
Suellen Seabury Quinlan, Hudson	Tom Collins, Pelham
Richard Maddox, Hudson	Joe Torre, Wilton
Robert Kostecki, Hudson (A)	Becky Ohler, NH DES
Brion Carroll, Hudson (A)	

Staff Present:

Steve Williams, Executive Director	Camille Pattison, Integrated Planning Program Manager
Kerrie Diers, Assistant Director	Tim Roache, Principal Transportation Planner
Steve Schaffer, GIS Manager	Karen M. Baker, Administrative Assistant
Shirley Vance, Executive Assistant	

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM. Bernie Manor was introduced as a potential new Commissioner from Hudson. Steve Williams also introduced new staff members Tim Roache, Principal Transportation Planner and Karen Baker, Administrative Assistant.

Privilege of the Floor

There were no members of the public in attendance who wished to speak.

Approval of Minutes -September 20, 2006

Nelson Disco requested that the minutes of September 20, 2006 be amended to indicate a "left turn lane on Rt. 101 in Amherst at the intersection of Old Manchester Road" It was moved by Nelson Disco, seconded by Marilyn Peterman:

THAT the minutes of September 20, 2006 be approved as amended.

The motion carried unanimously.

Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan (LCTP)

Camille Pattison reported on the LCTP. The Safe, Affordable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires that a locally-developed, coordinated public transit/human service planning process and an initial plan be developed by 2007 as a condition of receiving funding for programs directed at meeting the needs of the elderly, disabled and low income. Social service providers were invited to a series of three meetings were held to determine how best to combine services and to provide a higher lever of service at a lower cost.

Tim Roache briefed members on the immediate transportation needs as outlined in the report: public outreach; additional funding sources; and coordination and implementation of the State Coordinated



Transportation Plan as well as the short and long terms goals. He added that the LCTP Committee and TTAC endorsed the plan for recommendation to the Commission for approval. Steve Williams explained that some funding in the region will end if they do not move forward and choose to adopt the plan. He asked that they consider the plan for adoption. Members of the commission discussed the proposed plan.

Jay Hennessey asked that the bullet starting with Milford on pg. 45 be fixed due to the misstatement that Milford already has some level of regularly scheduled transit service. It was moved by Mike Fimbel, and seconded by Donald Wunderlich.

THAT the Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan (LCTP)
be adopted by the Commission.

The motion **carried** with Howard Dilworth, Jr. opposed.

The next agenda item (Report on Transportation Programming Process) was deferred to later in the meeting (NH DOT Commissioner Carol Murray had expressed an interest in attending the meeting this evening and had not yet arrived).

Status Report on NRPC Regional Plan

Kerrie Diers distributed a status report on the Regional Plan. NRPC and its member municipalities will work collaboratively to determine critical issues expected to confront the region in the next 20 years. Three regional forums will be held in the Towns of Hudson and Milford and the City of Nashua. A slide show was being put together showing major issues which may affect the region. In addition, presentations will be given to civic groups, school boards, and regularly scheduled town meetings (Conservation Commission etc.).

The regular March Commission meeting will be re-scheduled to March 29 as a mini retreat (venue unknown yet) starting at 6:00pm. This will be a dinner meeting where issues will be prioritized. Helen Fenske asked if the regional forums were open to everyone. A discussion was held among commissioners regarding the process.

Mid-Year Budget Amendment

Steve Williams distributed a proposed mid-year FY 2007 budget revision and discussed new grants and personnel changes that have come about during the first 6 months of the fiscal year. Jay Hennessey asked if there was a public bidding process due to the increase on consultant professional services. Steve informed him that there is a procurement process that we go through and explained that it is also a federal and City of Nashua requirement. After further discussion, it was moved by Nelson Disco, seconded by Marilyn Peterman:

THAT the Mid-year Budget Amendment for FY 2007 be adopted.

The motion **carried** unanimously.

FY06 NRPC Audit

On behalf of the Executive Committee, Treasurer Nelson Disco reviewed the FY06 NRPC Audit stating that it was in compliance with accepted audit processes. In addition, everything looked in order and he recommended that it be accepted (copies of the audit would be sent to the Commission members). He added also that next years audit would include changes on indirect cost allocation methods. A member asked if there was a timeline on approval of the audit. Steve responded that there is not a required



timeline, but that the audit is required to be sent to all the grant agencies. After further discussion, it was moved by Donald Wunderlich, seconded by Susan Durham:

THAT the Commission members accept the recommendation from the Executive Committee to accept the audit.

