

MONADNOCK REGION FUTURE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MINUTES

July 31, 2014

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

SWRPC staff members present were Tim Murphy, Executive Director; J. B. Mack, Principal Planner; Lisa Murphy, Senior Planner; Tara Germond, Senior Planner; Rebeckah Bullock, Community Development Specialist; Steve Waleryszak, GIS Technician/Planner; Henry Underwood, Planning Technician.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Larry Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m., welcomed those in attendance, and introductions were made.

II. Minutes of June 12, 2014

The minutes of June 12, 2014 were approved by unanimous vote.

III. Draft Regional Plan

Tara Germond provided a review of the working draft of the Regional Plan and asked attendees for general impressions. She reminded the group that the plan is organized around the following theme areas: community vitality, economic prosperity, stewardship, and preparedness. Case studies that feature exemplary projects and programs are woven throughout the document. At the end of each section, goals and objectives are provided, as well as what communities can do to support them. At the end of the Plan, an implementation section will display a matrix with a list of the Plan's strategies and potential partners to implement these action items. Plan components such as the Long Range Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy will be included in an appendix and referenced in the body of the Plan. She noted that a section on how to use the Plan will be included.

Chairman Robinson thought the Community Vitality section was very interesting and felt the section on how to use the Plan would be useful to boards and municipalities. Susan Ashworth commented that the use of figures and photos was very engaging. She also commented that the What Your Community Can Do checklists would be very useful.

Leandra MacDonald asked if there was information on the Region's seasonal population and what impact they have on the Region. She noted the influence of summer residents that support community activities like the Peterborough Players. Dick Berry asked if slow growth was truly a problem. Tara Germond clarified that the heading in question was a statement of fact, and it was not necessarily a problem.

Rhett Lamb commented that the subjects were somewhat negative. He suggested that the Plan also include strengths or other content as a way of balancing these statements. Tara Germond commented that

the intent was to start with a positive introduction for each section of the Plan and then to address the challenges facing the Region. Leandra MacDonald encouraged staff to be conscientious of word choice, and suggested an alternative to the word “undermine” in the Community Vitality section introduction. Tara Germond thanked the group for their comments and requested attendees to provide further feedback on the draft by contacting her directly.

IV. Prioritization of Implementation Strategies

Tara Germond thanked attendees for reviewing the list of Regional Plan strategies in advance of the meeting and for identifying those they felt were the most important in each category. She stated that the purpose of the exercise was not to eliminate strategies but to help prioritize them. She displayed the list of strategies and highlighted the top three to four strategies in each category as ranked by Leadership Team members.

Rhett Lamb asked who the target audience is for the Implementation section of the Plan. Tim Murphy responded that the audience is not restricted. Rhett Lamb clarified his question, noting that some organizations do not have the ability to respond to the strategies. Tim Murphy said that it is expected that employers, nonprofits, and others in addition to local governments can use and respond to the content contained in the Regional Plan. Tara Germond stated that it is recognized that local governments and boards cannot do it all and there needs to be many players involved to address the Plan’s goals and objectives. Rhett Lamb commented that Keene’s recent Comprehensive Master Plan included topic areas where the City does not have the ability to intervene. He noted that in some ways these items are hard to execute, citing a goal relating to food security.

Group members shared their comments and thoughts on the top ranked strategies for each category. Related to housing strategies, attendees noted that these strategies emphasize reuse of existing buildings and reducing barriers to housing diversity and affordability. Dick Berry commented that the strategy related to the use of performance zoning or flexible use districts is relevant to the City of Keene’s Marlboro Street re-zoning project.

Tara Germond commented that the strategies related to accessing goods and services include more than traditional transportation. They also address the need for delivery services and enhanced broadband. In the category of economic vitality, strategies that support small and emerging businesses in the Region were ranked higher. Rhett Lamb commented that large employers relocating to the Region is much less likely to occur than small businesses growing. Tara Germond noted that strategies in the stewardship category will be further subdivided to aid in prioritization. The group agreed that breaking this category into subsections is important. Rhett Lamb mentioned that flood management is a major area of vulnerability with respect to the preparedness category of strategies.

Tara Germond asked if there were other general comments on the regional plan strategies. She said that staff will work to reduce redundancy and to clarify strategies that may be too wordy or vague. Leandra MacDonald expressed the need for a glossary to the Plan. Rhett Lamb suggested sidebars as an effective way to integrate definitions of terms. Leandra MacDonald cautioned against combining too many strategies into one. Tara Germond said that criteria will need to be developed and considered in prioritizing strategies. Rhett Lamb suggested including information and strategies that do not make it into the Plan in the Appendix.

V. Next Steps

Tara Germond noted that Nashua Regional Planning Commission is preparing a statewide snapshot that includes an overview of the themes and goals included in each Regional Plan as well as statewide trends

and conditions. Staff are working to finalize the draft Regional Plan and multiple plan components for public review sometime in the fall of this year.

VI. Next Meeting

Tara Germond suggested meeting next on September 16th, following the SWRPC Board of Directors meeting. She will send out a poll to confirm the availability of the group on this date.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Henry Underwood
Planning Technician

DRAFT