



**APPROVED MINUTES
 NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
 Executive Committee
 October 20, 2021**

In-Person Public Meeting with Zoom Attendance Option

| Members Attending In Person | Members Attending on Zoom | Members Absent | Staff Attending | Others Present |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Susan Ruch, Chair Jim Battis, Treasurer Kim Queenan Tamara Sorell Tim Tenhave Janet Langdell Venu Rao | none | Karin Elmer Sarah Marchant | Jay Minkarah, Executive Director Sara Siskavich, Assistant Director | none |

1. Call to Order

Ruch called the meeting to order at 6:00. An in-person quorum was present. No members or public participated via Zoom.

2. Business

a. Minutes: September 22, 2021

After no discussion, Battis moved to approve and file the minutes of September 22, as presented. Tenhave seconded the motion, which passed 7-0-0.

b. September - October Dashboard

Minkarah reviewed the Dashboard, Profit and Loss, and Balance Sheet. The Dashboard’s Working budget reflects a substantial increase for the regional housing needs assessment. Costs are also up for related professional services. The delta is going to reserve.

In terms of staff activities: a key meeting was the Capitol Corridor Stakeholders Meeting. There is momentum to make the Pheasant Lane Mall the preferred site over the Dow Site alternative. Both Simon Properties and Tyngsborough are supportive. Commissioners discussed how this could potentially rekindle efforts toward establishing proposed new southbound exit of the turnpike as well as create an opportunity for transit-oriented development. Ruch and Rao requested an invitation to attend the next stakeholder meeting on Financial Planning to address environmental concerns which must be considered early, i.e., in the design phases.

Minkarah reported little controversy at the GACIT public hearing in Merrimack which had a notably low turnout. The removal of the Hudson Circumferential Highway was not contested. Chris Buchanan of Amherst Fire gave compelling first-hand testimony relative to the need for safety improvements along Route 101.

There are no designated freight corridors in the NRPC region, however we completed a required MPO Freight Assessment meeting with FHWA, and it went smoothly.

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Minkarah and Rao attended the School Bus Electrification Initiative Kick-off Meeting with World Resources Institute which is supported by the Bezos Foundation.

On the topic of pending grants, the mobility management opportunity is moving forward and will grant \$120K for each regional coordination council for each of two years to hire a regional mobility manager.

NRPC will pursue another round of EPA brownfields assessments and we are optimistic for this round.

Minkarah is also pursuing an application to the EPA Brownfields revolving loan fund. The application will be through the NRPC Foundation once we are situated with a DUNS number and plan to register with the System for Award Management (SAM). This would allow NRPC to offer low interest loans for brownfields remediation. The ceiling is \$1M and we will go for the max. The Foundation would receive the funds as a grant, and then we would be able to grant up to half with no payback obligation.

Battis moved to accept and place on file for audit the Dashboard and Financials of September/October. Langdell seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0-0.

c. FY22 Q1 Quarterly Web Analytics

Website traffic remains consistent relative to audience traffic, geographic distribution, and top page content. Siskavich clarified that geo is detected by IP address and therefore has limitations. Newsletter stats reflect that we sent two newsletters in September. All newsletter performance metrics are up including clicks. Clicks are distributed across many article types. Audience dynamics are active, some adds, some removes, and overall, there was plus 1 net subscriber. Social media is trending consistently with Facebook by far showing stronger performance than Twitter. HHW is dominating our social channels which is appropriate considering it's NRPC's largest public-facing service. NRPC's Facebook page migrated to the new Pages format and analytics changed substantially. We are still looking at how to track total engaged users, which why it is blank on the report. There are not enough available data yet to report activity on LinkedIn.

3. Transportation Programs

Minkarah reported that vehicular count field work, particularly turning movement counts to support several local studies, is still active. The Transit expansion study is essentially complete. We are going out to bid on transportation engineering services.

4. Project Updates

Minkarah gave brief updates on the regional housing needs assessment template. The Economic recovery plan steering committee's November meeting will be an examination of the state's housing market. The last Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) event will be November 6. Energy aggregation is tough this year because of wild rate fluctuations. Rao reported that Hollis is interested in alternatives proposed by Community Power and suggests that NRPC invite them to come talk to us.

5. Staff Updates

Andrew Smeltz is leaving for a planner position at Southwest. NRPC will be recruiting to fill that vacancy as well as an administrative assistant position.

6. Other Business

a. New Website

Minkarah briefly described how the desire to stand up a robust Economic Development web page evolved into working with a vendor to overhaul the entire NRPC website. A few days ago, NRPC went under agreement with Revize out of Michigan a who has a large portfolio of regional customers. The new site will have a modern look and feel and will offer additional functionality such as translation and accessibility. Langdell reported on the current efforts to brand the RCC and they are a highly interested project stakeholder. Rao encouraged NRPC to engage stakeholders early, through either a broad survey and/or by assembling a beta team. Siskavich will circulate example Revize websites to the Executive Committee.

b. Annual Forum

There was discussion about options for an in-person event next spring. NRPC will look at venues for an outdoor event in the late May timeframe.

c. Annual Dues

Minkarah has been looking at the other RPCs' dues-setting strategies and would like to suggest we propose a modest increase. There was discussion about communication of NRPC's value alongside the dues proposal. Ruch requested that NRPC prepare numbers for the Executive Committee's consideration.

7. Adjourn

At 8:08, Battis moved, with a second by Rao, to adjourn. The motion passed 7-0-0.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be November 17, 2021