



MINUTES

NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

September 19, 2007

Members Present:

Martin Michaelis, Amherst	Janet Langdell, Milford
Bradley Vear, Amherst (A)	Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon
Tad Putney, Brookline	Brian McCarthy, Nashua
Richard Maddox, Hudson (A)	Mark Plamondon, Nashua
Howard Dilworth, Jr., Hudson	Kathy Hersh, Nashua
Suellen Seabury Quinlan, Hudson	Ed Gleason, Pelham
Robert Kostecki, Hudson (A)	Leo Thibeault, Pelham (A)
Brion Carroll, Hudson	Tom Collins, Pelham
Ray Peeples, Litchfield	Joe Torre, Wilton
Donald Wunderlich, Merrimack	Becky Ohler, NHDES
Tim Tenhave, Merrimack	C. Christopher Guiry, Mason
James Elliott, Merrimack	Nancy Richardson, Mason
Karin Elmer (A), Merrimack	

Staff Present:

Steve Williams, Executive Director	Camille Pattison, Integrated Planning Program Manager
Kerrie Diers, Assistant Director	Tim Roache, Principal Transportation Planner
Steve Schaffer, GIS Manager	Karen M. Baker, Administrative Assistant

Kathy Hersh, Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Kathy welcomed two representatives, C. Christopher Guiry and Nancy Richardson from the Town of Mason and proceeded with introductions.

Privilege of the Floor

There were no members of the public in attendance who wished to speak.

Approval of Minutes -June 20, 2006

It was moved by Donald Wunderlich, seconded by Tim Tenhave:

THAT the minutes of June 20, 2007 be approved.

The motion carried unanimously.

Transportation Improvement Program Amendment

Tim Roache summarized the reason for the Transportation Improvement Program Amendment (STIP 4). He informed the group that the amendment was an administrative change. These resulted from changes in project schedule with four projects that weren't ready to bid being moved from 2007 into 2008. He also pointed out that there would be no impact on air quality. Letters have been provided from the other MPO's documenting their air quality conformity determinations. Roache also stated that at the last TTAC meeting, a recommendation was made to the Commission to approve STIP amendment 4.

Public Hearing: Hersh asked if there were any members of the public present to speak for or against the proposed STIP amendment. There were none. Hersh closed the public hearing.

Mike Fimbel asked if all projects were being moved. Roache answered that only 4 were being moved. Howard Dilworth, Jr. asked what happens if the Commission does not approve STIP Amendment 4. Williams answered that both NRPC and NHDOT have to approve the TIP or no federal funding can be used for the projects. As a result, unless the changes are approved, these projects will not have funding.



There was a question on when fiscal year 07/08 ends and begins. Tim answered September 30th. After further discussion, it was moved by Mike Fimbel, and seconded by Ed Gleason:

THAT STIP Amendment 4 be approved by the Commission.

The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting with Town of Mason Representatives

C. Christopher Guiry, Board of Selectmen Chair for the Town of Mason introduced himself and gave a brief summary of what the Town of Mason was looking to do. He explained that they were currently members of the Southwest Region Planning Commission and wanted to join the Nashua Regional Planning Commission. Chris went on to give a brief summary of Mason saying that it covers 24 square miles of land area and they are very proactive about review of development. He added that their goal is to draw from the experiences of other towns in the region and that joining the NRPC would be a much better fit for the Town of Mason.

Hersh asked the group if anyone had any questions to ask and reminded them that the process of taking on Mason was described in a memo included in the agenda packet. Fimbel asked Guiry if there was any feedback since January for public support regarding joining the NRPC. Guiry said the item has been part of the selectmen's discussion for a while and in the town newsletter. He added that the public was in favor of the town joining NRPC and had no negative comments as well as 100% support from the BOS and the PB. In addition, he said there has been big staff turnover at SWRPC and they were looking for more stability. Chris explained what Mason would be paying to join the NRPC (see Membership in NRPC memo included in agenda packet for more details).

Carroll asked if anything would occur by leaving and joining (quorum). Williams said there was also full explanation of this in the Membership in NRPC memo included in the agenda packet. Joe Torre asked if there were any outstanding contracts with SWRPC. Guiry said there was not and they would not be bringing any baggage and that the only thing they were finishing up currently with SWRPC was their Master Plan.

