



## MINUTES

**Thursday – April 20, 2017**

- 1. Call to Order** - Chairman Lavoie called the meeting to order at 7:10p.m.
- 2. Roll Call** –Secretary Ramsdell called the roll and declared a quorum present. The following Commissioners and Staff were in attendance:

### Commissioners

Amesbury	Robert Lavoie, Chairman
Georgetown	John Cashell
Groveland	Robert Arakelian
Haverhill	April Derboghosian
Lawrence	Theresa Park
Methuen	Kevin Hagerty
Newbury	John Weis
Newburyport	Ed Ramsdell, Secretary
North Andover	Rick Byers
Rowley	Bob Snow, Treasurer
Salisbury	Jerry Klima
West Newbury	Brian Murphey
Rep at Large	Heather McMann

### Staff

Karen Conard, Executive Director  
Joe Cosgrove, Environmental Program Manager  
Mike Parquette, Comprehensive Planning Program Manager  
Tony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager  
Jerrard Whitten, GIS Program Manager  
Jen Dunlap, Finance Administrator

### **3. Adoption of March Meeting Minutes**

The minutes were reviewed and recommended for adoption.

*Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Ramsdell and second by Commissioner Snow. The March minutes were unanimously approved.*

### **4. Adoption of March Warrant**

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

*Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Murphy. The March warrant was unanimously approved.*

## 5. Chairman's Report

Chairman Robert Lavoie reported on the following activities since the last meeting in February.

- We are pleased to welcome back Rick Byers as our North Andover Commissioner.
- This time each year we ask the Nomination Committee to meet and bring back a slate of candidates for the officer positions on the Commission. As Chair of the Nominating Committee I will work with the Committee and report back to the Commission next month. Kevin Hagerty is the other member of the committee and if there are any others that would like to serve on the committee or be considered for an officer position please let me know.

## 6. Executive Director

Executive Director Karen Conard reported on the following activities since the last meeting in March.

Ms. Conard noted several Eagle Tribune articles on cleanup of the Merrimack River. There is discussion if MVPC will advocate for this project.

- Attended the March monthly MARPA meeting at MAPC in Boston. Topics included introduction of the Governor's Regional Workforce Skills Planning Initiative and a discussion with the new Director of Transportation 4 MA
- Attended MVCC Congressional Breakfast meeting, with Congresspersons Niki Tsongas and Seth Moulton
- Attended with Tony Komornick the MassMoves Northeast session, held at the Ipswich Brewery. 6 state senators participated, including our own Senators L'Italien and Tarr
- Attended the Northeast Commonwealth Conversation listening tour held at Lawrence General Hospital, where over 75 stakeholders and business/community leaders sat in and gave valuable feedback to the 11 state senators in attendance, including Senate President Stan Rosenberg
- Met one-on-one with MVWIB Chairman Peter Matthews to discuss my joining the MVWIB (taking the slot vacated by DennisDiZoglio)
- Attended the monthly MPO meeting held here on March 22nd
- Toured the RCG Mill Complex along High Street in North Andover
- Attended the North Andover Town Hall Open House held March 26<sup>th</sup>
- Met with Ozzy Properties' Orit Goldstein and Ellen Keller to discuss a variety of issues with their multitude of commercial holdings in Andover, North Andover and Lawrence
- At the request of Mayor Fiorentini, sat in on a presentation in his office from MassHousing, who were making the rounds meeting with all of the Commonwealth's Gateway Cities
- Listened to a webinar presented by NARC on the Trump FFY2018 budget proposal
- Attended my first Performance and Asset Management Advisory Council chaired by MassDOT Chief Engineer Patricia Leavenworth, where we heard a presentation about the tunnel inventory currently underway
- Met with new State Representative Juana Matias (Lawrence), who could not attend the Legislative Caucus back in February, along with the Program Managers
- Met with Groveland Finance Director Denise Dembkowski to advance the Regional Housing Production Plan conversation
- Met with Andover Senior Planner Lisa Schwarz to plan the first one-on-one community conversation in support of the Regional Housing Production Plan
- Attended the staff training on Conflict of Interest, led by Jen Dunlap
- Attended MVCC Business Expo Luncheon, with guest speakers Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo and House Ways & Means Chairman Brian Dempsey
- Attended the statewide Regional Workforce Skills Planning Initiative meeting at Worcester Technical HS, with guest speakers Governor Baker, Lieutenant Governor Polito, Secretary of Education Peyser, Secretary of Labor & Workforce Development Walker and Secretary of Housing & Economic Development Ash

