

MONADNOCK REGION FUTURE

LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MINUTES

July 30, 2013

Present: Larry Robinson, Chair, Dick Berry, Ben Daviss, Elaine Levlocke, Leandra MacDonald, Ed Merrell, *SWRPC Board of Directors*; Eileen Fernandes, Vice-Chair, *Cheshire Medical Center*; Susan Ashworth, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS)*; Ryan Owens, *Monadnock Conservancy*; Amanda Littleton, *Cheshire County Conservation District*; Rhett Lamb, *City of Keene*; and, Jen Risley, *Monadnock Food Coop*.

Staff members present were Tim Murphy, Executive Director; Rebecca Baldwin, Office Manager; J.B. Mack, Principal Planner; Tara Germond, Senior Planner; Rebeckah Bullock, Community Development Specialist.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Robinson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., welcomed those in attendance and introductions were made.

II. Minutes of May 21, 2013

The minutes of May 21, 2013 were approved by unanimous vote.

III. Discussion Topic: Ensuring that the Regional Plan can be effectively utilized by our communities now and into the future.

Staff member Tara Germond provided a presentation on where we are in the development of the Regional Plan now that we are approximately half way through the project. She reported that to date we have engaged regional partners, continue to work with statewide partners, established a regional outreach strategy and held regional listening and visioning sessions across the region. Items that still need to be completed include finalizing the regional needs assessment, development of a regional vision, goals and priorities, development of regional plan components, conduct scenario planning, identify and prioritize implementation projects and complete the draft Regional Plan. She outlined the nine components of the draft Regional Plan that we hope to have completed by January 2014 that include the following documents:

- Regional Existing Conditions and Trends Assessment
- Housing Plan
- Long Range Transportation Plan
- Water Infrastructure Plan
- Environment Plan
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Climate Change Impacts Assessment
- Energy Efficiency and Green Building Plan
- Scenario Planning Exercises

Tim Murphy explained that when this team was formed approximately one year ago the focus was on outreach and we are now in the process of making a shift to drafting the Regional Plan.

Tara Germond explained that she and Tim Murphy met with both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Leadership Team to discuss how the Regional Plan can be an effective and useful document for our Region and communities once it is developed. It was agreed to propose a series of questions to the team members to gather their input regarding the Regional Plan as follows:

#1. For what purposes might communities, organizations, and other entities use the Regional Plan?

Suggestions from team members included the following:

- As a resource to support various applications.
- To place things in a regional concept.
- To determine if a project has regional impact.
- To know what surrounding communities are doing and if it affects your community.
- To see the benefit of a regional process and what co-operation among communities can accomplish.
- To leverage funding and align priorities.
- To establish ways for organizations and towns to partner with each other for a common vision.
- For towns to use as a source of information in creating their plans and provide them with innovative ideas.

Dick Berry observed there can be multiple answers to the same question. Rhett Lamb agreed noting the more data that is available the more helpful the document will be to our communities. Tim Murphy used the Housing Needs Assessment as an example and explained that it will provide a vision for the region rather than tell communities how things have to be done.

Ben Davis asked if copies of the Regional Plan will be distributed to our towns and Tara Germond responded that each town will receive two copies and one will go to the Office of Energy and Planning. Amanda Littleton asked if outreach will be provided once the Regional Plan is completed and was told it would be.

Larry Robinson asked if the Regional Plan will be a living document and Tim Murphy responded that it is required to be updated every five years but could be done more often if we wanted to.

#2. What information and data voids do our communities, organizations, others typically face? How might the Plan be an opportunity to address these gaps?

Suggestions from team members included the following:

- Make sure data is current and not outdated as an example it was noted that wetlands in the region are not adequately marked. It was explained that in some cases we are dependent on data provided by other organizations.
- Develop a volunteer data base for knowledge sharing.
- Heighten knowledge of what exists in each of our communities.
- Develop a method to access knowledge as to what is going on in surrounding communities.
- Include information on food, public health and energy.

- Develop templates that can be used as a tool in municipal planning matters so they don't have to re-invent the wheel. It would also be important to include examples of lessons learned from both successful and unsuccessful initiatives.
- Include a bibliography or resource guide in each section of the Plan.
- Include interactive planning and zoning maps.
- Develop a method to share information within the region and throughout the state.

