



**MINUTES**  
**NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**June 18, 2008**

**Members Present:**

Martin Michaelis, Amherst	Mark MacDonald, Mason
Bradley Vear, Amherst	Nelson Disco, Merrimack
Tad Putney, Brookline	Karin Elmer, Merrimack (A)
Linda Saari, Brookline	Donald Wunderlich, Merrimack
Peter Baker, Hollis	Noreen O'Connell, Milford
Susan Durham, Hollis	Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon
Brion Carroll, Hudson	Bob Canaway, Nashua
Howard Dilworth, Jr., Hudson	Kathy Hersh, Nashua
Richard Maddox, Hudson (A)	Mike Tabacsko, Nashua
Bernie Manor, Hudson (A)	Mark Plamondon, Nashua
Suellen Seabury Quinlan, Hudson	Brian McCarthy, Nashua (A)
Leon Barry, Litchfield	Joe Torre, Wilton
Chris Guiry, Mason	Nancy Mayville, NH DOT

**Staff Present:**

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

Kathy Hersh, Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

**Privilege of the Floor**

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

**Introduction of New Members**

Chairman Hersh asked Alderman Brian McCarthy to introduce new members Bob Canaway of the Planning Board and Alderman Mike Tabacsko both with the City of Nashua.

**Approval of Minutes - March 19, 2008**

It was moved by Suellen Seabury and seconded by Brion Carroll:

THAT the minutes of March 19, 2008 be approved.

The motion carried unanimously.

**FY 2009 Budget and Work Program**

Steve Williams gave an overview of the FY 2009 Budget (see "*Nashua Regional Planning Commission Proposed Fiscal Year 2009 Budget*" included in agenda packet). He notified the group that they would talk later about Mason, the new NRPC facility, and projects in the works. Williams explained that the agency is funded through three main sources: local dues, contracts with member governments for services, and state and federal contracts and that the local dues for FY09 (misprinted in budget as "FY08") were adopted in June 2007 and totaled \$155,000 for all members. He pointed out that the FY 09 Budget was recommended by the Executive Committee to the Commission and noted that the \$1.96 million budget was only a 4.7% increase from the FY08 budget. Williams noted that agency personal expenses were down due to an employee resignation and that the personnel expense included merit increases that would be consistent with the previous year. In addition, the budget as proposed included projected increases in health expenses of 10%. For more detailed information regarding expenses, please refer to

pages 4 & 5 of the FY2009 Budget. O'Connell thanked Williams and NRPC for a job well done on the Budget saying it was easier to read than past budgets.

Williams then called the attention of the Commissioners to several items of special interest:

#### Town of Mason

Williams noted that pursuant to previous actions the Town of Mason would join NRPC beginning July 2008. He explained that the Executive Order was signed by the Governor during May and that this was the last step necessary to get Mason on board with NRPC. He further explained that Mason's has agreed to give \$10,500 for 2 years to NRPC to cover expenses (regional traffic forecasting model updates, GIS Database updates, new logo, letterhead, and business cards).

Chris Guiry, Chair of the Mason Board of Selectmen introduced Mark MacDonald, Chair of the Mason Planning Board. Chris continued on by saying that it would be good to fill the corner spot currently empty on the NRPC Region map. He thanked the group for accepting the Town of Mason as a member of the NRPC and added that it has been a journey and that Mason looked forward to being productive members. He also felt that it would be a much better fit than Southwest RPC was for the Town of Mason.

#### NRPC Office Facility

Members of the Executive Committee described the process the Executive Committee and staff went through to find a new facility for NRPC. O'Connell stated that NRPC has outgrown its current facility and can't really hold large groups and that the new facility would be more appropriate due to NRPC's growth. She further explained that they looked at every possible place Brad Vear could come up with and that Executive Park Drive in Merrimack was the best choice due to NRPC's needs, cost, and capacity. She added that it will be much more efficient.

Karin Elmer added that it will improve quality of life pointing out the issues with portions of the current building not heated, not cooled, and tobacco smoke filled. She also said that they searched high and low in Nashua to try and find a suitable place to accommodate NRPC's needs. Brion asked where Executive Park Drive was in Merrimack. Williams pointed out on a map where it was.

