

SOUTHWEST REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MINUTES

May 12, 2020

Chairman Mullins announced that today's meeting would be conducted using a Zoom format and read a document entitled *Authority for Conducting a Meeting Electronically (copy attached)*. He announced that all votes would be conducted by roll call.

Present: Tom Mullins, Chairman, *Peterborough*; Gus Lerandean, Vice-Chairman, *Swanzy*; Larry Robinson, Secretary, *Marlborough*; Chris Coates, *Cheshire County* (joined the mtg. during Agenda Item IV(b)); Jill Collins, Treasurer, *Hinsdale*; Brian Barden, *Dublin*; Camilla Lockwood, *Temple*; Leandra MacDonald, *Peterborough*; Cheryl Mayberry, *Walpole*; Ed Merrell, *Jaffrey*; Butch Morin, *Richmond*; John Snowdon, *Westmoreland*; Gary Spykman, *Keene*.

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

Absent: John Gomarlo, *Winchester*; Jay Jacobs, *Harrisville*.

Guest: JoAnn Robinson, Marlborough resident.

I. Welcome

Chairman Mullins called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

II. Committee Reports

a. Transportation Advisory Committee

Staff member J. B. Mack reported that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) has met twice since the last Board meeting. On March 2, 2020 TAC members received presentations from staff on the Intermodal Transportation Center Feasibility Study and the results of a Statewide survey conducted by the NH Department of Transportation. On May 4, 2020 TAC received a presentation entitled *Connected and Automated Vehicles (CAV) 101: How is Technology Changing Transportation?* from Mark Suennen, PE of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. Mr. Suennen discussed the benefits and drawbacks of new emerging CAV-related technologies as well as ways they can be integrated into transportation planning activities.

b. Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee

Mr. Murphy reported that the Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee (ENRAC) has not met since the Board was updated on their activities at the February Commission meeting.

c. Economic Development Advisory Committee

Staff member Todd Horner reported that the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) met on April 8, 2020. The meeting was dedicated to providing information and sharing resources with municipal and economic development stakeholders in the region regarding the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Murphy added that this meeting served as an example of how SWRPC has been providing assistance to our communities during the current health crisis. Although the next EDAC meeting is scheduled to take place on July 8, 2020 it is anticipated that it will be conducted sooner to consider the addition of priority projects and programs that have been nominated for inclusion in the Southwest NH Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Projects that are listed in the CEDS may improve their eligibility for funding opportunities that are becoming available related to the economic impacts of COVID-19. Todd Horner noted that we have received fifteen nominations to date and there is still time to submit more for consideration.

d. Brownfields Advisory Committee

Staff member J. B. Mack reported that the Brownfields Advisory Committee (BrAC) met on May 6, 2020. Committee members received updates on various projects including findings and recommendations from our environmental consultants on a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) for the former WW Cross property in Jaffrey and a proposed scope of work for the former Greenfield Auto property. J. B. Mack also provided Board members with an update on the status of the former Kingsbury property in Keene. He explained that for over a year we have been trying to come to terms with the current owner of the property in order to proceed with assessment activities on the site and to date have been unsuccessful. BrAC has discussed the possibility of returning the unused portion of the grant to EPA since its current status prohibits SWRPC from applying for additional grants. The current grant expires the end of September and it is anticipated that it would take 20 weeks to complete the proposed scope of work once permission to proceed is obtained from the current owner. Director MacDonald asked what the drop-dead date would be to determine if the funds need to be returned to EPA. Mr. Murphy responded that staff has been working with EPA, NHDES and our environmental consultant and it is anticipated that things would need to be in order by the middle of next month in order to proceed. Director Robinson asked if we could apply to EPA for an extension of the current grant due to the COVID-19 situation. J. B. Mack responded that we could apply for an extension but it would still jeopardize our being able to submit an application for new grant funding until this one has been 70% expended. Director MacDonald suggested that the Board have staff set a drop-dead date for the owner to comply with moving forward and if he doesn't the funds will be returned. Mr. Murphy explained that the owner has been approached at multiple times, and was most recently required to reply prior to the May 6th BrAC meeting and he did not. Chairman Mullins asked if staff had a recommendation and Mr. Murphy replied that providing a drop-dead date as suggested by Director MacDonald might be the best way to proceed although that date can't be identified at the moment pending further discussion with EPA, NHDES and our environmental consultant. Director Mayberry expressed that in her opinion it would be best to give staff the latitude to proceed in the best interest of SWRPC.

Motion: To authorize staff at its discretion to return the unused portion of our site-specific grant to EPA if a resolution cannot be reached prior to a deadline that they will determine.

Motion by Director MacDonald, seconded by Director Robinson. Approved by unanimous roll call vote.

III. Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes of February 18, 2020 Meeting**
- b. Highlights of Commission Activities - February, March and April 2020**
- c. Agreement with Town of Langdon - Master Plan Update**
- d. Agreement with Town of Walpole - Master Plan Update**
- e. Grant Award - Complete Streets Implementation**
- f. Financial Reports - February, March and April 2020**

Motion: To accept the consent agenda as presented.

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

IV. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Murphy reported that the office is closed to the public during the current public health emergency and that the majority of staff members are working remotely from home. The few that are working from the office are adhering to an established protocol of wearing masks in the common office areas or when communicating with each other, washing hands frequently and using hand sanitizer. All meetings that need to take place are being conducted remotely utilizing a Zoom format.

Mr. Murphy noted that he had an additional item that he would like to bring up under his report and Board members suggested that he cover that item first.

