



**APPROVED – MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Held via Zoom
June 17th, 2020**

Members Present:

Susan Ruch, Amherst	Tim Tenhave, Merrimack
Mike Dell Orfano, Amherst	Janet Langdell, Milford
Tamara Sorell, Brookline	Sarah Marchant, Nashua
Robert Larmouth, Hollis	Dave Tencza, Nashua
Venu Rao, Hollis	Ed Weber, Nashua
James Battis, Hudson	Hal Lynde, Pelham
Kim Queenan, Litchfield	Dave Hennessey, Pelham
Burton Reynolds, Lyndeborough	Jim Kofalt, Wilton
Charles Moser, Mason	Kermit Williams, Wilton
Karin Elmer, Merrimack	

Others Present:

None

Staff Present:

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director
Sara Siskavich, Assistant Director
Kate Lafond, Business Manager
Gregg Lantos, Principal Transportation Planner/MPO Coord.
Mason Twombly, Regional-Environmental Planner

Welcome and Introductions

Elmer opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Minkarah reviewed the Zoom meeting procedures and protocols. A roll call attendance was then conducted.

Privilege of the Floor

No members of the public wished to speak.

Elmer made an appeal to the Commission that the Executive Committee needs new members, she plans to step down as Chair and she believes more Executive Committee members will be stepping down over the next year. Tenhave encouraged Commissioners by stating that he joined the Executive Committee last year and it is not a very large commitment, just a little more preparation and participation.

Approval of Minutes – December 18, 2019

Spelling correction is to be made on Page 3, “sifts” will be changed to “shifts”. URL’s are to be added where there are currently hyperlinks.

Hennessey motioned with a second from Kofalt,

THAT the minutes of December 18, 2019, be approved as amended and placed on file.

The motion **carried** with abstentions from Moser, Reynolds, & Tencza

Approval of Minutes – May 13, 2020

The header of the minutes is to be changed from “March” to “May”. Spelling correction is to be made on Page 1, “inmcludong” will be changed to “including” and Page 3, “need” to “needed”. An apostrophe will be added to “Commissions” on Page 3.

Tenhave motioned with a second from Battis,

THAT the minutes of May 13, 2020, be approved as amended and placed on file.

The motion **carried** with abstentions from Hennessey, Moser, Rao, Reynolds, Tencza, & William

Annual Business Meeting

FY 2021 Budget

Minkarah reviewed the proposed FY21 budget with the Commission. Minkarah pointed out revenue areas of more significant change from the FY20 budget including the EPA Brownfields grant which is a 3-year \$300,000 grant and noted that that a large drawdown by November 2020 is anticipated. Much of this grant is to pay for contracted services. The Solid Waste District’s budget which passes through NRPC includes six Household Hazardous Waste events. Seven collection events were budgeted for last year however three had to be canceled due to COVID-19. The EPA Healthy Communities grant should be wrapped up by the end of FY20 and NH Geodata Portal is a new project. Siskavich summarized the project details and explained that the funds were awarded by the State to NH Granit, NRPC is a sub-recipient and NRPC will subcontract with other RPC’s to accomplish project goals over the next two years. Minkarah went on to review the budgeted expense line items.

Williams motioned with a second from Moser:

THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission FY 2021 Budget be approved.

The motion **carried**, all in favor

Janet Langdell exited the meeting

Annual Grant and Contract Authorization

Minkarah explained that on an annual basis the full Commission must affirm that the Executive Director is authorized to file applications, sign contracts, and implement the annual work program.

Weber motioned with a second from Battis:

THAT the Executive Director be authorized to file applications with federal, state, and local governmental units and other agencies to implement the FY 2021 work program of the Commission, and to execute agreements to receive funds for such purposes.

The motion **carried**, all in favor.

FY 2022 Dues

Minkarah stated that there is no proposed increase and that the total dues amount will remain flat at \$163,000. Minkarah added that the amount changes for each community in the region are slight, any changes are a result of that community's estimated population and equalized assessed valuation which is used to calculate the dues.