Brad Vear welcomed both Chris Guiry and Nancy Richardson to NRPC and said they made a good decision. Guiry said it was a longtime coming and that there is a lot of land available for subdivision in the town. He added that what they need is some good advice from neighbors and NRPC. Hersh told the group that a vote was needed to indicate NRPC's support for having Mason as a member. Jim Elliott asked how adding Mason will affect the agency financially. Williams stated that much of the funding NRPC receives is allocated on a population basis, so there would be relatively little additional revenue from adding Mason as a member. As far as cost to the Commission, the amount is being asked to pay to NRPC is to cover costs incurred for GIS costs, traffic analysis updates, administrative changes (logo, letterhead, etc), etc. After further discussion it was moved by Sue Ellen Seabury Quinlan and seconded by Ed Gleason:

THAT the Town of Mason be accepted as a member of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission as of July 1, 2008 contingent upon approval by Town Meeting of the NRPC dues and the additional payment of \$10,500.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ten Year Plan Transportation Update

Roache presented a summary of the proposed changes to the 2009-2018 Draft Ten Year Plan to the group by reviewing the spreadsheet included in the agenda packet. He explained that this update would be challenging due to the limited state and federal funds available for transportation improvement projects.



Roache further explained that there was not enough money and there still is a billion dollar deficit and many projects have either been dropped from the 10 Year Transportation Plan, delayed or reduced in scope. Roache informed the Commission that the GACIT (Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation) public hearings were upcoming. The purpose of the hearings is to inform the public about details of the Ten Year Plan. The three public hearings for the region will start at 7:00 and are listed below:

District 5 - Councilor Debora Pignatelli **Tuesday, October 2nd - Nashua City Hall Auditorium**
Monday, October 15th - Milford Town Hall Banquet Room

District 4 - Councilor Ray Wieczorek **Monday, October 22nd - Hudson Community Center**

Roache also pointed out that turnpike projects were no longer included in the Ten Year Plan. He encouraged folks to attend the GACIT hearings and provide their input.

Members of the Commission then asked questions about the status of various projects and general discussion ensued. Members of the Commission from Hudson questioned NRPC's position on the Circumferential Highway. Williams stated that the Circumferential Highway has been a priority for NRPC for 50 years. Unfortunately the NH DOT has determined that project will not move forward. As a result, NRPC has been working to identify the underlying transportation needs and put together project proposals that address those needs. Williams indicated that he hoped to provide a fuller presentation on those efforts at the December meeting. Williams was asked what would happen to right-of-way purchased by DOT for the Circumferential Highway if the project did not go forward. There was general discussion of the process for disbursing state owned property. Williams stated that NRPC would not support sale of the Circumferential Highway right-of-way without the approval of the towns.

Questions were also asked about the process by which revisions were made to the NH 101 project. Roache stated he had met with officials from Amherst, Wilton, and Milford and reviewed the NH 101 recommendations and agreed upon a phasing plan for the project. Vear questioned if the same process was used on the 101A widening. Roache stated that the changes to the NH 101A project were decided upon by NH DOT.

Tenhaven mentioned the Channel 9 News reporting that the Governor was supporting raising tolls and that it could be used for the widening of the Everett Turnpike and Tenhaven asked if this would shift moneys or make more available. Williams reviewed the proposed toll hike rates and the areas that would be affected adding that it would not impact the ten year plan. Langdell questioned the NH 101 safety improvements listed in the original corridor study for Amherst, Milford and Wilton. Tim said he had notes from the meetings he had with the towns adding that all improvements in the corridor study were still recommended, but it was not possible for all to be done in a year. Tim said he would provide information to Janet.

Elliott asked how the DOT approaches its plan for the short term on maintenance and preservation. Tim explained that many of the maintenance projects are state aid or funded through the district force account and therefore do not show up in the ten year plan.