Transfer of Funds to a New Account at Mascoma Bank

Mr. Murphy explained that concern had been expressed during past audit reports that our funds in the Bank of America exceed the insured limit covered by the FDIC, however, the stability of that institution did not warrant making a change. Given the uncertainty of the financial effects that the current pandemic could have on the banking institution it seems prudent to move excess funds to a secured account at another bank to assure FDIC coverage for all our funds. Mascoma Bank has been instrumental in assisting staff to determine the best option for SWRPC to diversify some of our funds. The bank requires that the Board of Directors approve of the transaction at a regular meeting. Staff member Becky Baldwin explained the type of account that would be utilized.

Motion: To authorize the Executive Director to enter into a relationship with Mascoma Bank for the purpose of diversifying SWRPC funds to meet the insurance limitations of the FDIC.

Motion by Director Robinson, seconded by Director MacDonald. Approved by unanimous roll call vote.

a. Website Consultant Selection

Mr. Murphy explained that staff has moved forward with plans for updating the SWRPC website since the concept was endorsed by the Board at their January 14th meeting. He called upon staff member Todd

Horner to provide additional details. Todd Horner noted that request for proposals was sent out and over 30 responses were received by the March deadline. In addition to himself, Director Snowden and staff member Henry Underwood reviewed the proposals and interviewed the top candidates. The field has been narrowed to two candidates, either of which they feel would be capable of updating the SWRPC website. It is proposed that further negotiations take place and an agreement be entered into with the vendor that can complete the project for an amount not to exceed \$12,000. Director Snowden noted that both Todd Horner and Henry Underwood have done a very thorough job and he is impressed with the work they have done. Director Mayberry asked when the new website will be up and running and Todd Horner replied that it is anticipated that it will be complete within six months of executing an agreement. Mr. Murphy noted that we had originally anticipated having the project completed by the end of Summer but the outbreak of COVID-19 and concern over how the crisis would impact funding sources has somewhat slowed the process.

Motion: To proceed with negotiations for the development of a new website for SWRPC and authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the successful vendor for an amount not to exceed \$12,000.

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

b. FY 19/20 Work Program Budget Amendment

Mr. Murphy referred to the FY 19/20 Work Program Budget Amendment that had been sent to the Board prior to the meeting. He explained that when the budget was established for July 1, 2019 it represented the best estimate based on calculated assumptions. Towards the end of the FY we typically revisit and amend the budget to reflect more closely how the year will end. This amendment will also serve as a starting point for developing the FY 20/21 budget. He drew attention to the bottom line which anticipates ending the year in the positive by approximately \$10,000 which is within 90% of what was originally budgeted. He noted that Natural Resource Planning was off to a slower start than anticipated and the consultant work for the DES 319 Spofford Lake project has been delayed for an entire season. In addition, required one-on-one meetings associated with the project have become difficult to schedule with the outbreak of COVID-19. Funding not utilized this year will be reflected in the FY20/21 budget. He further explained that the Hazard Mitigation and Antrim/Bennington Wastewater projects started later in the year than originally anticipated. Some of the awardees for the Complete Streets program have been unable drawdown funds at their proposed pace. Both the UPWP and various CDBG contracts have generated more income than originally anticipated. We received a request to do one emergency operation plan compared to the two we had hoped for and the lack of activity on the Kingsbury property resulted in less income being generated for our Brownfields program. The decrease on the expense portion of the budget amendment are mostly attributed to the lack of work being done on the Complete Streets program and consultant services being performed for the Brownfields and DES 319 Spofford Lake project mentioned above.

Chairman Mullins noted that Director Coates joined the meeting.

Motion: To adopt the revised FY 19/20 work program budget as presented.

Motion by Chairman Mullins, seconded by Director MacDonald. Approved by unanimous roll call vote.

c. 2020 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. He noted that last year Chairman Mullins, Director Lerandean and Director Robinson served in this capacity. Mr. Murphy added that to assist the nominating committee he has polled the current members of the board regarding their desire to serve for another year and will provide that information to the committee.

It was the consensus of the Board to have the same members mentioned above serve on this year's nominating committee.

d. 2020 Annual Meeting

Mr. Murphy reminded Board members that the Annual Commission Meeting, which is required by state law, is used to establish the Board of Directors members and Commission Officers for the upcoming year, approve the work program budget for the upcoming year, showcase staff accomplishments over the past year, provide a chance to network with our communities, and have a guest speaker provide educational information on a selected topic to attendees. Given the restriction imposed on public gatherings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic it will not be possible to conduct our 2020 Annual Meeting as we have in the past. To begin with we will need to be resigned to conducting the meeting using a Zoom format like we are doing for today's meeting which in itself could significantly decrease attendance. Following internal discussion with Becky Baldwin he'd like to propose three possible options for Board consideration:

1. Conduct business items only to cover the legal requirements of an Annual Meeting
2. Conduct business items and also showcase several staff projects
3. Conduct items listed above and also have a guest speaker on a selected topic

It was the general consensus of the Board to conduct the Annual Meeting via Zoom following the suggestions in option 2. above. It was further agreed that staff have the flexibility to determine how many and which projects they wish to showcase.

Mr. Murphy asked if the Board wanted to conduct the Annual Meeting on June 9th as previously planned or move it to June 16th which would give staff more time to prepare. Director Mullins noted that he may have a conflict on June 16th.

It was the general consensus of the Board to move the Annual Meeting date to June 16th if it did not present a conflict for Chairman Mullins. Staff will let the Board know the date of the Annual Meeting once it has been confirmed with Chairman Mullins.

V. Next Meeting

Staff will let the Board know if a meeting will be needed prior to the SWRPC Annual 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 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin
Office Manager