Williams then introduced senior staff members to report on accomplishments in FY08 and initiatives for FY09:

#### Land Use and Environmental Planning

Williams introduced Assistant Director Kerrie Diers and asked her to give a summary of Land Use and Environmental Planning. Diers first summarized the Regional Plan explaining how it went high-tech in 2008 using new interactive technology to fine tune the goals, recommendations and action strategies that will guide the future work programs in energy, water resources, and transportation. She went over some highlights (see Page 6 of the *NRPC FY09 Proposed Budget* for more detailed information) from the three forums held in November/December of 2008 which included key stakeholders and experts in the three above mention fields. Diers noted that the common threads between all three of the forums was the need for better cooperation and coordination at the regional level, and the need to review land use policies and regulations to integrate the best practices to encourage energy efficiency, protect water resources and extend the life of our transportation system. She added that NRPC would be finalizing the regional goals, objectives and action items for the final section of the Regional Plan.

Vear asked if there was a way to combine purchasing power by town for oil, salt, etc. and if there was a model out there that would be helpful in alleviating the energy and fuel costs. Dilworth spoke of some school districts in the area that are getting together to buy as a group. Williams

responded saying that there are RPC's out there that do joint purchasing for electronics, healthcare, for example and that NRPC could investigate this and it should not be hard to do.

Diers also explained that energy planning for the Nashua Region has been focused on funding research and maintaining and developing contacts with organizations, agencies and companies that are working on energy related issues. She added that NRPC staff has been very involved with the climate protection efforts in the state by attending energy events, annual conferences, and statewide meetings. Most recently, staff has been assisting local communities with establishing local energy committees and efforts.

Disco asked about the Phase II Stormwater Rules. Kerrie informed him of a Stormwater Coalition Meeting on July 10<sup>th</sup> with an EPA Representative to see what's going on because the stormwater permits will be expiring. A planned field trip to the coast headed up by Environmental Planner Minda Shaheen was also upcoming.

Lastly, Diers informed the group about the progress of NRPC's Regional Brownfields program through the assistance of an All-Hazards grant. This will utilize and expand the inventory potential of Brownfields sites that were developed under the first grant. If anyone was interested in getting involved with the program, she asked them to contact either Minda or herself.

Brad referred to the fact that seven years ago New Hampshire was 30<sup>th</sup> in the nation in regards to its population by age (oldest). Last year, we were moved to number 6. He felt this was due to the communities promoting over 55 housing and felt this was getting out of control and was creating a demographic. Diers said that something could be done as a part of iTRaC and referred to a movie regarding this issue "Communities and Consequences", which could be shown at NRPC to have further discussions about. Maddox said that Hudson has more senior housing than they can fill and felt this was due to the fact that they allowed up to 6 units per acre for senior housing and every builder jumped on board. He added that this was a loop hole that he hoped will be corrected.

### Integrated Planning

Williams then asked Integrated Program Manager Camille Pattison to give a report on iTRaC. Pattison started her report with a description of the successful project in Milford. She explained that Milford was interested in ensuring that future commercial and multi-family development along a section of 101A in town was in keeping with the character of the community, so the iTRaC program worked with the town to develop a corridor overlay district with design guideline for a 2 mile section of Nashua and Elm Streets. The project was voted in at town meeting in March of this year. Pattison proceeded to pass around some copies of the design guidelines for the Commissioners information.

Next Pattison went over the Brookline project which involved conducting a visioning process for Route 13 and Route 130 corridor. One of the results being a very successful public meeting, in large part to the dedicated committee, held on a Friday night in April where 100 people attended. She passed around some copies of the visual preference survey that was developed with the results shown for each photo. Also, as part of the process, Pattison referred to the children's artwork display done by a group of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, on what they wanted to see in the future for Brookline. She pointed out some of them were really funny, but the overall themes were more amenities and less driving. Lastly she passed the floor over to Commissioner Tad Putney to talk about the follow up event which included a pilot project on study circles which had just been completed and results would be added to the final plan. Putney briefly explained what study circles were and how they had been used in other communities.

Pattison then described a planned project for Merrimack. This is was the one of the projects for the upcoming year and Pattison went into some detail on the special project which focused on implementation of the existing town center master plans that had been developed. Some of goals for the project were as follows:

- Consideration of pedestrian connections
- Development of the new courthouse
- Developing an action plan for the town center
- Reviewing the existing town center overlay district

Lastly, Pattison informed the group of the technical services that are being offered for smaller research projects and marketing outreach services.

Brion felt this was great and requested a copy of the brochure adding that he would like to see this done for Hudson. He asked if it had been done for Hudson, if not, what it takes to get it done, and how does Hudson sign up. Pattison answered that no projects had been undertaken for Hudson yet, and that, yes, it can be done for Hudson, and there is an application process they would have to go through first. Williams added that Brion would have to talk to other town members first. Maddox asked if NRPC had the capacity to conduct a larger survey similar to Brookline's or capacity for a larger database. Williams referred Maddox to Survey Monkey, an online survey service and suggested he get in touch with Steve Schaffer for more information.

