



MINUTES

Thursday – April 16, 2015

- 1. Call to Order** - Chairman Byers called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
- 2. Roll Call** –Secretary Ramsdell called the roll and declared a quorum present. The following Commissioners and Staff were in attendance:

Commissioners

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|---------------|-------------------------|
| Haverhill | April Derboghosian |
| Lawrence | Theresa Park |
| Methuen | Kevin Hagerty |
| Newbury | John Weis |
| Newburyport | Ed Ramsdell |
| North Andover | Richard Byers, Chairman |
| Rowley | Robert Snow |
| Salisbury | Lou Masiello |
| West Newbury | Brian Murphey |

Staff

Dennis DiZoglio, Executive Director
Anthony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager
Joe Cosgrove, Environmental Program Manager
Mike Parquette, Comprehensive Planning Program Manager
Todd Fontanella, Sr. Transportation Planner
Jen Dunlap, Finance Administrator
Nancy Lavallee, Office Administrator

3. Adoption of February and March Meeting Minutes

The February and March minutes were reviewed and recommended for adoption.

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Weis and second by Commissioner Snow to authorize the February Minutes. The February Minutes were unanimously approved.

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Weis to authorize the March Minutes. The March Minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Warrant for March

Treasurer Robert Snow reported that the March warrant was reviewed favorably and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Murphey and second by Commissioner Weis. The March warrant was unanimously approved.

5. Chairman's Report

Chairman Richard Byers reported on the following activities since the last meeting.

- MVPC publishes an annual report each year to provide an overview of the Commission's accomplishments. Staff is currently working on the 2014 annual report and it should be complete & printed by May 1st. This year's focus will be on economic development that was the theme for our 2014 Regional Planning day event.
- As has been mentioned at previous Commission meetings MVPC conducted its Citizen Planner Training Program in April. On April 6th and 13th MVPC held its 2015 training program. Thirteen people participated in the training.
- We have included a number of news articles in your packets that referenced MVPC this month ranging from an article regarding the regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, to the discontinuance of River Road in Merrimac to the funding need for new transportation projects.

6. Director's Report

Executive Director Dennis DiZoglio reported on the following MVPC activities since the last meeting.

Meetings with Community Leaders

- On March 24th Tony Komornick and I attended the MARPA / MassDOT quarterly consultation meeting in Sutton.
- On March 26th Mike Parquette and I attended the Downtown Methuen Task Force meeting.
- On March 26th MVPC conducted Conflict of Interest training for the staff as required every 2 years.
- On March 27th I attended the monthly MARPA meeting
- At the invitation of Representative Linda Campbell, I attended the House Ways and Means committee meeting held in Methuen on March 31st.
- On April 1st I participated in the press conference held at Park Station in Boston sponsored by T for Mass. I advocated that transportation investments need to be made in the Merrimack Valley.
- On April 7th I met with Bev Donovan from the Haverhill Chamber and Bill Pillsbury from the City of Haverhill to discuss potential workshop collaborations.
- On April 7th I attended and chaired the MMA Regional and Local Policy Committee. The committee reviewed pending legislation to create Community Benefit Districts.
- On April 9th I represented MVPC at the MPO meeting.
- On April 14th I was part of a delegation that met with Senator Spilka, new chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee to advocate resources for regional collaboration.
- On April 15th I met with Derek Mitchell new Executive Director of the Lawrence Partnership to discuss how MVPC could work with the newly formed partnership.
- On April 15th Tony Komornick and I met with Mayor Rivera regarding transportation priorities for the City of Lawrence.
- On April 16th I attended the semi-annual Essex Heritage Commission meeting held at the Everett Mills in Lawrence.

Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMMC)

- At the April 1st DPW meeting we continued to focused on the new EPA stormwater draft regulations and our regional stormwater collaborative effort. We had as a guest speaker Fred Civian, DEP Stormwater coordinator. The last scheduled stormwater workshop was held on April 10th.
- On April 13th the Mayors and Managers held their monthly meeting. Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack was the guest speaker. The Secretary reviewed the transportation agenda of the Baker Administration. The Communities had an opportunity to discuss with the Secretary their transportation priorities. Some of the priorities discussed included: Haverhill commuter rail schedule adjustments to enhance rail service due to the double tracking project, new train stop in North Andover, Bus on Shoulder, Whittier bridge schedule adherence, Newburyport intermodal center, Newburyport park and ride expansion, Chapter 90 funding and snow management reimbursements.
- Ameresco, the region's ESCO provider has completed projects in Merrimac, North Andover and Lawrence. Salisbury is under construction. Methuen and Haverhill are adjusting their programs to

deal with the net school spending issues. Methuen has expanded their program to include retrofitting their streetlights. Lawrence is considering a second phase and the Greater Lawrence Technical High School has started an IGA.

- To meet the communities' net metering credits needs we have solicited offers from solar developers. Borrego has made an offer and Andover is exploring this option. Amesbury has a large solar project in development and is soliciting the interest level from communities.
- Electric aggregation is moving forward with Newburyport, Haverhill and Methuen.
- To date the regional renewable energy manager, Meister Consulting Group (MCG) has met with: Newburyport, Newbury, North Andover, Boxford, Andover and Amesbury to review potential site. Boxford has selected Borrego to develop their landfill project and a notice to proceed has been issued. No additional progress to report.

Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System

- MVPC, along with 6 other RPAs received a letter from the Retirement systems stating that after 42 years of being members of the State retirement system MVPC is now required to contribute to the system. A meeting was held with the State retirement Board and MARPA. Corrective legislation has been drafted and I met with Representative Dempsey seeking his help. Representative Dempsey office is recommending that we engage the administration in this discussion. I have reach out to Deputy Secretary Rachel Madden from EOAF to discuss the issue and she has agreed to meet. Currently waiting to schedule a meeting.

7. Contracts

- A contract with the Town of Merrimac for \$6,500 to update parcel mapping.
- A contract with MAPC for \$8,000 to create a housing template for integrating healthy housing principles into Housing Production Plans (HPP) prepared by MVPC on behalf of our communities. We are in discussions to develop HPPs for Merrimac, West Newbury and Haverhill. We will actually be a sub-recipient to the Mass Department of Public Health who has given a grant to MAPC to promote healthy lifestyles. The integrating of healthy lifestyles into housing productions plans is one of their strategies.
- Authorization to enter into a MOU with the National Wildlife Federation to partner with them to promote coastal resiliency and habitat restoration in the Great Marsh of Northeastern Massachusetts. This MOU will allow us to access \$1,238,297.00 in Sandy Grant Funds.

Vote: There was a motion and a second to authorize the above-mentioned contracts and all associated contracts. There was a motion by Commissioner Masiello and second by Commissioner Hagerty to authorize the contracts. The contracts were unanimously approved.

8. Comprehensive Planning Update

VALLEY SUPPORT TEAM

Methuen: Dennis DiZoglio and Mike Parquette are members of the Methuen Downtown Redevelopment committee and can offer MVPC's expertise in economic development and transportation planning to assist in their efforts. Methuen has decided to pursue a 40R District application and Mike met with their city planner to discuss this effort and how MVPC can assist in their efforts. The city has met this week with DHCD regarding the proposed 40R district application. Methuen may also be able to utilize other programs aimed for "Gateway Cities" such as: Cultural District, Housing Development Incentive Program, 43D for Housing, Tax Increment Financing, and Compact Neighborhood Districts.

Merrimac: Mike Parquette has had discussions with and sent a proposal to the Town of Merrimac to update their Housing Production Plan that MVPC completed in 2009. We will be undertaking this effort this summer.

Groveland: Mike Parquette has met with Groveland officials (Assessor, Fire Chief, Planning Board members, and a Select Board member) to discuss permitting issues. Mike has sent a proposal to Groveland to develop a Permitting Guide. This effort will begin within the month.

DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH/MAPC GRANT - Worked with MVPC's Betsy Goodrich and Todd Fontanella to prepare a grant application for funds to incorporate "health initiatives" into a current project or study. MVPC was successful in receiving \$8,000 to prepare a public health planning template for integrating healthy housing principles into Housing Production Plans. This work must be completed by June 30th.

MERRIMACK VALLEY MEANS BUSINESS/EDA GRANT - MVPC submitted a grant application to EDA to obtain funds for updating and marketing the MVMB website which has been a goal of the Mayor's/Manager's Coalition. MVPC received a call from EDA requesting more information - specifically expanding on a section of the application discussing recent business closings in the region. Mike Parquette conducted the research; updated and improved the information previously developed, provided source documentation, and submitted the information to EDA. MVPC should hear whether the grant application is successful by the end of April.

DEVELOPMENT SPREADSHEET – Mike Parquette is working with Tony Komornick following up on information regarding development in the region that we previously submitted to MAPC for their use in preparing regional population and employment projections. The spreadsheet identifies larger scale residential and commercial/industrial or mixed-use developments recently completed or proposed. We have identified projects by community, location, type, lot size, status, completion year, total # of housing units, and if commercial - total square footage. We have identified 4,150 housing units proposed or recently built, and over 2 million square feet of non-residential development proposed - some of it new construction, some renovation of existing mill space.

MVMC WIRELESS COMMUNICATION RFP - An RFP was recently developed to hire a wireless communications developer to work on behalf of our region's communities locating where new towers may be needed in order to improve communication coverage. Three firms submitted proposals. Mike Parquette is a member of the review team reviewing the proposals, interviewing the 2 companies short-listed, and ultimately bringing a recommendation on who to hire back to the MVMC for their acceptance.

MVED - Two potential loans are in the initial stages of review. Both have a high degree of being granted and if so, will use most of the funds currently available to lend.

9. Environmental Program Update

MVPC's Environmental Program Manager, Joe Cosgrove, report on the upcoming Stormwater Workshops.

Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative:

- Completed Stormwater Management Housekeeping Workshops geared to DPW staff and municipal practitioners with session on March 20th on Buildings, Facilities, Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance including field tour of Andover DPW yard. Final scheduled session on Stormwater System Infrastructure Maintenance was held last Friday April 10th at the Lawrence Riverwalk campus of Northern Essex Community College. Representatives from all 15 MVPC communities attended at least one of the sessions. Discussions are ongoing about adding additional session on financing & systems maintenance.
- Next meeting of DPW Directors/Stormwater Collaborative on May 6th will include presentation by Tim Chorey, new Stream Continuity Specialist with the Mass. Dept. of Fish & Game

10. Transportation Report Update

MVPC's Transportation Program Manager, Tony Komornick, reported on the following transportation activities.

Merrimack Valley MPO

The **MVMPO** met on April 9th and voted to endorse a series of **proposed amendments to the region's FFYs 2015 – FFY 2018 TIP**. (see attachment). The Public Review and Comment period for these amendments will end on March 30th. Two Public Hearings were held at the MVPC Offices on March 18th.

The next meeting of the MVMPO is tentatively scheduled for May 20th.

Studies, Analyses & Plans

Related to the **Regional Transportation Plan**, Tony Komornick, Betsy Goodrich and Todd Fontanella continued to develop proposed *Goals and Objectives* for use in the document and staff continued to identify a variety of *Performance Measures* that will be evaluated by MVMPO members for use in the Plan as is mandated under MAP-21.

Steve Lopez and the GIS staff prepared a revised version of **the comprehensive list of all crashes at intersections in the Valley** using MassDOT data from 2010-2012 (see attachment).

Betsy Goodrich completed our revisions to the **Journey to Work data** for the region from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census and the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, which will be included in the RTP.

Betsy Goodrich attended the **Methuen Arlington Neighborhood, Inc.** meeting on March 10th to discuss the upcoming RTP, review traffic, safety and transit issues in the City and to solicit members' ideas of how transportation should be improved in their neighborhood, in Methuen and in the region.