- Met with Greater Lawrence Technical School's Athletic Facility Campaign Fundraiser Sarah Starkweather to discuss ways to finance the completion of their \$6 million athletic complex improvements
- Met with Rowley Town Administrator Debbie Eagan and Town Planner Kirk Baker to advance the Regional Housing Production Plan conversation
- Presented with Angela Vincent to the Andover Economic Development Council meeting
- Met with North Andover Director of Community Development Eric Kfoury and Town Planner Jean Enright to plan their one-on-one community conversation in support of the Regional Housing Production Plan
- Attended the first meeting of the Northeast Regional Workforce Skills Planning Initiative at Greater Lawrence Technical School
- Met with Rowley Town Planner and Angela Vincent to plan their one-on-one community conversation in support of the Regional Housing Production Plan
- JUST returned from the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce Legislative Event, with State Senator O'Connor Ives and State Representative Jim Kelcourse

#### Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMMC)

- Held the monthly DPW Directors meetings in April and continued to discuss the MS4 permit, at which procurement expert Bob DeFusco talked about the joint services contracting initiative and Ellie Baker of Horsley Witten added to the discussion about various grants and eligibility
- Led the March 21<sup>st</sup> MVMMC meeting, hosted by Mayor Zanni at Methuen City Hall. Topics discussed included the MV branding effort and gauging interest in supporting the Clean River Project

#### 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. MARPA has appointed Janet Pierce, the Executive Director of CMRPC, to represent them on the committee required in the 2016 budget to resolve this issue. UPDATE: the Committee met on March 30<sup>th</sup>. Below is a quote from Janet Pierce's email:

“Although this was the first posted meeting, it was obvious the Admin and Finance and Retirement Board members are anxious to get the various groups represented on the Working Group to commit to a payment arrangement.”

The Committee will meet again on May 1<sup>st</sup>, with all affected parties welcome to join. Jen Dunlap and I plan to attend on behalf of MVPC.

#### **7. Contracts**

- Amesbury – MIMAP 2.0 renewal contract - \$2,000  
Covers operation of MIMAP 2.0 for Amesbury through June 30, 2018
- Groveland – Water and Sewer Mobile Application - \$6,750  
(\$1,750 from community and remaining from DLTA)
- MassGIS NextGen911 pilot project - \$1,320

***Note: Commissioner Snow made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned contracts as presented. Commissioner Park seconded the motion. The contracts were approved.***

## 8. Annual Report ‘storymap’ Presentation

MVPC’s GIS Analyst Kelsey Quinlan presented MVPC’s 2016 Annual Report in the greatest and latest technology format of Storymap to the Commissioners. Storymap is the online version of the Annual Report in a digital format. The Commissioners were very impressed on Ms. Quinlan’s presentation and rated it as “Excellent”.

## 9. Transportation Report Update

Mr. Komornick briefly touched upon some of the following tasks and activities that have been completed or undertaken by transportation staff since the last Commission meeting in March.

### Merrimack Valley MPO (MVMPO)

The Merrimack Valley MPO met on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Discussion again focused on the status of the Salisbury Rail Trail project as well as issues with the funding for the design of all the sections of the Border to Boston Multiuse Trail.