For more detailed information on Land Use programs please refer to the "*Nashua Regional Planning Commission Proposed Fiscal Year 2009 Budget*" included in June agenda packet

### Transportation Planning

Williams then introduced Principal Transportation Planner Tim Roache to report on the transportation program

#### Broad Street Parkway

Roache started off with Broad Street Parkway pointing out that most of everyone knows about this project and its long history. Over the past two years NRPC has managed this project through some rather difficult technical problems as well as a challenging political environment. NRPC recently completed a supplemental study to resolve several outstanding issues related to cost engineering and the environment that had remained unanswered since the 1997 EIS and 2003 terminus study. Most recently NRPC completed a cost reduction analysis of the project that identified options to significantly reduce the scope and cost of the project while maintaining its functionality. Roache went on to say that the reason he chose to this project as a highlight of the past year because it highlights the versatility and broad based skill set of the NRPC leadership and staff. He explained that the project required the staff to address and solve many technical problems and truly required a multi-disciplinary approach. It shows that the commission is capable of taking on complex project development and management tasks. He concluded his highlight of Broad Street Parkway saying that he was proud of the fact that we have the leadership at the NRPC under Williams and Diers and the skill at the staff level to be successful with this type of project.

Roache moved onto two FY 2009 initiatives saying that he was happy to report that NRPC successfully secured two Statewide Planning & Research Grants totaling \$100,000. The first project is to develop a Transportation Emergency Preparedness Plan in which NRPC will facilitate a forum where emergency preparedness and transportation operations plans will be discussed and coordinated with other plans in the region. The focus will be on assessing how well the transportation system functions in the event of an emergency. Part of the process will be to convene a panel of transportation security experts to assist with the planning process, identify up to 5 scenarios that could compromise the security and functionality of the regional transportation network, quantification by NRPC and the expert panel the effect on the transportation system and conclude with the development of goals and strategies which will be summarized in report form.

The second project is to develop a NH specific model for integrating transportation, land use, and environmental planning. He explained that this will be based on the Eco-Logical framework created by FHWA and its partner agencies with the main focus of the project being on the Souhegan River Watershed. Roache explained the concept as a collaborative planning process to define resources,

understand where they interact, and develop a strategy to mitigate the impacts of infrastructure improvements. The four main goals would be as follows:

- Strengthen collaboration, partnerships and data sharing amongst agencies
- Identify the potential impacts of specific projects on the watershed
- Develop mitigation strategies
- Develop the model framework for integrated planning for NH

Roache concluded saying that Diers would be taking the lead on the 2<sup>nd</sup> project. Diers commented that there are 14 or 15 projects listed in the Ten Year Plan around the Souhegan River Watershed and this would help to identify how projects will affect the watershed. By combining them all, they will be able to pick out the most important things to help mitigate and create a model that other RPC's can use. Nelson asked if Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee was going to be involved. Diers replied that there was an extensive list of partner organizations that would be involved including the SoRLAC.

For more detailed information on Transportation programs, please refer to the "*Nashua Regional Planning Commission Proposed Fiscal Year 2009 Budget*" included in June agenda packet

### Geographic Information Systems

Williams presented the report for GIS since program manager Steve Schaffer's wife had just given birth the previous day and was not present to give an update. He started off with achievements. One being the implementation of the new GIS Technical User Group, which to date has been successful and strongly supported by representatives of member local governments. Secondly, was the GIS involvement with Merrimack Village District. He explained that it started with a needs assessment which led to a data model and now the GIS department is doing field data collection in the Lampson Road area of the water distribution network. In addition, GIS is hoping to have the system valves mapped by the end of summer. Williams also informed the group that GIS was working with a vendor to help MVD digitize all their paper records to eventually be able to use a PDA to view water systems maps and find locations. A long term goal for GIS and MVD would be to GPS all individual 9500 shut off valves. Williams concluded by mentioning some of the other projects being worked on by GIS:

- Land Use Modeling
- GIS Data Improvement Program
- Land Use Growth Analysis (latest big focus)
- Generation of building footprints to match aerial images obtained by Milford
- Digitization of Lyndeborough trails based on community input.
- Generation of address points for all buildings in Hudson

Maddox thought that E911 was doing the house addressing in Hudson. Williams said that E911 had contracted with NRPC to do the job. Vear asked if the GIS data was available on the website. Williams said there was not adequate capacity on the website to serve GIS data directly. Williams said to contact NRPC GIS staff for help with this information and they were very good at working with client/server applications and can share data which can require some skill and bandwidth to use.