Other

Tony Komornick attended the April 2nd **MVRTA Advisory Board Meeting** and reported on the status of Transportation Planning process in the region.

Tony Komornick met with City of Lawrence Community Development Director Jim Barnes and DPW Director John Isensee on April 8th to discuss the process of identifying priority roadway and bridge projects as well as Representative Moran, Abel Vargas and staff from Groundwork Lawrence to discuss the next steps for implementing the **Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail along the M&L Branch ROW in Lawrence**.

As a member of the Review Committee, Todd Fontanella has been evaluating applications for operating assistance grants under the MassDOT Section 5310/Mobility Assistance Program for FFY 2016.

Todd Fontanella participated in a Travel Training (ADA) session at the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission Offices on March 9th.

Earlier this week, Tony Komornick and Betsy Goodrich met with Bill Buckley, Kathleen Colwell, DPW Director Patrick Bower and Kevin Dandrade of TEC to review Methuen's transportation project priorities for the upcoming RTP (see handout).

Tony Komornick attended the February 24th meeting of the **Haverhill Traffic and Safety Committee** as well as the March 12th meeting of the **Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee** where he received feedback from committee members on the priority of roadway and bridge projects in the City for the upcoming TIP and RTP.

Jim Terlizzi and Danny Ovalle continue to collect information on the location and condition of all sidewalks in the City of Haverhill as part of MVPC's contract to update **Haverhill's Asset Management Program**.

Jim Terlizzi reviewed road **surface condition data** in the region that was collected by MassDOT using their pavement management data collection vehicle. Jim's review showed that the results of MassDOT's analysis matched those of MVPC on higher speed roadways; it did a poor job of analyzing pavement conditions on roadways in congested areas, such as downtown Lawrence.

Jim Terlizzi, Jerrard Whitten and Danny Ovalle are finalizing work on an application that will accelerate collection of **road surface condition information** for federal aid roadways in the region.

Danny Ovalle continued to prepare the **2014 Community Traffic Count Reports** and to upload the traffic count data we have collected to the MassDOT website.

Jim Terlizzi began to assemble crash data that will be considered as part of our **Broadway (Route 28) / Haverhill Street (Route 110) Intersection Traffic Study**.

Todd Fontanella hosted a meeting of the **Merrimack Valley Regional Coordinating Council** here on March 12th. The group is focusing on developing a joint transportation/safety video proposal involving youth in the region and individual members are interested in the Section 5310/MAP grant submissions.

Betsy participated in a conference call on the **use of Health data in transportation planning** that was held earlier today and suggested a few options of how this data be incorporated into the MVPC's various planning disciplines.

Todd Fontanella completed his review of the MVRTA's performance in FY 2014 in meeting **federal ADA service provision requirements**.

We were informed that the **City of Haverhill** received a **Mass in Motion grant** and will hire MVPC to assist them with developing a Complete Streets policy, strengthen public participation in and augment efforts of the Haverhill Bike/Ped Safety Program.

Tony Komornick, Mary Kay Beninati and Jerrard Whitten are working on a methodology for process travel time/travel speed data that will be used to identify **congestion along the region's National Highway System roadways**.

Upcoming Meetings

- 25% Design Hearing for project to repair I-495 bridges over the Powwow Riverwalk (March 19th);
- Quarterly Meeting of MassDOT/RPA Directors (March 24th);
- Lawrence Mayor's Health Task Force (March 26th);
- 25% Design Hearing for Lawrence St./Park St. intersection project (March 31st);
- Public Meeting on Central Street Roadway project in Rowley (March 30th);
- DPW Directors Meeting (April 1st);
- Merrimack Valley Transportation Committee (To Be Determined);
- MVRTA Advisory Board Meeting (April 2nd);
- MVMPO Meeting (April 9th (tentative));
- Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee (April 9th);

11. Local and Regional Issues

12. Other – Regional Planning Day to be determined.

13. Adjourn

There was a motion and a second to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on April 16, 2015.

Ed Ramsdell, Secretary