

# MONADNOCK REGION FUTURE

## LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

### MINUTES

May 21, 2013

**Present:** Dick Berry, Ben Daviss, Ed Merrell, Eleanor Vander Haegen, *SWRPC Board of Directors*; Susan Ashworth, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS)*; Ryan Owens, *Monadnock Conservancy*; Amanda Littleton, *Cheshire County Conservation District*; Eileen Fernandes, *Cheshire Medical Center*.

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

#### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

Dick Berry called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m., welcomed those in attendance and introductions were made.

#### **II. Minutes of February 19, 2013**

The minutes of February 19, 2013 were approved by unanimous vote.

#### **III. Confirmation of Leadership**

Tim Murphy noted that at the February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting Larry Robinson was nominated and unanimously appointed to serve as Chairman of the Monadnock Region Future Leadership Team. He reminded members that at the same meeting it was suggested that a Vice-Chairman be appointed at a future meeting.

#### **Motion: To appoint Eileen Fernandes as Vice-Chairman of the Monadnock Region Future Leadership Team.**

Motion by Ben Daviss, seconded by Susan Ashworth. Approved by unanimous vote.

#### **IV. Regional Vision Statement - Presentation and Discussion**

Staff member Tara Germond explained that the focus of work on the Monadnock Region Future project is in the process of changing from outreach and engagement to plan writing. She added that there is still a minor amount of outreach work to be completed and provided a presentation on the results of efforts that have been conducted to date that included:

- The engagement of 441 residents, employers and visitors to the Region.
- Conducting 13 neighborhood conversations that involved senior citizens, college students, young professionals, and families.

- Holding two regional listening sessions with three more scheduled to take place.
- Collection of 261 comment cards representing the views of residents in 26 of our communities.
- Staff review of local master plans.

She noted that there are also plans to hold topic orientated forums in conjunction with the Planning Commission's Advisory Committees later this fall and that the UNH Survey Center is completing a statewide household telephone survey for Granite State Future, the results of which will be available in the coming months.

Tara Germond went on to provide a summary of what input has been received from the outreach efforts to date. She reviewed the predominant responses regarding what people like best about the Region broken into the following categories. The statistics beneath each category illustrate the frequency of responses by outreach type (comment card, neighborhood conversation, local master plan) that supported the theme.

Community Vitality: Common responses related to community vitality include: 'the people and their friendliness,' 'close knit communities,' 'the small town feeling,' 'volunteerism and civic engagement,' 'coordination between towns,' and 'the peacefulness and quiet.'

- 72.4% of Comment Cards Responses
- 38% of Neighborhood Conversations
- 59.4% of Local Master Plan Goals

Natural Resources: Common responses related to natural resources include: 'rural character and landscape,' 'open spaces,' 'clean air and water,' and 'access to outdoor activities.'

- 50.5% Comment Cards Responses
- 29.8% Neighborhood Conversations
- 90.6% of Local Master Plan Goals

Economic Vitality: Common responses related to economic vitality include: 'downtown areas,' 'small businesses,' 'cost of living,' and 'the arts and culture.'

- 27.6% Comment Cards Responses
- 18.2% Neighborhood Conversations
- 62.5% of Local Master Plan Goals

Recreation: Common responses related to recreation include: 'trails,' 'hiking,' 'biking,' 'skiing,' 'parks,' and 'water sports.'

- 17.2% Comment Cards Responses
- 17.4% Neighborhood Conversations
- 15.6% of Local Master Plan Goals

She asked team members if they agreed with the statements above, if they wanted to add anything and what stands out to them as being most important to preserve and protect. Ryan Owens noted that they are all important and integrated with each other. Eleanor Vander Haegen noted that no one aspect dominates the other and together they provide a lot of strength and diversity. She asked each member what they liked best about the region and responses included: civic engagement, water resources, the spirit of collaboration, rural character, natural resources, quality of life, recreation, rural open spaces, the people and geography, walkability, sense of tradition, people helping others in need, the unique characteristics of each town and their sense of identity, the safety factor, and accepting people for who they are and respecting them for it.