Battis motioned with a second from Ruch:

THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission FY 2022 Dues assessment be approved.

The motion **carried**, all in favor.

Election of FY 2021 Executive Committee Officers

Elmer stated that at the Executive Committee meeting this business item was tabled to their next meeting, she would like to step down as Chair and not all Executive Committee members were present to discuss and decide on the officer positions.

Proposed Bylaws Amendments

Minkarah reviewed the Bylaw amendments and summarized the discussion had at the May 13th special commission meeting. Minkarah reiterated that the purpose of the amendments is to bring them into compliance with Federal Highway and Transit guidelines. As well as make them gender-neutral and remove staggering term language that is no longer necessary. Minkarah continued that the amendments provide for a clear delineation of Commission and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) functions. The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) is an advisory committee that makes recommendations to the MPO Policy Committee. The MPO Policy Committee will now also include Nashua Transit System (NTS) and Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC). Ruch pointed out that NTS and SVTC representatives can also be municipality representatives but they will be limited to 1 vote even though they may be representing 2 entities. Williams asked if the Commission and the MPO Policy Committee would meet at the same time. Minkarah stated yes and described the meeting agenda as outlined in the proposed bylaws.

Williams motioned with a second from Ruch:

THAT the amendments to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission Bylaws be approved.

The motion **carried**, all in favor.

Proposed formation of Nashua Regional Planning Commission Foundation 501 (c)(3)

Minkarah explained that forming the 501 (c)(3) would allow the Foundation to receive funding from grants, other foundations, and private donations. The Foundation could then grant funds to the Commission to fulfill goals. Minkarah stated that other RPC's have done this and with attorneys review the drafted non-profit bylaws are modeled after theirs. Minkarah added that based on the discussion from the May special commission meeting the membership of the Board of Directors was increased from 5 members to 7 members to include 2 members at large.

Tenhaven suggested that since the foundation membership is nominated by the NRPC Executive Committee and confirmed by the full commission that Article III, Section 9 language be changed so that the members of the Board of Directors elect a successor to fill a vacancy only until the next annual Commission meeting so that they can fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Tenhaven further suggested that in Article IV, Section 2 “He/She” be replaced with “The President” and Article VI, Section 3 “Trustee(s)” be replaced with “Director(s)”.

Williams suggested that there should be a dissolution clause that describes what should be done with the Foundation assets if the foundation dissolves. Minkarah pointed out that this clause is included in the non-profit Articles of Agreement to be filed with the State of NH.

Williams asked regarding the relationship between the Commission and the Foundation. Minkarah noted that the purpose of the non-profit is *to help, support, and enhance efforts of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission*. To help accomplish this the NRPC Executive Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer) will hold Foundation Board of Director positions, the Executive Committee and Commission appoint the other four Directors, two of which will be current NRPC commissioners. Minkarah added that it is his assumption that the Foundation will use NRPC staff to manage operations but that is not a requirement.

Williams asked regarding the separation of funds. Minkarah stated that the Foundation is a separate entity and its finances will be accounted for separately from NRPC. Operationally there will need to be an agreement between the Foundation and NRPC.

Moser asked what the next steps would be. Minkarah stated that the next step is to file with the State of NH and the IRS.

Ruch stated that this is an important and momentous decision, establishing a non-profit will provide new revenue sources to support future goals.

Marchant stated that this is an excellent step forward.

Weber noted that there are huge cost savings on things like software for non-profits.

Ruch motioned with a second from Battis:

THAT the formation of Nashua Regional Planning Commission Foundation 501 (c)(3) be approved and the Foundations Bylaws be approved as amended.

The motion **carried**, all in favor.

