

Planning Meeting for an Eastern Monadnock
Regional Coordinating Council

Minutes

October 22, 2009

Present: Ellen Avery, *Monadnock United Way*; Jed Brummer, *Town of Rindge*; Joanne Carr, *Town of Jaffrey*; Audrey Cass, *Contoocook Valley Transportation Company (CVTC)*; Ken Geraghty, *CVTC*; Margaret Gurney, *CVTC*; Rebecca Harris, *CVTC*; Patrick Herlihy, *NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)*; Owen Houghton, *State Council on the Aging*; Jeffrey King, *Peterborough Recreation Department*; Sam Lafortune, *Peterborough CPC Teen Center*; Susan Leach, *Citizen of Jaffrey*; Peggy LeBlanc, *Adventure Limo and Transportation*; Daniel Levesque, *Monadnock Community Hospital (MCH)*; Andrew Macdonald, *MCH*; Jack Nailor, *MeritCare LLC*; Dave Osmun, *CVTC*; Bob Perry, *American Red Cross (ARC)*; Dwight Schenk, *Monadnock at Home*; Gary Welch, *ARC*

SWPRC Staff Present: J.B. Mack, *Senior Planner*; Tara Germond, *Assistant Planner*

I. Welcome and Introduction

J.B. called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m. and introductions were made.

II. Minutes of September 14, 2009

The minutes of the September 14, 2009 meeting were approved as submitted.

III. Memorandum of Understanding and Bylaws Discussion

J.B. Mack began the meeting by providing a brief overview of the history and purpose of the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC). Prior to entering into a discussion about a governing structure and bylaws, he asked that the group revisit topics discussed at the September 14, 2009 meeting. These topics included approving the vision/mission statement created at the September 14, 2009 meeting, determining an appropriate name for the RCC6 Region, and deciding which towns are included in the RCC6.

Vision/Mission Statement – J.B. Mack reviewed the vision statement created at the September 14, 2009 meeting and asked if the group had any questions. The group agreed with Owen Houghton’s suggestion to replace the word “citizens” with “community members.”

Naming of the RCC6 Region – J.B. Mack asked the group if anyone had a preference or opinion about what to name the RCC6 Region. To date, this Region has interchangeably been referred to as the Eastern Monadnock Region or the Contoocook Valley Region. After brief discussion, the group unanimously approved Eastern Monadnock Region as the official name for the RCC6 Region. A recap of the discussion leading to this decision is documented below.

Jed Brummer noted that “Monadnock” encompasses the entire Southwestern NH Region, whereas Contoocook Valley is more specific to the Eastern Monadnock Region. Susan Leach stated that she thinks “Monadnock” is important to have in the title and suggested that Eastern Monadnock may be a more appropriate reference. Audrey Cass agreed that it is important to

identify the group with the Monadnock Region as people might confuse the Contoocook Valley with the Town of Contoocook.

Audrey Cass asked if there is any precedent for defining the Region as the Contoocook Valley. Owen Houghton responded that this reference grew with the development of ServiceLink in the mid 1990s. ServiceLink was initially established by County but as it grew it became apparent that residents in the Eastern Monadnock Region related to both Hillsborough and Cheshire County. To better service the needs of these communities, ServiceLink established a branch at the River Center in Peterborough. Rebecca Harris affirmed that people living in the Eastern Monadnock Region tend to access services from both Hillsborough and Cheshire County, whereas people living in the western portion of the region tend to access services within Cheshire County. Owen Houghton suggested using the "Eastern Monadnock Region." The group agreed by consensus to call the RCC6 "Eastern Monadnock Region."

Towns Included in the RCC6 – Patrick Herlihy, who is a member of the State Coordinating Council for Community Transportation, explained that when the boundaries for RCC Regions were established, the designation of some communities, primarily those on the border of two RCCs, was left in question. For the RCC6 Region, the communities in question are Dublin, Jaffrey, and Rindge. J.B. noted that these initial boundaries were based upon hospital catchment areas and that he feels the group's view of community transportation is broader than medical related rides.

