

SOUTHWEST REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MINUTES

April 13, 2021

Staff member Rich Clough announced that today's meeting will be conducted using a Zoom format and read a document entitled *Authority for Conducting a Meeting Electronically* (attached). He indicated that all votes would be conducted by roll call.

Present: Tom Mullins, Chairman, *Peterborough*; Gus Lerandean, Vice-Chairman, *Swanzy*; Jill Collins, Treasurer, *Hinsdale*; Sara Carbonneau, *Winchester*; Brian Barden, *Dublin*; Camilla Lockwood, *Temple*; Leandra MacDonald, *Peterborough*; Cheryl Mayberry, *Walpole*; Ed Merrell, *Jaffrey*; Butch Morin, *Richmond*; John Snowdon, *Westmoreland*.

Staff members present include Tim Murphy, Executive Director; Rebecca Baldwin, Office Manager; Rich Clough, Office Support Specialist; J. B. Mack, Principal Planner; Lisa Murphy, Senior Planner; Todd Horner, Senior Planner; Henry Underwood, GIS Technician/Planner.

Guest: Christine Robidoux, Temple resident.

Absent: Larry Robinson, Secretary, *Marlborough*; Chris Coates, *Cheshire County*; Jay Jacobs, *Harrisville*; Gary Spykman, *Keene*.

I. Welcome

Chairman Mullins called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. He acknowledged the recent passing of John Gomarlo and suggested a moment of silence be observed in John's memory. It was noted that John Gomarlo had served on the Board of Directors as well as several SWRPC Advisory Committees since he became a member in 2004.

II. Advisory Committee Reports

- a. Transportation Advisory Committee**
- b. Energy & Natural resources Advisory Committee**
- c. Economic Development Advisory Committee**
- d. Brownfields Advisory Committee**

- a. Transportation Advisory Committee**

J. B. Mack reported that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) met on April 12, 2021 to review and rank two applications that had been submitted for the federal Transportation Alternatives Program for non-motorized transportation infrastructure. Representatives from both the Town of Hinsdale and the City of Keene attended the meeting to describe the proposals and answer questions of TAC members. TAC is recommending to NHDOT that both applications be considered for funding with the Keene proposal being given the higher ranking.

b. Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee

Lisa Murphy reported that the Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee (ENRAC) met on March 23, 2021 and received a presentation from a representative of the Connecticut River Conservancy on the relicensing of dams along the Connecticut River. During that meeting, J. B. Mack provided an overview of environmental concerns associated with the wastewater infrastructure located beneath the Vilas Bridge in Walpole. The next meeting of ENRAC is scheduled for June 22, 2021.

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Todd Horner reported that the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) is scheduled to meet on April 14, 2021. The agenda will focus on economic recovery resources and efforts in the region and will include both federal and local initiatives.

c. Brownfields Advisory Committee

J. B. Mack reported that he expects a meeting of the Brownfields Advisory Committee plans to be scheduled in the coming weeks.

III. Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes of March 16, 2021 Meeting**
- b. Agreement with NH OSI - Local/Regional Planning Support**
- c. Grant Award - Complete Streets Implementation**
- d. Agreement for Consultant Services - Lake Warren Watershed Management Plan Implementation**
- e. Highlights of Commission Activities - March 2021**
- f. Financial Report - March 2021**

Motion: To accept the consent agenda as presented.

Motion by Director Lerandeanu, seconded by Director Carbonneau. Approved by unanimous roll call vote.

IV. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Murphy explained that in addition to the three items listed on the agenda under his report he will be providing updates on two additional items.

- a. Agreement with NHDOT - Transportation Planning**

Mr. Murphy reported that the agreement with NHDOT for transportation planning known as the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) follows a similar scope of work as in the past and will run from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023. He acknowledged that a challenge will be to complete the work using a slight reduction in funding. In an effort to maintain a level-funded contract, staff submitted an application for support through the Federal Transit Administration to conduct feasibility studies on volunteer driver programs and microtransit in the region. He recognized J. B. Mack for his efforts in preparing the application that was approved for inclusion in the UPWP.

