

## **SOUTHWEST REGION PLANNING COMMISSION**

### ***BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING***

#### **MINUTES**

**January 14, 2020**

**Present:** Tom Mullins, Chairman, *Peterborough*; Gus Lerandeau, Vice-Chairman, *Swanzey*; Larry Robinson, Secretary, *Marlborough*; Brian Barden, *Dublin*; John Gomarolo, *Winchester*; Camilla Lockwood, *Temple*; Cheryl Mayberry, *Walpole*; Ed Merrell, *Jaffrey*; Butch Morin, *Richmond*; John Snowdon, *Westmoreland*.

Staff members present include Tim Murphy, Executive Director; Rebecca Baldwin, Office Manager; J. B. Mack, Principal Planner; Todd Horner, Planner; Terry Johnson, Senior Project Manager; Lisa Murphy, Senior Planner; Henry Underwood, GIS Technician/Planner; James Weatherly, Planning Technician.

**Absent:** Jill Collins, Treasurer, *Hinsdale*; Chris Coates, *Cheshire County*; Jay Jacobs, *Harrisville*; Leandra MacDonald, *Peterborough*; Gary Spykman, *Keene*.

#### **I. Welcome**

Chairman Mullins called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

#### **II. Committee Reports**

Vice-Chairman Lerandeau suggested that, as there is not new information to report, that the Brownfields Advisory Committee report be moved to the consent agenda which was agreed to by the Chairman.

##### **a. Transportation Advisory Committee**

Staff member J. B. Mack reported that the Transportation Advisory Committee met on January 6, 2020. The meeting agenda included various program updates and a presentation from staff on the *Plan for the Ashuelot Rail Trail* project.

##### **b. Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee**

Staff member Lisa Murphy reported that the Natural Resources Advisory Committee (NRAC) last met on October 23, 2019. The next meeting of the Committee as the Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee (ENRAC) is scheduled for January 22, 2020. She noted she will be attending an informational meeting regarding an application for the Chinook Solar proposal that has been submitted for review by the NH Site Evaluation Committee. The proposal is for a 30 megawatt solar array on 130 acres in Fitzwilliam. The site review process requires the regional planning commission to be notified and allows the option to provide comment. Mr. Murphy noted that the proposal is being put forth by a Florida-based company and if it goes forward will be the largest of its kind in NH. There is also a similar proposal being considered

for Hinsdale. Lisa Murphy reviewed the timeline for the comment period including filing to be an intervener. Mr. Murphy explained that his interpretation is that intervener status is intended for those to which the proposal, if built, would create hardship. Chairman Mullins asked if there is a formal role for SWRPC in this case and Mr. Murphy replied that our role is limited to providing comment on how the proposal fits in with the general development of the region. Lisa Murphy noted that the Town of Fitzwilliam has filed for intervener status. Mr. Murphy noted that the solar company representatives had provided a presentation to SWRPC a while ago and at that time we stressed the importance of working with local communities.

### **c. Economic Development Advisory Committee**

Staff member Todd Horner reported that the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) met on January 8, 2020 and discussed updating the priority projects and programs that are included in the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest New Hampshire* (CEDS) to which EDAC members agreed to sponsoring a solicitation process for nominations. Also during the meeting U.S. Small Business Administration provided a presentation on their programs and services. In addition, SWRPC staff provided information on a new program entitled *Monadnock Vital Economies* that is designed to provide member municipalities with technical assistance regarding economic development planning. Assistance can range from developing economic development chapters in master plans, expanding housing options, improving broadband access, and enhancing a community's outreach efforts to attract economic activity. Outreach material on the new program will be distributed in the next couple of weeks.

## **III. Consent Agenda**

- a. Minutes of December 10, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting**
- b. Highlights of Commission Activities - December 2019**
- c. Agreement with Cheshire Medical Center - Community Health Improvement Plan**
- d. Financial Report - December 2019**

**Motion: To accept the consent agenda as presented.**

Motion by Director Robinson, seconded by Director Merrell. Approved by unanimous vote.

## **IV. Executive Director's Report**

### **a. SWRPC Website Update - Proposal**

Mr. Murphy reminded Board members of the presentation that was given by staff during their September 2019 meeting regarding the SWRPC website. He referred to a copy of a portion of the minutes from that meeting that were attached to today's agenda item which further describes the current site. At the September meeting, the Board instructed staff to come forward with a proposal for consideration at a future meeting.