Tara Germond went on to report the major themes related to what people shared during the outreach efforts regarding their opinions as to what could be improved within the Region as follows:

Economic Vitality: Common responses related to economic vitality include: ‘more job opportunities and better paying jobs,’ ‘a more equitable tax structure,’ ‘more skill training,’ ‘more businesses,’ and ‘more economic development.’

Transportation: Common responses related to transportation include: ‘more public transportation,’ ‘better road maintenance,’ ‘better access to airports,’ ‘better bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.’

Recreation: Common responses related to recreation include: ‘more activities for youth,’ ‘more entertainment and more arts and ‘music festivals.’

Natural Resource Protection: Common responses related to natural resource protection include: ‘more conservation of open spaces,’ ‘less pollution and littering,’ ‘more recycling,’ and ‘improved air quality.’

Housing Opportunity: Common responses related to housing opportunity include: ‘more affordable housing,’ ‘more senior/elderly housing’ and ‘more downtown housing choices.’

Community Vitality: Common responses related to community vitality include: ‘more coordination between towns,’ ‘more community service’ and ‘more effort to attract families to come and stay in the area.’

Again Tara Germond asked team members if they agreed with the public observations, if they had anything to add and what seems to be the most important. Responses were as follows: more land conservation efforts, more preservation of the environment, improve economic vitality and opportunities for growth, encourage more home businesses, address the growing drug problem, find better ways to address extreme weather event damage, improve broadband development, better identify and improve the link between economic development and transportation, more pooling of resources and knowledge, find a way to better tap into the existing volunteer base, and encourage less government regulations and restrictions on development standards.

Tara Germond asked team members what their vision for the Southwest Region would be in the next twenty years if the current needs and challenges can be addressed. Amanda Littleton asked if the Planning Commission has a vision developed for the Region. Tim Murphy responded that we have various ones for different programs that we administer. Team members visions for the future included recognition that the State of New Hampshire is aging and we need to retain younger people by providing more diversity, development of vital village centers surrounded by open space, creation of a local orientated economy that utilizes our natural resources, a better transportation system linking communities, improved education, remain optimistic while continuing to be a viable region, develop economic resources to take care of the people who live here, and have a self reliance on a strong local economy.

Tara Germond asked team members what they felt the purpose and impact of the plan should be. Responses included that the plan should identify where you are going and provide the guidance you need to get you there, it should point out the importance of placing things into a regional concept rather than concentrating solely on local need, it should inspire an alternative approach on how to identify problems and provide encouragement in finding solutions to certain issues, it should be used as a tool to help bring funding and resources into the region, and it should serve as

an educational resource to show us ways to move forward, it should be used as a tool to help coordinate efforts as we strive to improve our quality of life, and it should be used as a resource to assist our communities in addressing their planning issues.

Tara Germond noted that staff will begin development of a regional vision for team members to review. Ben Daviss suggested that the feedback from the outreach sessions for this project be shared with the Board of Selectmen in our communities as well as the final plan.

## **V. Other Matters**

### **a. Regional Community Conversations**

Tara Germond shared copies of a brochure announcing the remaining regional community conversations that will be taking place in Alstead, Antrim and Peterborough and encouraged Leadership Team members to attend.

### **b. Regional Plan Component Development**

Tara Germond advised that staff is currently working on several regional plans including the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest New Hampshire update and Housing Needs Assessment Plan.

### **c. SWRPC Annual Meeting**

Tim Murphy announced that the Planning Commission's Annual Meeting has been scheduled to take place on June 25, 2013 at Keene State College. He noted that Van McLeod who is the Commissioner of the NH Department of Cultural Resources will be the guest speaker and he encouraged Leadership Team members to attend.

### **d. Topic Oriented Forums**

Tara Germond announced that several topic oriented forums that will be held in conjunction with various Planning Commission Advisory Committees are in the process of being scheduled to take place during the Fall.

## **VI. Next Meeting**

Tim Murphy announced that the next Monadnock Region Future Leadership Team meeting would likely be held in conjunction with the July Board of Directors meeting. An agenda packet will be sent out prior to the meeting.

## **VII. Public Comments/Questions**

No public comments were made at this time.

## **IX. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin  
Office Manager