Following the March MPO meeting, MassDOT staff met with representatives from the four Border to Boston (B2B) communities in the region to discuss this matter in greater detail. At that meeting, it was agreed that:

- MassDOT would provide almost all of the \$1.5 million in additional funding needed to complete the 100% design of the existing/conceived elements of the trail. This amount will be in the form of state funds and will require the development of new agreements between the communities and Stantec. These new agreements may take between 4 and 6 months to put in place;
- Stantec will resume work on the design of the Salisbury Rail Trail and the Georgetown sections of the trail with the available funding under the existing agreement. It is hoped that when this funding runs out, the new agreements between the communities and Stantec will be in place, and
- The Salisbury Rail Trail Project could be advertised in FFY 2018.

Based on the above information, MVPC prepared a **Draft FFYs 2018-2022 TIP** that programs the Salisbury Rail Trail project in FFY 2018 (see attached ‘Quick Tip’ Target List).

Tony made a presentation to the MassDOT CMAQ Consultation Committee and was successful in securing CMAQ funding for **Amesbury’s Elm Street Reconstruction project**.

The MVMPO is now considering making three **amendments to its FFYs 2017-2021 TIP** (see attached list). These will be discussed at next week’s MPO meeting and likely released for public review and comment.

**The next meeting of the Merrimack Valley MPO will be held on April 26<sup>th</sup>.**

### MPO-Related

The MassDOT Project Review Committee recently approved the following projects in the Merrimack Valley region:

- North Avenue Reconstruction Project in Haverhill
- Route 110/Route 108 Intersection Reconstruction Project in Haverhill
- I-93 Resurfacing Project in Andover and Tewksbury
- Route 114 Resurfacing in Lawrence and North Andover
- Route 110 Resurfacing in Methuen
- Nock Middle School Safe Routes to School Project in Newburyport

## Studies

Jim Terlizzi is assisting the **Town of West Newbury** in identifying roadway locations in the community that could justify the **installation of guardrails**.

Danny Ovalle and Jim collected AM and PM Peak period turning movement counts at the intersection of **Route 1 and Route 133 in Rowley** in support of the Road Safety Audit for that location.

## Other

Staff is completed its review of the projects to be included in **MassDOT's Draft 2018-2022 Capital Investment Plan** and submitted comments to the Office of Transportation Planning. Any project that will appear in the MVMPO's FFYs 2018-2022 TIP should appear in this document.

Staff continued to develop its draft list of **Critical Urban and Rural Freight Corridor segments** in the region for submission to MassDOT. This matter will be discussed at next week's MVMPO meeting. If approved by MassDOT and the MVMPO, these segments would become eligible to receive federal freight funding

Staff continued to collect **National Transit Database ridership counts** for the MVRTA's fixed route bus system.

Angie Vincent hosted a meeting of the **Merrimack Valley Access to Jobs Forum Committee** on March 30<sup>th</sup>. This Committee is examining issues impacting the ability of area residents to gain access to employment by some means of transportation other than private automobile.

MVPC hosted a meeting of the **Georgetown Branch Trail Working Group** on March 22<sup>nd</sup> where it was learned that the design for the Groveland Community Trail could be completed as early as this summer.

Danny has completed work on the **Community Traffic Counting Summary reports**.

Betsy Goodrich continued to assist the **City of Haverhill with their ADA ramp project** that was initiated through the City's bicycle and pedestrian safety program.

Betsy attended the **Lawrence Mayor's Health Task Force Working Group Meeting** that was held in Lawrence on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

## Technical Assistance

Tony has been working with Newbury officials on a possible **MVPC Parking Study in the Byfield Village area**.

## Upcoming Meetings

- Merrimack Valley MPO Meeting: April 26<sup>th</sup> – 12 Noon @ MVPC Offices.

## **10. Comprehensive Planning Update**

Mike Parquette, MVPC's Comprehensive Planning Program Manager reported on the following Comprehensive Planning activities since the last meeting in March.

