



MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONA PLANNING COMMISSION
Executive Committee
January 19, 2005

Present: John Eresian, Chair
Frank Bolmarcich
Howard Dilworth, Jr., Treasurer
Nelson Disco
Kathy Hersh, Vice Chair
Bill Parker
Marilyn Peterman
Andy Prolman

Absent: Mike Fimbel

Staff: Stephen Williams, Executive Director
Roger Hunt, Assistant Director

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Minutes of the December 15, 2004 Meeting

The minutes were reviewed by the members of the Executive Committee. Group consensus was that the minutes were appropriate and acceptable. Motion by Bolmarcich, second by Dilworth to approve the minutes; passed unanimously.

Legislative Forum

Williams distributed two draft agendas for the February 24 forum. One version includes Gov. Lynch and David Soule as keynote speakers; the other lists only Soule, in case the governor will not be able to attend. Williams briefly reviewed the history of the Forum, which has evolved from a networking gathering to the current information-sharing format.

Eresian stressed the need to remember what we are trying to accomplish with the Forum. Williams noted that David Soule's topic will be "The Changing Face of the New England Economy". Disco indicated that in earlier years, we had more opportunities for discussion following the speaker's presentation; Williams replied that Soule will allow discussion time.

Group consensus was that the agendas were good, with the proviso that the governor's staff will be asked where he would like to appear on the agenda. Hersh will check to see if Mayor Streeter could also help confirm the Governor's attendance. The Committee agreed that the menu we've had in recent years is fine.

The Committee also discussed the need to formally recognize long-serving staff members and Commission members. Dilworth distributed a handout with a number of discussion points. Consensus was that many of Dilworth's points were well-taken; discussion produced additional ideas. The Committee agreed that Williams will coordinate a long-service recognition element at the February 24 meeting. The Committee will continue to discuss how service should be acknowledged hereafter.

NRPC Hosting of GIDC Webpage

Williams provided a brief history of the GIDC (Gateway Industrial Development Corporation), noting that about 1/4 of NRPC's annual CDFA funding is provided in connection with NRPC's relationship with GIDC, most of which goes to host GIDC's website. Hersh pointed out that Nashua is not part of GIDC and has its own economic-development office; she questioned whether hosting the website is appropriate. Hersh also indicated that some of the data on GIDC's website is actually NRPC data (uncredited).

The Committee discussed overall economic-development efforts in our region and GIDC's role therein. Williams told the group that the RPCs are trying to raise their economic-development profile; that CDFA has a new director; and we need to be cautious about possibly jeopardizing this relationship. He



suggested that NRPC could help GIDC Director Doug Brown transition to an independent website, while retaining a relationship for overall economic development purposes. The Committee consensus was that this was a reasonable idea. The group also agreed with Williams that NRPC's website ought to have links to GIDC *and* other economic development entities in the region (e.g., Nashua's office), and that GIDC should link to NRPC's data instead of including it on their own page.

Dilworth expressed his concern that GIDC is charged with assisting local governments, but local governments seem to be unaware that it exists, based on Committee discussion. Parker noted that Milford has been working with GIDC in recent months. Peterman said that she would like to ask Doug Brown to come speak with the Executive Committee, to better understand GIDC's purpose and activities. The Committee agreed that this was a good idea.

State Economic Development Initiative

Williams distributed a letter from Stuart Arnett, director of the NH Division of Economic Development. Arnett would like NRPC to help convene a Greater Nashua regional economic development roundtable between now and April. Committee consensus was that this is a reasonable request. Several members expressed interest in involving local chambers of commerce as well. Prolman supported NRPC's involvement but cautioned that we should avoid overcommitting our time.

Monthly Finance Report for December 2004

Williams distributed the monthly update and highlighted items of interest. It appears NRPC will spend about 92 percent of our budget this year if trends continue; this translates to a carryover of about \$350K to next year. Everything is currently in good shape for the agency financially.

Other Business

Williams updated the Committee on the Hollis-Brookline position search; at this point there are three top-tier candidates slated for telephone interviews. He also directed attention to NRPC's latest GIS products, with four thematic maps of Brookline displayed, and told the group that all our municipalities will have similar maps available in the near future.

Hersh and Williams also led a brief discussion about the commuter rail project's recent activity. The Dow plant is currently in demolition and a purchaser is being selected. Transit-oriented development is definitely part of the plan. The City's aldermen have approved hiring a brownfield-remediation consultant. Peterman asked if the expired federal funding could still be obtained; Williams and Hersh are optimistic on this score.

Dilworth asked about the current status of several previously discussed matters, including training for staff and the strategic plan. Hunt will be working on staff training this spring. Williams indicated that the strategic plan got sidetracked by the commuter rail project, but we should be able to resume progress very soon.

Williams asked if we should distribute the Bike/Ped plan and the Regional Housing Needs assessment in February, in anticipation of the Commission's March consideration. The Committee agreed that this would be helpful.

Adjournment

There being no further business, several members simultaneously moved and seconded adjournment; motion carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.