For more detailed information on GIS Programs, please refer to the "*Nashua Regional Planning Commission Proposed Fiscal Year 2009 Budget*" included in June agenda packet.

Williams stated that concluded the presentation of the proposed FY09 Budget and Work Program.

Hersh asked for a motion for approve to FY2009 budget. Maddox spoke up saying he had no time to review the budget and could not approve it. He added that the 2009 dues were voted on last year and the budget drives the numbers. Kathy explained that NRPC does the member dues really early and that the numbers in the budget for member dues are approved a year in advance to allow them to be incorporated

into local budgets. Williams explained in more detail how the numbers for the dues are determined - 50% is based on the municipal share of the total population and the other 50% is based on municipal total of equalized assessed value. After further discussion regarding the FY09 budget was discussed:

It was moved by Donald Wunderlich and seconded by Susan Durham:

THAT the NRPC FY 2009 Budget be adopted by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission.

The motion carried with Howard Dilworth, Jr. and Richard Maddox opposed.

### **Setting of FY 2010 Dues**

Williams referred to the "Calculation of NRPC FY 2010 Local Dues Assessment" table included in the agenda packet. Brion asked if there was any information comparing the dues assessment for FY09 with the proposed assessment for FY10. Williams said the increase is generally between 2% and 4% of the previous years and is based on the rate of inflation as identified from the CPI. After further discussion it was moved by Nelson Disco, and seconded by Marc Plamondon:

THAT the NRPC FY 2010 Local Dues Assessment be approved by the Commission.

Maddox informed the group that Hudson was beginning their budget process for FY 2010 next week, so they were looking at "0" increase on budget line items. Leon Barry asked what the previous year's dues were and agreed with Carroll that there should be some kind of before and after data included. Mike Fimbel of Mont Vernon suggested that a copy of the previous year's dues be included in the agenda packet when it comes time to set the dues each year. Diers passed around a copy of the previous years local dues assessment. Leon asked why the column for population estimates said "FY05" when it was for FY 09. Williams said that 2005 was the most recent year for which data was available. Tad asked where excess revenues go. Williams said that the dues were fully committed and go to three purposes: Subsidizing of programs (60-70%), Agency Reserve Funds, and federal and state grant matches. Carroll asked if NRPC had to approve the dues at this meeting. Williams said yes because they need to provide FY2010 dues to the municipalities before the September meeting and the next opportunity to vote on them would not be until the September meeting. Fimbel said that in his experience, selectmen never balk at 1, 2, 3, or 4%. O'Connell commented that Milford questions the dues every year when they are presented to the BOS, but do approve them. She added that Milford has gotten so much more in the last several years from NRPC and are okay with 3 or 4% and that it is equitable for them.

Hersh closed the discussion of the dues and called the question:

The motion carried with Howard Dilworth, Jr., Richard Maddox, and Brion Carroll opposed.

### **Annual Grant and Contract Authorization**

Williams referred to the suggested motion included in the agenda packet and gave a brief explanation. Kathy asked for a motion. It was moved by Brion Carroll and seconded by Leon Barry:

THAT the Executive Director be authorized to file applications with federal, state and local governmental units and agencies to implement the FY 2009 work program of the Commission, and to execute agreements to receive funds for such purposes.

The motion carried unanimously.

### Nominating Committee

Per the Bylaws, each year the Chair of the Commission appoints a nominating committee that makes nominations for the Executive Committee and officers. This meeting required nominations for an officer and one open position on the Executive Committee. The Nominating Committee proposed Noreen O'Connell of Milford as Chair, Mike Fimbel of Mont Vernon as Vice Chair, Karin Elmer of Merrimack as Treasurer and for the the open seat on the Executive Committee proposed Suellen Seabury of Hudson. After further discussion it was moved by Brion Carroll and seconded by Linda Saari

THAT the slate be approved as presented by the Nominating Committee.

All were in favor and the motion **carried** unanimously.

Barry asked the members listed to please stand up since he was new and did not know any of the people nominated. Another member asked when the Executive Committee meetings are held. Fimbel answered they were held every month for 10 months of the year.

### Commissioners' Roundtable

A commissioner's roundtable was held.

It was moved by O'Connell and seconded by Dilworth

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 9:05 pm.

The motion **carried** unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Stephen Williams, Official Recorder