**Merrimack Valley Regional Housing Production Plan:** Using funds from the CCC program, MassHousing, and DLTA, MVPC will complete a Regional HPP. The HPP will be comprised of a comprehensive housing needs assessment; affordable housing goals; and implementation strategies. This is a "first of a kind" regional HPP, and has the potential to be used as a model for other RPA's. Staff has met several times to discuss this initiative, we met with all the Planning Directors on April 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Plan, and the first "public" open house discussion will be on May 24<sup>th</sup>. We have also been meeting with individual communities one-on-one to gather specific information regarding their housing issues and concerns. Also, MVPC will be partnering with Salem State University students to do much of the data collection that is vital for this effort. We appreciate their assistance and look forward to working with Salem State.

**Community Compact Cabinet:** The "Community Compact Cabinet" is designed to elevate the Administration's partnerships with cities and towns, and allows the Governor's Office to work more closely with municipal leaders. The Cabinet champions municipal interests and develops in consultation with cities and towns, mutual standards and best practices for both the state and municipalities. The creation of Community Compacts creates clear standards, expectations and accountability for both partners. Regional Planning Agencies have been directed to use DLTAs funds to advance CCC projects for our cities and towns.

In our region, 12 municipalities have signed "community compacts". Two communities, Lawrence and Newburyport have community compact reports completed for "best practices" in the field of financial forecasting. MVPC has completed a CCC project for Salisbury on Comprehensive Water Resources Management; we have begun working with Georgetown on a Complete Streets bylaw; and we have been working with North Andover and the MVMMC on job creation and retention (regional marketing campaign). In addition, we will be working soon with Groveland on development of mobile technology for their water department that can serve as a model for other communities.

Also, the administration announced the new "Efficiency and Regionalization Grant Program." The purpose of this program is to provide financial support for governmental entities interested in implementing regionalization and other efficiency initiatives that allow for long-term sustainability. MVPC submitted a grant application in November to complete a Merrimack Valley Regional Housing Production Plan. We were successful and will receive \$100,000 to complete the project as discussed above.

**Merrimack Valley Regional Marketing Project:** MVPC has completed phase one of the MVMMC marketing project. Numerous meetings were held with local businesses and individual communities as well as "roundtable" meetings in order to determine the effectiveness of the existing MVMB "brand", and to better understand what makes the valley attractive to businesses, residents, and visitors. Logos and taglines were developed and these were presented to the MVMMC on December 1st to solicit their opinion and advice as they will be key players in owning and selling the marketing slogan and logo. The tagline and logo was also presented to the "roundtable" committee on December 12<sup>th</sup>. All parties agreed on a tagline and logo. The next step is to hire a firm to develop a marketing campaign and launch the new tagline and logo. We have solicited and received bids for this effort.

**EDA Application:** MVPC is partnering with the City of Lawrence and Salem State University to apply for EDA funds to conduct a feasibility study in Lawrence to investigate the right mix of scale up businesses, to be located in an existing building, focused on smart textiles that would result in development of a sustainable innovation center in the City. The concept is to develop a center that would generate jobs and support the next generation of textile manufacturing, but also be flexible enough to include compatible businesses that complement each other.

The scope to implement this project includes:

1. Conduct a Project Kick-off with the Project Partners/Stakeholders
2. Collect Existing Studies and Plans
3. Conduct a Thorough Market Analysis Focused on Textile Manufacturing:
4. Investigate Existing Sites to Locate the Innovation Center
5. Develop Site Selection Criteria
6. Develop Final Recommendations, Next Steps and Implementation Plan

**MassCEC Solar Hot Water Program Grant:** MVPC has partnered with Meister Consultants Group (lead applicant), MAPC, and HCOG to submit an application in the amount of \$210,000 to complete an innovative project through the Solar Thermal Challenge that will drive the adoption of solar thermal technologies, reduce solar thermal soft costs, and remove market barriers to deployment. If successful, MVPC will receive approximately \$25,000 to undertake "campaigns" in our region.