Todd Horner referred to a handout that was distributed at the beginning of today's meeting and went over the various aspects of the proposed website update including a timeline, budget and summary of proposed activities. It is suggested that a consultant be hired to do the actual development of an updated website. Prior to sending out a request for proposals, staff will develop a content plan that will identify details such as a proposed menu structure, program area content, proposed site features, and model sites that will serve as a reference. After soliciting requests for proposals, staff will review those received in efforts to select a

consultant to assist with the project. Once a successful consultant has been identified, staff will bring a recommendation for the Board's consideration. Considering staff and consultant activities to complete the update including site development, support and maintenance, a budget of \$12,000 is being proposed which is representative of what other RPCs have spent on similar updates of their sites. Todd Horner pointed out that we are not planning to build a new site from scratch but will be using a content management system to develop themes that already exist that can be customized to meet our needs.

Director Lerandeau asked if we are comfortable with the budget amount proposed and Todd Horner responded that we are. Mr. Murphy explained that staff met with Director Snowdon yesterday to go over the proposal and share ideas based on his experience with website development. Director Snowdon commented that he has developed many websites and the approach we are taking is appropriate in his opinion and will help control costs. He added that if we were to build a site from scratch we would be dealing with a lot of potential "bugs" and the overall cost would likely be thousands of dollars more than our proposal. Mr. Murphy noted that this activity was not anticipated in the current budget. He added that there is a possibility that when we go out with our request for proposals the results may come in higher than we anticipate. Should that happen staff will come back to the Board for their input and consideration before moving forward. Director Lockwood asked if we have spoken with other RPCs that have updated their websites and Todd Horner responded that we have and they shared their requests for proposals as well as provided feedback that the content management system makes sites more manageable and eliminates having to keep a developer on retainer.

**Motion: To authorize staff to move ahead with the proposal to update the SWRPC website and solicit requests for proposals.**

Motion by Director Lerandeau, seconded by Director Robinson. Approved by unanimous vote.

#### **b. 2020 Winter Commission Meeting**

Mr. Murphy suggested that this item be taken up after agenda item V.

#### **V. Discussion Topic - Rural Communities Opioid Response Planning**

Mr. Murphy explained that staff members Henry Underwood and Terry Johnson have been working on a project entitled Rural Communities Opioid Response Planning involving a consortium of partners working to address opioid addiction and related issues in the Monadnock Region. We were invited to be a part of the project to conduct a gap analysis and needs assessment report based on SWRPC's experience with collecting, managing and interpreting data in the Region. Copies of project materials were passed around for Board members to view.

Henry Underwood provided background on the project which was supported by funding through the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. He drew attention to the amount of opioid-related deaths in southwest New Hampshire, noting that in 2018 there were 32 drug overdose deaths in Cheshire County alone. The project scope of work included the gap analysis that SWRPC conducted in addition to creating a comprehensive strategic plan to address the identified gaps: a comprehensive workforce plan to recruit, train and maintain service providers; and a sustainability plan to continue the work of the consortium relative to opioid use disorder prevention.

Terry Johnson reported that in order to complete the gap analysis, SWRPC staff reviewed available literature regarding existing plans, participated in focus group meetings and conducted one-on-one

interviews with key stakeholders. Focus group meetings included representatives from prevention, treatment and recovery providers, schools, criminal justice services and programs, first responders, recovery coaches, and people with lived experience. Key gaps that were identified included the need for emergency or safe housing while awaiting treatment, a shortage of transitional or long-term housing options, limited transportation options to be able to attend meetings, appointments and utilize services, and unsupportive municipal zoning to provide for addiction treatment and recovery services.

#### **IV. Executive Director's Report**

##### **b. 2020 Winter Commission Meeting**

Mr. Murphy noted that the issue of opioid addiction that was discussed in agenda item V. is directly related to several planning related issues including housing, transportation, economic development and zoning. It impacts the workforce with regards to absenteeism, makes addressing housing needs difficult due to the stigma attached to addiction and effects our general quality of life. Part of the Consortium's efforts include providing outreach and education regarding this topic and Mr. Murphy suggested that the 2020 Winter Commission Meeting would provide a good opportunity to improve awareness among our communities. He noted that the presentation would in the form of a panel discussion. Staff is currently looking in possible venues for the event.

Board members agreed that this is an important topic and encouraged staff to proceed with the meeting logistics scheduled for February 18, 2020.

#### **VI. Next Meeting - February 18, 2020**

Chairman Mullins announced that the next meeting of the SWRPC Board of Directors is scheduled for February 18, 2020 just prior to the Winter Commission Meeting.

#### **VII. Other Matters**

No other matters were brought before the Board at this time.

#### **VIII. Public Comments**

No public comments were offered.

#### **IX. Adjourn**

Meeting Adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin  
Office Manager