



**APPROVED – MINUTES
 NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
 Held via Zoom
 September 16th, 2020**

Members Present:

Susan Ruch, Amherst	Burton Reynolds, Lyndeborough
Mike Dell Orfano, Amherst	Karin Elmer, Merrimack
Tamara Sorell, Brookline	Tim Tenhave, Merrimack
Robert Larmouth, Hollis	Janet Langdell, Milford
Venu Rao, Hollis	Ed Weber, Nashua
James Battis, Hudson	Hal Lynde, Pelham
Kim Queenan, Litchfield	

Others Present:

Reagan Bissonette, Executive Director
 NRRA
 William Rose, NHDOT
 Tim White, NHDES
 Suzanne Fournier, Milford citizen

Staff Present:

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

Welcome and Introductions

Elmer opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m. A roll call attendance was conducted.

Privilege of the Floor

No members of the public wished to speak.

Approval of Minutes – June 17, 2020

Spelling correction is to be made to Dell Orfano throughout the minutes. Dell Orfano clarified his statement under the commissioner round table section, Amherst residents want to stop the growth and preserve the community.

Ruch motioned to approve as amended with a second from Weber,

THAT the minutes of June 17, 2020, be approved as amended and placed on file.

The motion **carried**, all in favor

Presentation - Reagan Bissonette, Executive Director, Northeast Resource Recovery Association: Recycling, Solid Waste, and Composting in New Hampshire – current Issues & Trends

Reagan Bissonnette the Executive Director of the Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRA) gave a presentation about current issues and trends in recycling, solid waste, and composting.

PDF Copy attached. The recorded presentation can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/NashuaRPC/videos/337150254199671>

Election of FY 2021 Executive Committee Officers

The recommended new slate of officer positions is as follows for FY21:

Susan Ruch, Chair / Jim Battis, Vice-Chair / Sarah Marchant, Treasurer

Venu Rao and Kim Queenan have also volunteered to serve on the Executive Committee. Tenhave indicated that their membership only needs to be voted on by the full Commission at the annual meeting, which is now next July.

Tenhave motioned with a second from Weber:

THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission approves the recommended FY21 slate of officers.

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

MPO Policy Committee

NRPC Regional On-Road Carbon Monoxide Emissions Reduction Target

Lantos explained that NRPC had previously adopted performance targets which are required for all MPO's. The carbon monoxide reduction performance target applies to transportation management areas. The carbon monoxide performance target is a 4-year target which we are required to implement before the end of the year. Lantos discussed how the targets were developed at the direction of NHDOT and Federal Highway. Three CMAQ projects contribute to the targets. The target was presented to the TTAC and they recommend the target for adoption.

Weber noted that NTS is using more natural gas in buses and asked does this factor in. Lantos indicated that we are using factors developed by NHDES. Minkarah asked Tim White if increased use of natural gas is factored in. White stated that the use of alternative fuel vehicles is a positive development in terms of the improvement of air quality in Nashua. Lantos and Siskavich confirmed that the CMAQ analysis used included emissions calculation for natural gas vehicles.

Dell Orfano asked if any thought was given to renewables like solar and hybrid hot water systems? Lantos this is only for on road mobile source emissions from CMAQ projects.

Ruch commented that emissions affect public health and that is why this is a requirement. Interestingly some natural gas vehicles have higher Carbon Monoxide emissions but lower emissions of nitrogen oxide and particulates so there is a benefit to natural gas vehicles.

Lantos spoke to what would be needed to really have a measurable performance target.

Minkarah reminded that NHDOT and NHDES representatives are voting members of the MPO Policy Committee

Ruch motioned with a second from Battis:

THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission MPO Policy Commission approve the Regional On-Road Carbon Emissions Reduction Target.

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

State of New Hampshire FY 2023 to 2032 Ten Year Transportation Plan project proposals

Lantos relayed that every two years NRPC solicits projects for the NHDOT 10-year transportation plan. There is a two-year allocation of \$6.175 million of federal funding. We have received six project applications and there is one carry-over project in the amount of \$294,000 for a Nashua sidewalk project. Lantos reviewed the six projects. The total for the projects amounts to \$4,248,300 of federal funding leaving \$1,926,700 available. It is still possible to accept applications for other projects at this point. Lantos indicated that we do also have the NH 101 safety improvement project that is underfunded and there is thought to see if remaining funds can be applied to that if possible. Minkarah is unsure that the timing of the 101 projects and the availability of funds would align there could be a significant gap. Minkarah commented that we usually hit or exceed the allocation, only four communities in our region have submitted applications this cycle. Ruch noted that all communities under stress right now due to COVID but it is a shame to leave money on the table for eligible projects in the region.

Transportation Project Updates

Lantos provided updates as follows:

The Nashua interregional transit study to evaluate the feasibility of connections to Massachusetts was project was hit hard by the effects of COVID because it relies on the collection of ridership counts and trip patterns. We are now moving ahead and using already collected data.