To help facilitate discussion about which towns should be incorporated in the RCC6 Region, Rebecca Harris provided a list of the RCC6 towns that are members of her organization (Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Frankestown, Greenfield, Greenville, Hancock, Jaffrey, New Ipswich, Peterborough, Sharon, Rindge, and Temple).

Patrick Herlihy explained that the North Country was able to resolve a similar boundary discussion by joining the two regions together. Rebecca Harris highlighted that the two North Country RCCs share one hub, whereas, this region has more than one hub; Rindge is a major destination for the Eastern Monadnock towns and Keene is also a major destination for people to do shopping. Audrey Cass asked about motivating factors for joining the two RCCs. J.B. Mack and Patrick Herlihy explained that in order to attract a broker, there must be enough people with transportation needs in the region to make it a viable venture. There is concern that traffic patterns in the region may not warrant two RCCs and that having two regions might deter a broker. They confirmed that it is possible to have two separate RCCs that share a broker.

Questions were raised about including towns located in the middle of the Region such as Harrisville, Nelson, and Stoddard into the RCC 6 Region. Sam Lafortune stated that she thinks a connective thread between the towns in the RCC6 region is the three school districts of Conant, Conval, and Mascenic. These districts have interconnected programs and are servicing each other. In addition, these schools rarely work with Keene programs.

Rebecca Harris emphasized the importance of hearing directly from the towns in question about what Region they more strongly associate with. Individuals from the three towns in question agreed that their respective town should be included in the RCC6 region. Jaffrey resident, Susan Leach, stated that she feels it is important for Jaffrey to be included in the RCC6 Region. She mentioned that the Jaffrey Community Center plans to work closely with the CPC Teen Center and CVTC, both located in Peterborough. Based on a recent conversation with the Dublin Town Administrator, Margaret Gurney, a Dublin resident, affirmed that the Town does not feel a strong

connection to Keene and added that Dublin is part of the Conval School District. Jed Brummer, Rindge Selectman stated that Rindge affiliates more closely with the Eastern Monadnock Region.

Audrey Cass and Gary Welch stressed the importance of gathering and maintaining data to help identify unmet need and to be used as evaluation tools. Gary Welch confirmed that the American Red Cross currently has data/statistics tracking met/unmet need. J.B. Mack noted that SWRPC has completed an assessment of the need for community transportation across the Southwest Region. Tara Germond agreed to develop a presentation of this research at the next meeting.

The group agreed that Jaffrey, Rindge, and Dublin should be included in RCC6. Group members agreed that it is important to contact stakeholders of these towns to inform them of their inclusion in the RCC6 Region.

Memorandum of Understanding: J.B. Mack explained that in order for the group to advance the process of becoming an RCC it is important to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and bylaws. He explained that a MOU is a document that RCC6 members would sign in agreement that indicates willing participation in the RCC. To help guide the process, he used Sullivan County RCC's MOU and bylaws as an example. He noted that these documents have been approved by the State for the Sullivan County RCC and that while they may work for Sullivan County they can be adapted to work for this region.

The group began to review the example MOU and offered suggestions to make it more compatible with the RCC6 vision and mission statements. As this discussion unfolded, J.B. Mack revised the MOU to reflect suggested changes. Changes to MOU included broadening the scope of the MOU to include people of all ages and abilities, addressing significant unmet need before the need for coordination of transportation services, characterizing the region as rural, emphasizing collaboration, confirming that the service gap will grow significantly in the next twenty years, and including a phrase about environmental responsibility.

Margaret Gurney questioned whether Community Transportation should be part of the Eastern Monadnock RCC6 title. Out of respect for time, it was decided that this topic would be addressed at the next meeting.

Peggy LeBlanc of Adventure Taxi and Limo asked if the RCC will negatively impact the private transportation providers. Patrick Herlihy explained that the purpose of the RCC is to better coordinate transportation services within the region, including helping people access private providers.

IV. Next Steps

For the next meeting, J.B. Mack will present the revised Memorandum of Understanding and the group will begin to discuss bylaws. Also, Tara Germond will make a presentation on new maps and analysis completed for the RCC process.

V. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on November 19, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. J.B. will inform the group of the location once it is confirmed.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tara Germond
Assistant Planner