Transportation Project Updates

Lantos began by indicating that the project solicitation for the Ten-Year Plan is underway. Memos have been sent to each community, who are encouraged to start thinking about project concepts. Lantos hopes to get the project submission forms out to communities soon with a submission deadline of the end of July. Once received by NRPC the project submissions will be evaluated and ranked. Minkarah asked, for the benefit of the communities, what types of projects qualify. Lantos responded

highway and non-motorized projects as well as some infrastructure. Examples include sidewalks, bike/pedestrian paths, park & rides, bus shelters.

Weber thanked Lantos for sending the traffic report for the Green Meadows project and noted that it will have an impact on other surrounding communities by the volume of traffic. Weber asked if the traffic report will be sent to other communities. Lantos indicated that he is happy to send it to anyone however he believes that there will be some changes. Minkarah agreed and gave some context to the discussion. There is a large logistic center being proposed in Hudson on the Green Meadows golf course site. This project has been declared one of regional impact so NRPC is reviewing it. Minkarah anticipates changes to the plans which will present changes to the traffic study. Weber thinks that geological watershed needs to be reviewed also. Minkarah noted that is not outside of NRPC's scope.

Lantos continued his report of the timeline for the Ten-Year Plan project submissions. By December 4th, 2020 draft priority list will be provided to NH DOT. Changes can be made until March 2021, with the final deadline for project submission to DOT being April 30th, 2021.

Lantos updated the commission that NRPC is required to have a Nashua Urbanized Area Memorandum of Understanding. A draft was developed and submitted for federal review, at this point, it is ready to be sent to other parties involved in the MOU.

Continuing his update, Lantos explained that NRPC is charged with revising the Long-Range Plan financial constraints. More discussion needs to be had with federal highway.

NRPC is also in the process of updating the congestion management document which was last updated in 2010. It is an excellent document, but it needs to be updated with new data. COVID-19 has impacted traffic. Traffic is 1/3 lower on the turnpike system. Lantos thinks that a subsection may need to be included. For future forecasting of traffic and congestion, we are assuming that traffic will return to normal levels. Minkarah noted that telecommuting, increase in online shopping, etc. may have a long-term impact on traffic levels and transit ridership.

Lantos added that the Interregional Transit Study has been on hold because of the impacts of COVID-19, it is hoped that in the fall NRPC can get surveys out.

Weber noted that 5G is coming out and asked if NRPC has a role in broadband. Minkarah stated that historically we have, he is unsure if NRPC will have a role in the implementation of 5G, but we will have a role in the deployment of technology in traffic controls and transportation as well as data collection. Lantos commented that NRPC is slated to do an Intelligent Transportation Systems plan which is an action plan, where ITS can be implemented in our region

Sorell asked regarding the list of transportation projects and if the timeframe for the projects were subject to change at all. Sorell continued that the reason she asks is there was another serious accident in Brookline at an intersection that is slated for updating in 2029. Lantos noted that NRPC is in support of a speed limit reduction in that area. Sorell asked if approved projects can be moved ahead. Lantos indicated that it could happen if another project before it is delayed.

General Updates

Minkarah informed the Commission that since the State's Stay at Home Order was lifted, NRPC reopened its office to employees on June 1st, they are not yet open to the public and meetings are still being held remotely. Minkarah stated that he anticipates hybrid meetings as we move forward.

Williams asked if a decision had been made on the annual forum yet. The spring forum was postponed because of COVID-19. Minkarah responded tentatively fall or winter but it is largely dependent on when function facilities can host us and what the requirements are.

Hennessey asked about the status of census returns. Minkarah replied that he believed the response rate has been good in this region. Siskavich agreed that NH as a state overall is outpacing the nation and our region is ahead of the pack as well. Siskavich continued that we do have a census contact and NRPC has increased social media messaging. Right now, the census is in the self-reporting phase, there will be canvassing. Hennessey is interested in the reports, Siskavich will have Ryan Friedman sent them along.

Mike Dell Orfano joined the meeting.