Another corrective action was to implement a fiscal constraint analysis for FTA funded projects, we have developed the final methodology.

Mason RSMS is underway, and it is our first effort for a town with primarily gravel roads. NRPC received a commendation from NHDOT for Hudson RSMS, it was the largest RSMS project done to date in the State. Minkarah pointed out that RSMS stands for Road Surface Management Study. The process involves staff going out, driving every road, and rating it then the community can then develop a multi-year improvement plan.

The Nashua Urbanized Area MOU 3rd draft has been completed and we will be looking for approval from the MPO in December.

Sustainable Energy Discussion – Venu Rao

Rao spent some time discussing sustainable energy, new technology, and his suggestion that the communities in the region address the matter collectively.

Rao told that in 3 to 5 years there will be more electric vehicles on the road than internal combustion engine vehicles. Surrounding states are getting there quicker and have more aggressive sustainable energy policies. Electrical vehicles are becoming affordable and cheaper to maintain. The influx of electrical vehicles will put a lot of load on electrical suppliers. This requires that we look ahead. The state does not have good sustainable energy policies. Solar microgrids are solar farms with banks of batteries. The state of NH does not have a policy in place to encourage this type of investing. At the local level if we look at land management policies to see how we can encourage this sort of thing and to make them visually appealing or hidden and safe.

Rao believes school buses are another issue. Every school has a lot of school buses and there is a lot of push around the country to move to electric school busses. 28 out of 50 states have laws relating to carbon monoxide limits. In Hollis, the High school and Middle school are considered higher energy consumption buildings, and they are charged a higher demand rate. Banks or batteries can be used to reduce consumption and rates. There are 480 thousand buses in the country and 94% run on diesel, the diesel fumes in the bus are a carcinogen we are exposing children to. Solar farms can be used to benefit both electrical school buses and school buildings. Current data already shows benefits.

Minkarah indicated that NRPC could host a series of round tables surrounding this topic.

Ruch noted that once the non-profit is fully established there may be more funding available for more like this and thanked Rao for bringing this up tonight.

Rao encouraged that we should start now so we are ahead of the curve to address this problem.

General Updates

Minkarah gave an update on the Brownfields grant program, half a dozen sites in four communities have been identified. There is a lot of progress. NRPC also has several significant grant applications out there now.

Commissioners Roundtable

Hollis – Larmouth the start of school was last week and one issue that has arisen is that many are driving students rather than them taking the bus, but the buses still must run. The Primary elections went well with outdoor tents and social distancing. The Olde Home Day was canceled but did hold an outdoor concert and fireworks.

Pelham – Lynde the town is proceeding with a project to put solar panels on all town buildings and hopefully the schools follow next year.

Amherst – Ruch the return to school has gone as smoothly as anywhere.

Merrimack – Tenhave noted that Merrimack has started asphalt recycling by grinding the top layer of the road surfaces and putting the material into dirt parking lots in town. Also, more apartments are proposed along Route 3. Not a lot of workforce housing though. Another interesting note nearly ½ democrat ballots cast in town were absentee.

Nashua – Weber the city is finally moving forward with the Master Plan update. The city also is having a large low-income housing replaced, they are moving people out and then they can come back into beautiful apartments.

Hollis – Rao a year ago we noticed there was no newspaper in town anymore so the Hollis Brookline Rotary newsletter was started, just information no editorial.

Amherst – Dell Orfano the town voted to make the Planning Board an elected Board in March. He stayed on the board to help bring the new board and it is an interesting task. Innovative integrative housing ordinance was rescinded so now there is a 128-unit development proposed and we do not have criteria for allowance. Also, the Jacobsen application was voted on 3 to 3 that the application was not materially different so put the project to rest. That will go to court and will cost the town a lot of money.

Brookline – Sorell Brookline has a Solar Committee, she will get Rao in touch with them. The election was well run. The lake was open with usual issues with crowd and parking but overall, it was a successful season.

Hudson – Battis reflecting on buses, a lot of buses in Hudson are also pretty empty. The Hudson Logistic Center is still the big topic in town, it will be a long time before that is resolved.

Milford – Langdell saw a Facebook post about a waiting list for the bus in Milford because they are limiting bus occupancy. It was announced today that the Milford Library was voted best in the state out of 254 towns. This is a credit to the great staff and Librarian.

Lyndeborough – Reynolds nothing to report

Litchfield – Queenan the Town Hall official reopened on Monday. The primary election went well. There is a positive case of COVID in Kindergarten. In town, there is the option to go remote full time or in school full time. On September 23rd, 2020, a virtual public hearing will be held to approve the draft CIP. The CIP committee & PB put together a community facility survey to provide input to the Master Plan. Last meeting a potential water issue was mentioned. Pennichuck investigated and believe a new water distribution system that went in 2019. It is hoped that the flushing of the waterline will resolve the issue.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Weber with a second from Dell Orfano. The meeting ended at 9:06 p.m. The next Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 16, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director