Regional Plan Update

Assistant Director Kerrie Diers passed around a brochure which would be included in mailings for 3 upcoming focus group meetings starting in the fall. Based on results from the Regional Plan meetings held previously, there were six topics that were determined to be the most important or pressing for the future of the region. The first three topics to be scheduled will be Energy and Green Building with a (meeting on November 1st at Nashua North High School), Water Resources (meeting on November 8th at Nashua High School North) and Transportation (meeting on November 15th at the Crowne Plaza in



Nashua). The 3 remaining topics found to be most important to the region (Regional Cooperation/Funding, Community Infrastructure, and Higher Education), would be scheduled after the first of the year. The focus groups would include individuals or groups who have a stake in on of the topics. Staff planned to use keypad data collection technology to collect the input at the meetings. This data would help in identifying strategies and to develop an implementation plan.

Carroll asked if Kerrie saw energy and green building as being an important issue for NRPC implementation. Kerrie answered that there were no predetermined notions and that if the Commission felt this was important to them, then we would investigate further. She added that PSNH and other people involved in energy would be invited to the meeting and with input on what types of programs that they might have, might be of some help.

Richard Maddox said it was a great basic concept, but felt NRPC needed to get some means to project the message to more than just 4 people adding that we are getting skewed results and need to get more in the thousands. Williams informed Maddox and the group that NRPC was acquiring a video camera and technical software to do this for education and outreach and DVD's for local cable channels. Maddox informed the group of Hudson's ability to webcast. Maddox and Quinlan suggested making the Regional Plan information accessible and having the ability to email comments would also be great. Williams said NRPC would start with outreach and education to get the message there and once we get our feet wet, we would broaden the range of projects.

Regional Great Streets

Camille Pattison explained that the American Planning Association is sponsoring the 2nd annual National Community Planning Month in October. This month long celebration is designed to raise awareness of planning achievements across the country and to recognize the many local projects that make our communities wonderful places to live and work. In support of the month NRPC is holding a Great Streets Contest throughout the region. One Great Street will be selected from each NRPC member community. A great street can be anything from a rural road with beautiful views, local residential road with wide, tree-lined sidewalks to an active Main Street. The deadline for submitting nominations is this Friday. She encouraged anyone who is interested to submit a favorite road in their community. The press release, flyer and application form have been included in your packet. Contest winners will be recognized through a variety of public outreach events and will be highlighted in a Great Streets Touring Map, which will be produced at the end of September.

Carroll asked if there was going to be signage identifying the winning streets in each community. Camille said that were looking into this, something small and non obtrusive. KostECKI asked what would happen if there was a tie vote. Camille answered that based on APA Great Streets Guidelines, if there are multiple nominations the streets will be ranked on Character; Aesthetics; Multiple Uses; Connectivity. She added that the point of this was to get members of the community and public involved. Langdell asked NRPC to do this again next year and with the hopes of getting it onto the cable access channel.

Program Reports

Williams pointed out the program reports were included in the agenda packet. He introduced Steve Schaffer to explain the launch of the GIS and Mapping Interest Group. The kickoff meeting would be held November 15th at noon in the NRPC conference room and that the flyers would be going out in the next week. Schaffer informed the group that you do not have to be a GIS or tech person to be involved. He further explained that the group was being created as a way to learn more about how technology is being used for municipal mapping needs in the region. The group's agenda would be driven by the interests of the members. He added that this is meant to be fun and informational and only an interest is required.



Carroll asked what number of people would be considered as too many. Schaffer answered that he did not have a number and he anticipated there could be anywhere from 6 to 40 people. Carroll also asked how often the group would meet and if he fit the profile. Schaffer answered that if you are interested, then you fit the profile and that the group could meet monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly and it depended on interest. Ed Gleason asked if E911 had any functionality with the group's agenda. Schaffer answered yes and that it was perfect for the group as an implementation topic. Vear asked if there were any GIS courses at the colleges. UNH, Plymouth State and Keene State were the only ones Schaffer was aware of. Mark Plamondon referred to GPS Tracks and cell phones for safety.

Tim Tenhave asked if NRPC was still accepting applications for the iTRaC program. Camille answered yes.

Commissioners' Roundtable

A commissioner's roundtable was held.

It was moved by Richard Maddox and seconded by Ray Peeples:

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 9:15pm.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Williams, Official Recorder