

# SOUTHWEST REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

### MINUTES

November 10, 2020

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 (copy attached)*. He announced that all votes would be conducted by roll call.

**Present:** Gus Lerandeau, Vice-Chairman, *Swansey*; Larry Robinson, Secretary, *Marlborough*; Sara Carbonneau, *Winchester*; Leandra MacDonald, *Peterborough*; Cheryl Mayberry, *Walpole*; Ed Merrell, *Jaffrey (joined at 3:10 p.m.)*; Butch Morin, *Richmond*; John Snowdon, *Westmoreland*.

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.

**Guest:** Christine Robideaux, Temple resident.

**Absent:** Tom Mullins, Chairman, *Peterborough*; Jill Collins, Treasurer, *Hinsdale*; Brian Barden, *Dublin*; Chris Coates, *Cheshire County*; Jay Jacobs, *Harrisville*; Camilla Lockwood, *Temple*; Gary Spykman, *Keene*.

#### I. Welcome

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

#### II. Advisory Committee Reports

##### a. Transportation Advisory Committee

J. B. Mack reported that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) has not met since the Board was updated on their activities at the SWRPC Fall Commission meeting. Since that meeting staff has prepared and submitted TAC's recommendations to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation that two projects be considered in the process of updating the State's 2023-2032 Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP) as follows:

- A nomination by the City of Keene to retrofit West Street from School Street to the NH 9/10/12 interchange with complete street treatments and improved coordinated traffic signalization and access management.
- A recommendation by the Town of Swansey to extend an existing TYP project which currently involves access management and complete streets improvements to NH 10 (Winchester Street)

from NH 101 to the Swanzezy Town Line. The Town of Swanzezy has requested that the project be extended further south to the main entrance of the Market Basket shopping plaza.

The next meeting of TAC is scheduled for December 7, 2020.

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

Lisa Murphy reported that the Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee (ENRAC) has not met since the Board was updated on their activities at the 2020 Fall Commission meeting.

The next meeting of ENRAC is scheduled for December 15, 2020.

**c. Economic Development Advisory Committee**

Todd Horner reported that the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) met on October 14, 2020. Updates were provided on two projects that were recently added to the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest New Hampshire* (CEDS). Both the Cold Stone Springs water infrastructure project in Jaffrey and the Business and Technology Center at Keene State College have been awarded funding through the Northern Border Regional Commission. EDAC members also received an update on the activities of the Monadnock Housing Roundtable which was formed by SWRPC earlier this year to identify challenges and opportunities related to housing in the Region.

The next meeting of EDAC is scheduled for January 13, 2021.

**d. Brownfields Advisory Committee**

J. B. Mack reported that the Brownfields Advisory Committee has not met since the Board was updated on their activities at the SWRPC Fall Commission meeting. Since that time staff has prepared and submitted an application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a community-wide brownfields assessment grant in the amount of \$300,000 to continue program activities in the Region. If successful, funding would be available in October of 2021. Mr. Murphy commented that the application was authored by J. B. Mack with assistance from Terry Johnson.

**III. Consent Agenda**

- a. Minutes of October 13, 2020 Meeting**
- b. Highlights of Commission Activities - October 2020**
- c. Agreements with NH HSEM - Hazard Mitigation Planning**
- d. Financial Report - October 2020**

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

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

**IV. Executive Director's Report**

- a. 2020 Complete Streets Implementation Grant Program - MAST Recommendation**

Mr. Murphy reminded Board members of action taken by the Board at their May 12, 2020 meeting authorizing SWRPC to act as fiscal agent for a \$100,000 grant from the NH Charitable Foundation's *You Have Our Trust* fund for the implementation of municipal complete streets projects in communities in Southwest NH. As fiscal agent, SWRPC worked with the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST) to oversee a competitive grant application process. The majority of the grant, \$90,000 was earmarked for award to municipalities that have complete streets policies while the remaining \$10,000 is being used for SWRPC to cover staff costs.

Henry Underwood provided background information on MAST, who have been in existence since 2005, noting that SWRPC provides support to the group through our transportation planning work program. He explained that according to their 2012 Action Plan, MAST has a direct connection to promoting complete streets which allow for safe and accessible use by all regardless of ability and mode of travel. Following a successful pilot program in 2017, with funding from the *You Have Our Trust* program, MAST has received additional annual grants to further the implementation of complete streets projects in our communities. MAST established a Complete Streets Subcommittee who, in conjunction with SWRPC, administered a competitive grant program, reviewed applications and provided a recommendation to the MAST Steering Committee regarding funding awards which they endorsed.

In order to be eligible for funding, a community must have an adopted complete streets policy in place. Nine of the communities in Southwest NH are currently eligible. Applications for the 2020 funding round were submitted by Harrisville, Keene, Swanzey, and Troy as summarized below:

- The Town of Harrisville requested \$9,590 for installation of two speed feedback signs for drivers (one on Main Street and one on NH 137) as well as enhanced signage for off-highway trails throughout the Town.
- The City of Keene requested \$41,000 for various pedestrian safety improvements at three signalized intersections (West Street/Island Street, Gilbo Avenue/School Street and Ashuelot Rail Trail on Emerald Street) and a pilot wayfinding signage program.
- The Town of Swanzey requested \$41,550 for sidewalk reconstruction and improvements in the vicinity of the intersection of NH 32 and Sawyers Crossing Road.
- The Town of Troy requested \$42,800 for pedestrian safety improvements at the intersection of NH 12 and Monadnock Street including pedestrian-activated beacons, a speed feedback sign for northbound drivers and improvements to overhead lighting.

