



**APPROVED MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Executive Committee
January, 15 2014**

Present: Karin Elmer, Chair
Janet Langdell
Tom Young
Dave Hennessey
Mike Fimbel
Jim Battis
Margaret Morris (new Merrimack alternate)

Absent: Dan Kelly

Staff: Kerrie Diers, Executive Director
Mark Connors, Regional Planner

I. Call to Order:

Elmer called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

II. Minutes:

The Executive Committee reviewed the minutes from the December 18, 2013 meeting. Langdell made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Elmer seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

III. Financials

Diers introduced the Commission's November financial report and noted that she was comfortable with the balances. She noted that revenues were running slightly ahead of projections while expenses were a bit lower than forecast. She added that there would likely be some changes moving forward depending on billing and invoice timing.

Battis inquired about local planning contracts. Diers noted that when she drafts the budget in June she must make estimates regarding amounts related to local planning contracts by month, and that the actual totals are likely to deviate somewhat as the months progress.

Hennessey asked if the Commission had a contingency plan if Hudson decided to withdraw from the Commission. Diers noted that the commission was hopeful Hudson would decide to remain a member community, but added that Battis would provide a brief update regarding the situation there.

Fimbel made a motion to approve the commission's financial report as presented. Young seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Business**IV. Hudson's Status in Regional Planning Commission**

Diers introduced Battis to provide a brief overview of Hudson's deliberations regarding its status in the regional planning commission. Battis recounted recent developments from the town's budget committee process and its upcoming deliberative session. He noted that Diers provided the budget committee with an accounting of the services NRPC provides the town in exchange for its membership and annual dues. Battis noted that the budget committee was not only satisfied with the role of the regional planning commission, but positive regarding its contributions to the town.

Battis noted that the town's proposed budget includes the NRPC dues, but that there may be a motion to remove the dues at the town's deliberative session. He noted that some residents had concerns regarding the proposed East Hollis Street roundabout in Nashua. Diers clarified that the project was proposed by the City of Nashua and the Commission provided support in the same manner it would for any other municipality in the region.

This was followed by a discussion of Hudson's status within the regional planning Commission. Diers noted that she would be happy to provide any support necessary in anticipation of Hudson's deliberative session.

V. Transportation Chapter Update

Diers introduced Connors to provide an update regarding the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Connors provided committee members with a document summarizing some of the major themes regarding transportation that the commission had heard during its public outreach efforts, including results from a telephone survey of residents by the University of New Hampshire.

This was followed by a discussion of some of public input from the UNH survey. Connors then provided a brief overview of the detailed outline for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and asked for any feedback from the committee. Langdell noted that while the plan included a discussion of poverty, she would like to see an additional focus on the transportation needs of the working poor, who earn just above the poverty threshold. Hennessey noted that while the region was generally affluent, it had some areas of poverty. Langdell also noted it might be helpful to explore the transportation needs of young adults.

Langdell said she would like to see the objective related to "demand response and volunteer driver services for non-emergency medical trips" clarified. She said she would prefer that it be simplified to focus on demand response and senior transportation needs.

Hennessey inquired as to what efforts were being undertaken to "plan for alternative fuel infrastructure to support the next generation of passenger vehicles" in the region. This was followed by a discussion that such efforts were not widespread across the region, aside from Nashua's efforts to run its entire city fleet of vehicles on compressed natural gas. Connors said he hoped that this section of the plan would provide guidance to communities in planning efforts related to alternative fuel vehicles. This was followed by a brief discussion of transportation planning efforts in the City of Lowell, Mass.



Connors then provided committee members with a memorandum from Tim Roache explaining how project goals and objectives were organized and then reviewed in relation to planned transportation improvements in the region. Diers noted that one of the commission's goals was to add transportation projects from every municipality in the region. Langdell inquired as to when the committee would begin seeing actual drafts of the regional plan. Diers then passed around a draft schedule of deadlines NRPC would work to meet in completing chapters. She said that chapters would be presented incrementally between February and June.

VI. Executive Committee Vacancies

There was no new progress to report. The Executive committee is waiting on the City of Nashua to fill the Community Development Director position. Diers will keep this item on the agenda until the positions are filled.

VII. Other Business

Community Planning and Landscape Architecture Services: Diers passed around two marketing brochures describing the commission's community planning services and landscape architecture services. Diers emphasized that the documents were in draft form, noting they were "hot off the presses." She said that the hiring of Jennifer DiNovo, a landscape architect, allowed the commission to offer a whole range of additional services to communities. She said the documents were not meant to be comprehensive in nature, but simply to provide a brief overview of services in a highly graphical format. She said she would e-mail the documents to committee members to solicit additional input.

Right to Know Request: Diers noted that the commission had recently received a very comprehensive Right to Know request seeking information on all contracts dating back to 2009. The request was received by most of the regional planning commissions in the state. In the interest of both avoiding significant staff resources responding to the request and maintaining consistency in the handling of the request, Diers noted that NRPC had joined the Strafford Regional Planning Commission in hiring an attorney to help respond to the request. This was followed by a brief discussion regarding the merits of a potential future policy to charge for staff hours expended in responding to large Right to Know requests.

Legislative Forum: Diers noted that the legislative forum will be held February 6 at Martha's Exchange and would feature Commissioner Jeff Rose from the Department of Resources and Economic Development as its keynote speaker.

Audit: Diers provided a brief update regarding the commission's upcoming audit. She hoped to have the final report at the February meeting.

Personnel Policies: Diers noted H.R. Concepts, the third party medical insurance administrator for the commission, now offers human resources services a reasonable cost. They will be conducting an HR audit of the Commission next week, and will be assisting with updating the Personnel Policies.



LIVEMaps: Diers provided a brief update regarding NRPC's LIVEMaps application, noting that it was essentially complete and was nearing a public launch. She added that the application should be an interesting tool for both municipal officials and members of the public.

Upcoming Legislation: Diers indicated that she, as well as Fimbel and Young, would attend a legislative hearing on January 17 regarding a proposal to eliminate regional planning commissions in the state. She thanked the executive committee members for their work in opposing the legislation and noted she was optimistic that it would be deemed inexpedient to legislate.

Facility Lease: Diers provided a brief update regarding the commission's facility lease negotiations. The owner's agent has proposed a 12% cap for energy increases. Diers still needs to review the spreadsheets to determine if this is a reasonable proposal.

Grant Applications: Diers noted that the commission had been working with Kathy Hersh, Nashua's former Community Development Director, and city officials on a grant application. The application related to enhancing Nashua's annual sculpture symposium, and hope to tie this into future efforts of increasing cultural and arts related tourism in the region.

New Commissioners: Diers noted new NRPC commissioners, including Aldermen Daniel Moriarty and Jim Donchess representing Nashua, as well as Aldermen Mary-Ann Melizzi-Golja and Diane Sheehan. Diers welcomed Margaret Morris of Merrimack, who attended the Executive Committee meeting as an audience member, would also be joining the Board of Commissioners. This was followed by a brief discussion in which Executive Committee members indicated they looked forward to working with Morris.

VIII. Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn made by Hennessey, which was seconded by Elmer. The meeting adjourned at 8:15PM.