

MONADNOCK REGION FUTURE

LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MINUTES

September 17, 2013

Present: Eileen Fernandes, Vice-Chair, *Cheshire Medical Center*; Dick Berry, Ben Daviss, Elaine Levlocke, Leandra MacDonald, Ed Merrell, *SWRPC Board of Directors*; Susan Ashworth, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS)*; Amanda Littleton, *Cheshire County Conservation District*; and, Tom Moses, *Keene Housing Authority*.

Staff members present were Tim Murphy, Executive Director; Rebecca Baldwin, Office Manager; Tara Germond, Senior Planner; Lisa Murphy, Senior Planner.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Vice-Chairman Fernandes called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m., welcomed those in attendance and introductions were made.

II. Minutes of July 30, 2013

The minutes of July 30, 2013 were approved by unanimous vote.

III. Discussion Topic: Drafting a Regional Vision

Tara Germond provided a presentation on the components that need to be considered when developing a regional vision. She noted the vision should depict how a community wants to look in the future by focusing on the next 20 - 30 years. She showed examples of various visions that utilized narrative statements, visual graphics and photography to deliver their message. She distributed a handout showing potential themes and value statements. Staff used the information collected from public outreach and engagement initiatives and discussions with the Leadership Team to develop these statements. (copy attached)

Members broke into smaller groups to further discuss the themes and values then regrouped to share their comments and suggestions as follows:

Community Vitality: It was suggested that this section be reworded to be more inspiring. It focuses on being safe and it was questioned if this is achievable.

Traditional Settlement Patterns: It was suggested to change the first bold bullet to more closely resemble the last bulleted item in that section. It was also suggested to remove the word “preserved” and members questioned what is meant by “cultural features”.

Economic Vitality: Members noted that there needs to be a reference to the arts sector and the term “balance” should be included in the statement.

Natural Resources: It was suggested that this theme include the word “education”. Also rather than referring to “continued support” the importance of preserving natural resources should be the focus.

Housing and Transportation: Members felt there needs to be a better way to link the two of these since there is a lot of overlap between them. They noted that this statement is connected to the Economic Vitality theme.

Tara Germond thanked members for their input and noted staff would continue to refine the statements. Tim Murphy asked members if they had any other thoughts regarding a format for the regional vision. Vice-Chairman Fernandes noted that she liked the combined picture and word sample shown in the presentation. Elaine Levlocke noted that she liked the mural approach and Leandra MacDonald suggested that the words of the vision could form the shape of Mt. Monadnock. Ed Merrell and Ben Daviss cautioned against it being too busy. It was agreed to keep the overall vision concise and to the point.

IV. Regional Plan Component Development

Tara Germond explained that it was agreed at the last meeting that staff would provide information on two of the Regional Plan components at each MRF Leadership Team meeting.

Lisa Murphy provided a review of the Environmental Plan component noting that staff is currently examining existing concerns, trends and conditions related to water resources, wildlife habitat, air quality, agriculture, forestry, and recreation. She noted that staff developed a survey with the assistance of the Natural Resources Advisory Committee that was sent to all the conservation commissions in our region seeking their input on natural resource priorities. A focus group discussion on this component has been scheduled for October 22nd. Tim Murphy noted that unlike some of the other components we don’t have an existing environmental plan to use as a basis but do have a lot of data to draw on. Tom Moses asked if we have data from the Department of Environmental Services and the NH Fish and Game Department and was told that we do.

Tara Germond provided an update on the Housing Plan component noting that an existing Housing Needs Assessment last updated in 2006 is being used as the foundation document. She explained that the main challenge is getting demographic data since the last US Census was a short form that doesn’t provide in depth information. A focus group discussion with members of Heading for Home has been scheduled for November. Leandra MacDonald asked if the increase in the elderly population and poverty level along with affordable housing barriers being created by various local ordinances will be addressed. Tara Germond noted that local barriers will be considered. Tim Murphy noted that property taxes present a barrier as well and young people are leaving the area because they cannot afford to live here. Tom Moses noted that one of the first questions asked when an organization like Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) is trying to bring a business into the area is “what is the housing like?” Dick Berry asked if the objective of this component is to get everyone a decent place to live. Tara Germond responded that the objective is to make recommendations that can be integrated into the Regional Plan. Tim Murphy added that we will be successful if we can provide good information regarding available choices.

V. Topic Oriented Focus Groups

Tara Germond reported that staff will begin conducting focus group meetings later this week. So far group meetings have been scheduled with the Economic Development Advisory Committee,

Natural Resources Advisory Committee, transportation representatives, and members of Heading for Home. Vice-Chairman Fernandes asked if all the future focus groups will be with selected participants rather than the general public. Tim Murphy noted that members of the public are welcome to attend any of the meetings. Tara Germond explained that the Advisory Committees were chosen because they are already existing groups familiar with the specific focus group topics.

VI. Next Meeting - November 19, 2013

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for November 19, 2013.

VII. Public Comments/Questions

No public comments were made at this time.

VIII. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin
Office Manager