Commissioners Roundtable

Amherst – Dell Orfano indicated a lot is going on in Amherst. The Board of Selectmen submitted to the Planning Board a proposal for impact fees. The Planning Board took a vote tonight (3 to 3) with the chair in favor of recommending implementation. The impact fees would limit smaller development and encourage "McMansions". Del Orfano noted people are screaming to stop growth and preserve the community.

Brookline – Sorell noted that she mentioned the traffic concern and that other than that, the town is experiencing overcrowding at the beach with complaints about out-of-towners. Sorell added that a few restaurants in town have started to open.

Hollis – Larmouth stated that the March School and Town meetings were postponed because of COVID-19. The School meeting was just held with drive-thru voting, which worked very well. The Town meeting will be held this Saturday, outside at the athletic field.

Hudson – Battis talked about the proposed logistics center, noting that last Saturday there was a site walk with over 100 public attendees which is the largest he has ever seen. The proposal presents traffic and air quality concerns among others such as the impact on home values. Three buildings are proposed, the two of which are huge. As previously mentioned, the proposal is one of regional concern and as he understands it is already under massive revision. Other than that, some restaurants are opening but things are far from normal.

Litchfield – Queenan said the CIP Committee is working on the Capital Improvements Plan, everyone wants new things. When complete the Planning Board will include the CIP in the Communities Facilities Chapter of the Master Plan. Also, the Selectmen recently formed a committee to address concerns of dirty looking water from Pennichuck, she believes they may also discuss rates.

Lyndeborough – Reynolds indicated that Lyndeborough is quiet right now.

Mason – Moser mentioned that the town is updating the Master Plan with NRPC's assistance. Online surveys generated very interesting results. The charrettes were delayed because of COVID-19 but the 1st public in-person meeting will be held by the Planning Board this month.

Merrimack – Tenhave stated that the town is seeing more drive to put residential units along the Route 3 corridor. There is a project going before the ZBA to create more units. Normally this area is a commercial district, but it is now becoming residential, on our way to being a bedroom community. Tenhave added that town voting will be held on June 23rd, absentee voting is being encouraged. Tenhave asked the other communities if and how they are holding non-public meetings. Discussion ensued related to how the communities are holding non-public meetings at this time.

Nashua – Weber reported that 122 Manchester Street site plan was before the Planning Board several times, the most recent site plan was very good and was approved, the back and forth process between the Planning Board and applicant works. Tencza pointed out that Main Street has been opened to support local business and he encouraged people to come down and check it out. Marchant agreed that the Main Street lane closures to support outdoor dining has been most exciting. All departments have worked together to support site plan changes to accommodate outdoor dining. Marchant also mentioned another big exciting project: the redevelopment of Bronstein apartments, a low-density urban renewal project from the 1970s with 38 units on 4 acres. The proposed redevelopment would create over 200 units of affordable housing. Marchant noted that this project is in serious discussion stage, so it has a long way to go.

Pelham – Lynde commented that there are two roundabout projects in process as well as work on a historic double stone arch bridge that is impacted by flooding. A large box culvert will be installed to provide relief and change the flow rate. Hennessey added that like Amherst, a petition warrant article abolished conservation developments as a reaction to affordable housing.

Wilton – Williams indicated that the Selectmen have been meeting in person this whole time, the audience however is attending virtually. Like Brookline, people from all over come to Garwin Falls which makes the people that live in the area unhappy. There have been a lot of parking issues which has resulted in ticketing from the police department. Moser stated that Mason has a similar issue at a quarry in town. Williams suggested that Moser reach out to the Wilton Town Administrator and Police Chief to get more information about how Wilton is addressing the matter. Williams added that 2 projects being worked on with NRPC have slowed down because of COVID-19, one is a collaborative workplace another is a brownfields study on a property adjacent to the town Police Department parking lot. The property used to be a mill and there may have been cyanide buried there. The property was owned by a 501 (c)(3) which dissolved in 1992 but did not sell the property.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Williams with a second from Kofalt. The meeting ended at 9:07 p.m. The next Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 16, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director