Director Carbonneau pointed out that the total requests exceeds the \$90,000 available through the grant. Mr. Murphy explained that there is a residual of program funds remaining from prior years that can be used to meet the total amount requested and this is part of the recommendation of the MAST Steering Committee. Vice-Chair Lerandau asked what would happen if a community were unable to come-up with the match commitment and was told if the award were contingent upon the match it would not be granted. Director MacDonald asked what role the Charitable Foundation plays when funds are not fully expended and Mr. Murphy explained that the funds are provided in their entirety to SWRPC for each grant round and we keep them segregated for tracking purposes and notify the funder on the status of the use of funds.

Mr. Murphy clarified that he feels it is important the Board be made aware of the potential MAST awards since SWRPC is acting as the fiscal agent for this program. Therefore, the Board is being asked through this agenda item to ratify the recommendation made by MAST by way of a motion authorizing entering into agreements with the communities selected for awards.

**Motion: To authorize the Executive Director to enter into agreements with Harrisville, Keene, Swanzey, and Troy to implement complete streets projects endorsed by MAST through the 2020 Complete Streets Implementation Grant program.**

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

Henry Underwood noted that staff will be in touch with the municipalities involved so they can work this into their budgeting process and projects will be constructed during the 2021 calendar year.

**b. Connecticut River Joint Commissions - SWRPC Representation**

Mr. Murphy explained that SWRPC has representation on the Connecticut River Joint Commissions (CRJC) which is a bi-state entity that looks after the welfare of what is happening in both Vermont and New Hampshire along the Connecticut River valley and its tributaries. CRJC periodically meets to conduct business including permit reviews in the corridor, encourage promotion of the corridor as a tourist attraction, promote recreation, and protect the environmental quality and cultural resources along the river. In the past representation on CRJC has been provided by members of our river communities that consist of the towns of Chesterfield, Hinsdale, Westmoreland, and Walpole. Past members have included Bob Harcke from Westmoreland who served for many years and, most recently, Ed Smith from Hinsdale. Ed Smith has indicated his intention to step down from this position. Harriet Davenport from Chesterfield serves as our alternate on CRJC and when she was approached by staff she expressed willingness to assume the primary role as our representative should that be the wish of the Board. Mr. Murphy noted that if Harriet Davenport is appointed our primary representative to CRJC we should consider designating an alternate at some point.

**Motion: To designate Harriet Davenport of Chesterfield as SWRPC's primary representative to the Connecticut River Joint Commissions.**

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

Mr. Murphy noted that staff will be contacting our Connecticut River communities to seek potential candidates to be considered as SWRPC's alternate representative for CRJC. Director Mayberry asked what level of commitment is required and Mr. Murphy noted that Lisa Murphy will provide that information.

**V. Discussion Topic - Substance Misuse: A Role for SWRPC**

Terry Johnson and James Weatherly provided an overview of the Monadnock Rural Opioid Response Planning Program and the role SWRPC has played. Terry Johnson explained this is the second round of work that SWRPC has participated in through an arrangement with Cheshire County. The Monadnock Region Rural Communities Opioid Response Planning Program Consortium (MRCORP) has a mission to build and strengthen the community by reducing the harms associated with opioid misuse, overdose and substance abuse in the Region. During phase one of the project known as the planning phase, SWRPC completed a needs assessment. Phase two, which is the implementation phase, expands on the work done during phase one. SWRPC deliverables associated with Phase two included developing a data dashboard and a resource guide for prevention, treatment and recovery services in the region.

James Weatherly explained that the resource guide and the data dashboard are both web-based deliverables and outreach skills SWRPC uses in other planning applications including data gathering and data processing were utilized. He provided visual overviews of both web sites. The resource guide provides a one-stop space to gather information within the Monadnock Region on opioid prevention, treatment and recovery while the data dashboard provides an overview of substance abuse data that can be utilized by local decision

makers. Information is broken-down into categories that incorporate local and state data, age, the criminal justice system, and the treatment workforce.

Terry Johnson also recognized the work done by Henry Underwood who helped produce the virtual deliverables for this project. He explained the components included in the Workforce Census that covers information related to the current capacity of services in the Region as it relates to workforce, residential services, treatment, and overall economic impact. He noted that there are currently waiting lists to receive treatment due to the lack of capacity within the Region. Regarding economic impact, in 2017 it cost \$2.36 billion statewide for substance abuse disorders which includes expenses related to criminal justice, labor force participation and loss of worker productivity.

In summary, Terry Johnson stated that in addition to data collection and analysis, various other aspects of SWRPC's planning programs were utilized during the effort including GIS mapping, transportation, housing, economic development, and local planning.

#### **VI. Next Meeting**

Vice-Chairman Lerandeau announced that the next meeting of the SWRPC Board of Directors is scheduled for December 8, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. and will be a remote 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 4:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin  
Office Manager