J. B. Mack provided an overview of the Transit and Shared Ride Improvement Feasibility Study that will look at needs that have been identified by the Monadnock Region Coordinating Council to which SWRPC provides staff support. There is perception of increased demand for evening and off-hour transportation to accommodate people who do not drive to assist with employment, education and youth services. Microtransit provides transportation services on an as-needed basis with flexible routing and scheduling. Regarding volunteer driver services, the feasibility study will look into expanding services that are currently available to seniors and people with disabilities. The study will begin in June of 2021 and will continue through December of 2022. The services of a microtransit consultant will be solicited to assist with that component of the effort. Director MacDonald suggested the utility of background checks of volunteer drivers. Chairman Mullins asked how the study would be structured and J. B. Mack responded that it will begin by examining similar programs across the country to determine what has made them successful followed by an evaluation exercise with the current programs operating in our area to determine potential improvements to make services better.

Mr. Murphy explained that the feasibility study will be included as a task in the first year of the upcoming UPWP agreement with NHDOT. Total compensation associated with the contract will be in the amount of approximately \$600,000 for the two-year period with a required 10% local match.

Motion: To authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the NH Department of Transportation for the Unified Planning Work Program.

Motion by Director Lerandean, seconded by Director MacDonald. Approved by unanimous roll call vote with Director Snowdon abstaining as he arrived at the meeting during discussion.

b. FY 20/21 Work Program Budget Amendment

Mr. Murphy referred to the proposed mid-year budget amendment that was distributed prior to today's Board Meeting noting that it shows both the current budget and proposed modifications through the end of our fiscal year. He noted that this will be used as the starting point for developing a proposed budget for FY 2021/22 which begins July 1, 2021. He drew attention to a slide that depicts the more significant modifications to the current budget that included reductions to anticipated income for watershed management planning projects, complete streets implementation and brownfields. In each case when the original budget was developed, it was anticipated a greater amount of pass-through funds would have taken place during this fiscal year so it will carry over into next year instead. These three items are also reflected on the contract service line on the expense side of the proposed budget. Chairman Mullins asked if given the above noted modifications we are still anticipating ending the year with a \$10,000 surplus and Mr. Murphy confirmed that is the projection.

Motion: To approve the FY 20/21 work program budget amendment.

Motion by Director Lerandean, seconded by Director Barden. Approved by unanimous roll call vote.

c. 2021 Nominating Committee

Mr. Murphy explained that each year a nominating committee is appointed to assist in preparing for the election of Board of Directors members and Commission Officers for the upcoming fiscal year. Chairman Mullins, and Directors Lerandau, MacDonald and Carbonneau volunteered to serve on the nominating committee.

Motion: To appoint Chairman Mullins and Directors Lerandau, MacDonald and Carbonneau as SWRPC's 2021 nominating committee to prepare a slate of Board of Directors members and Commission Officers to be presented at the 2021 Annual Commission Meeting.

Motion by Director Lerandau, seconded by Director Snowdon. Approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Murphy provided updates on the following matters:

U. S. Economic Development Administration Grant

Mr. Murphy announced that SWRPC's proposal to the U.S. Economic Development Administration for economic development planning and recovery activities has been selected for award and based on the Board's prior approval, acceptance of the award has been formalized. Funding from this award will support an update to the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest NH*, conduct Coronavirus recovery planning and provide technical assistance to our municipalities to assist with economic development efforts. He acknowledged the work of Todd Horner in taking the lead on submitting the grant application and indicated that Todd would serve as project manager in his new position as Senior Planner with SWRPC.

Municipal Broadband Build-Out Projects

Mr. Murphy noted that SWRPC has been active in assisting municipalities in moving forward with broadband connectivity efforts including the facilitation of meetings of the Monadnock Broadband Group. Of the sixteen towns in the State that voted during 2021 town meeting to move forward with public/private partnerships for broadband expansion, twelve of them are from Southwest NH. He referred to a recently published article in *NH Business Review* which features the broadband work that is going on in our region.

V. Next Meeting May 11, 2021

Chairman Mullins announced that the next meeting of the SWRPC Board of Directors is scheduled for May 11, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. and will be a remote meeting.

VI. Other Matters

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

VII. Public Comments

No public comments were offered.

VIII. Adjourn

Meeting Adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin
Office Manager