#3. How can the Plan be structured to have the most utility for end users such as town boards and committees, regional coalitions, organizations, etc.?

Suggestions from team members included the following:

- Highlight key issues such as transportation, energy, housing, and health services and provide a link to what others have done.
- Provide an explanation describing what each section was written for and who can benefit from it.
- If published in an electronic format provide a link between key words and the sections that pertain to them and also make sure the document has a search feature. It was noted that this could require a lot of up keep maintenance and the document would need to have both html and pdf versions to be sensitive to download speeds.

#4. How can we ensure communities and prospective partners in the Region feel a sense of ownership of the Plan?

Suggestions from team members included the following:

- Get people involved in the writing of the Plan.
- Include unique stories from the communities.
- Invite people to come in on a regular basis to provided updates to the items contained in the Plan.
- Make it clear that the Plan is an opportunity to promote your organization to the towns.
- Make sure the Plan provides a vision and ways to implement that vision.
- Include not only a vision and ways to implement that vision but provide actual stories as to what the end result was such as the success of the Monadnock Food Co-op.

IV. Regional Plan Component Development

Staff member Tara Germond explained that at each Regional Leadership Team meeting staff will provide information on two components that will be featured in the Regional Plan.

a. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest NH (CEDS)

Staff member Rebeckah Bullock provided an overview of the CEDS document and passed around copies for team members to examine. Tim Murphy noted that the document can also be viewed on the Commission's website. Rebeckah Bullock went on to explain that the CEDS document is comprised of six sections that identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as they pertain to the region. She reviewed the CEDS vision and eight goals that identify various tasks and objectives as well as a list of projects that have been added to the document over the past three years. She outlined the timeframe that will be used to incorporate the CEDS into the Regional Plan by January 2014.

b. Long Range Transportation Plan

Staff member J.B. Mack explained that staff will be updating the Long Range Transportation Plan to be included in the Regional Plan. He noted that the Long Range Transportation Plan was

created to fulfill part of the Commission's statutory obligation. He explained that the plan which was last updated in 2007 is broken into sections covering existing trends and recommendations. He referred team members to the trends section at the back of the plan. He stated that the update of the plan will have new concepts integrated into it such as livability, corridor planning, Ten Year Transportation Plan project criteria, performance measures and additional input. J.B. Mack noted that representatives from the Transportation Advisory Committee, the Monadnock Region Transportation Management Association and the Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation will be involved in a focus group meeting to help obtain additional feedback for updating the plan, a draft of which is due to be completed by January 2014.

Rhett Lamb asked if there will be several different plans or one plan. J.B. Mack explained that there will be one Regional Plan that will incorporate several other plans. Tim Murphy noted that both the CEDS and Long Range Transportation Plan are stand alone documents as well. Rhett Lamb noted that it will be a very difficult project to incorporate several plans into one. Tim Murphy clarified that unlike the City of Keene Comprehensive Plan the Regional Plan is advisory only.

V. Topic Oriented Focus Groups

Tara Germond noted that staff will be conducting topic oriented focus group meetings between the months of September - November around six topics (environment, energy, housing, transportation, economic development, water infrastructure). These focus groups will include the Planning Commission Advisory Committee members and other knowledgeable representatives and groups in the region. Each focus group will explore the opportunities, challenges and strategies around the topic of focus within the region. She asked group members to select one of the topics of focus and draft example questions that could be asked to facilitate conversation around that topic. Tara Germond announced that the first focus group meeting would be with SWRPC's Economic Development Advisory Committee on September 20th. She noted she would be sending an email to each team member providing them with further details of the structure of the focus groups and the group assignment.

V. Future Meeting Schedule

Tara Germond asked group members to share their thoughts on the current meeting schedule and structure. Group members agreed that meeting on a bimonthly basis following the SWRPC Board of Director's meeting seems to be working well. Tara Germond provided members with a meeting schedule through June of 2014 as well as a list of proposed meeting topics. The next meeting would take place on September 17, 2013.

VI. Public Comments/Questions

No public comments were made at this time.

VII. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin
Office Manager