The motion **carried** unanimously

Nominating Committee Report

The NRPC Nominating Committee (Mike Fimbel, Marilyn Peterman, and Ray Peeples) nominated Joe Torre, Town of Wilton to the Executive Committee. He was proposed to replace former Executive Committee member John Eresian who had stepped down. After further discussion it was moved by Mike Fimbel, seconded by Marilyn Peterman:

THAT Joe Torre be elected to the Executive Committee.

The motion **carried** unanimously.

NRPC Commissioner Appointment Information

Assistant Director Kerrie Diers prepared a memorandum regarding Community Representation to the NRPC. This question and answer memo was in response to recent inquiries regarding the process for appointing community representatives to serve as Nashua Regional Planning Commissioners (see "Community Representation to NRPC" memo handout). Listed below are some of the key points:

- 4 year terms (no automatics)
- Appointment information directly from RSA 36:46
- Nominations are made by town Planning Boards
- Appointment made by Selectmen/Town Council/Board of Aldermen

Report on Transportation Programming Process

Steve Williams discussed the memo included in the Commissioner packet entitled "Programming Projects for Federal Transportation Funding." This memo was prepared in response to concerns expressed at the September Commission meeting. He reviewed the eight basic steps currently used to add a project the State 10 Year Transportation Plan. Williams stated that the role of the municipalities and regional planning commissions in the selection of projects to receive federal transportation funding is very limited. The municipalities and regional planning commissions provide input on project prioritization to the NH DOT at the beginning of the process. However, there is no commitment by NH DOT to follow the priorities identified by the regional planning commissions. Through the course of the process, the Executive Council, the Governor and the Legislature all have the opportunities to change the list of projects in the 10 Year Transportation Plan. At the very end of the process, the regional planning commissions are expected to amend and adopt the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program and the Air Quality Conformity Analysis. Although the regional planning commissions have the option to not adopt or to change the Transportation Improvement Program, the regional planning commissions are very vulnerable to coercion by the state. As a result, those actions to adopt amount to little more than rubber stamp approvals on decisions already made by the NH DOT, Executive Council, Governor and Legislature.

From the perspective of the other participants there are problems in the above process for identifying transportation projects for funding. The first problem is that there is no policy direction to the process. At no point in the process is there an identification of the critical transportation needs of the state or



regions and no approach to focusing funding on the critical transportation needs. The process is simply one for distributing money. A second critical problem is that the existing process does not include a budget constraint on the regions or on the other participants. No one knows exactly how much money is available or can be committed to projects. As a result, there is no motivation to focus available funds on the highest priorities. Due to these two problems, there is very no practical method for anyone involved in the process to say that any particular project is not a priority for transportation funding.

Williams then described a proposal for revising the process that was developed by NRPC working with the Rockingham and Southern New Hampshire Planning Commissions. Under this approach a transportation funding policy is based on breaking the state's transportation facilities down into three groups based on the mobility market being served and then for each group of facilities identifying the organization that can best take the responsibility for selecting projects on that system and the funding that should be available for the purpose. This proposal focuses on federal transportation funds that available to be used statewide. Funds that are not federal funds (turnpike or state-aid funds) and funds that are already distributed by an existing formula (federal transit funds) are not included.

A general discussion then took place among the commissioners regarding issues with the current Ten Year Plan process for identifying projects and the proposal that Williams presented.

Meet with NH DOT Commissioner Carol Murray to discuss the proposal and work towards an agreement for how it might be implemented. I am working to schedule a meeting with the Commissioner that was to include three of the other RPC Directors to begin this discussion. We do not believe that legislative change will be necessary to implement to transportation funding process that we envision.

After further discussion, it was moved by Richard Maddox, seconded by Nelson Disco:

THAT the Executive Director work with the other regional planning commissions achieve acceptance of this proposal by NH DOT, and that the Executive Director meet with members of the Executive Council to describe the proposal and seek their support.

The motion **carried** with one abstention.

Commissioners' Roundtable

It was decided to forgo the Roundtable this evening. There was one announcement: the annual Legislative Forum will be held on January 25th at 7:00 pm at the Anheuser-Busch facility in Merrimack.

It was moved by Nelson Disco, seconded by Donald Wunderlich:

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 9:27pm.

The motion **carried** unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Williams, Official Recorder