## Meetings:

- March 21st– Mayors/Managers Coalition meeting in Methuen
- March 24th – DOER Solar webinar
- March 24th – EDA RLF webinar
- April 3rd – Staff met with Representative Matias
- April 4<sup>th</sup> – Parking Benefit District Workshop in Worcester
- April 6<sup>th</sup> – EPA Revolving Loan Fund workshop in Southbridge
- April 13<sup>th</sup> – Housing Plan kick-off lunch with Town/City Planning Directors
- April 14<sup>th</sup> – Staff with Bill Scott (Amesbury City Economic Development Director) to discuss buildout analysis and DIF
- April 14<sup>th</sup> – MARPA meeting with Karen & Jen

## 11. Environmental Program Update

In Joe Cosgrove's, Environmental Program Manager, absence MVPC's Executive Director, Karen Conard reported on activities since the last meeting in March. MVPC Environmental Program reports the following:

### Region Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning/Climate Change Adaptation:

- Mass EOEEA has rolled out plans for the state's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP), a key element following up on the Governor's Executive Order 569 "Establishing an Integrated Climate Change Strategy for the Commonwealth". MVPC is applying this week to become designated as a certified vendor for the program. If approved, MVPC staff will participate in training on soon to be issued guidance on assessing community vulnerability and developing resilience strategies as well as in using state data on climate projections. EEA also this week also announced funding availability for cities and towns through the MVP Program for funding assistance to complete municipal vulnerability assessments and resilience planning. Deadline for cities and towns to apply is Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

### Brownfields Program:

- This past week we received preliminary application from the City of Newburyport for sub grant assistance to help with cleanup of PCB contamination found on section of Phase II of the Clipper City Rail Trail. Property eligibility determination is pending with EPA.
- Joe Cosgrove, Jen Dunlap and Mike Parquette attended the EPA Region 1 Revolving Loan Fund Finance and Administration workshop in Southbridge April 6-7.
- Outreach meetings with Groundworks held with property owners in Lawrence.

### Green Communities:

- Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has notified MVPC that it is making additional Green Communities technical assistance support funding available through RPAs. Communities that need assistance in preparing 5-year energy reduction plans; designing and planning energy improvement projects or undertaking administrative/monitoring requirements of annual report preparation. Deadline to submit potential project MOUs through MVPC to EOEEA is June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### Stormwater Collaborative:

- Salem State University GIS Dept. grad students are doing stormwater infrastructure fieldwork in West Newbury. They will be making presentation to DPW/Stormwater Collaborative at the May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.
- With MassBay and Merrimack River Watershed Council and in partnership with Amesbury, Salisbury and Newburyport Conservation, we submitted on March 24<sup>th</sup> a 604B Water Quality Management Planning grant application focused on water quality monitoring at the Mouth of the Merrimack. Award announcements for the program are expected by June.

### **Great Marsh Management:**

- Annual meeting of Great Marsh Revitalization Task Force has been scheduled for Friday morning, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters. It will include presentations on extensive modeling efforts under the Sandy Grant by Woods Hole Group on preliminary results of Hydrodynamic and Salinity Modeling to help guide long-term control management of invasive species and effective habitat restoration.
- MassBay National Estuary Program 5-year federal certification meeting will be held next Wednesday for April 26<sup>th</sup> in Nahant.

### **Other:**

State environmental agencies recently issued a number of notices of grant funding availability for programs that support municipal and regional projects in stormwater management and environmental resource protection. Staff will be getting word out to communities and offering assistance in proposals. Programs include:

- Section 319 Clean Water Act NonPoint Source Pollution Grant Program. Grant deadline June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Provides design and construction funding for stormwater Best Management Practices and climate change adaptation/resiliency projects as well as outreach/education. Local match required is 40% of project cost.
- Coastal Pollutant Remediation Grants. Proposals due to MA Office of Coastal Zone Management by May 25<sup>th</sup>. All MVPC communities are eligible to apply for project that can be used for stormwater pollution assessment, design and implementation of green infrastructure BMPs and installation of commercial boat-waste pumpout facilities to reduce pollution. Local match required is 25%.
- Coastal Resilience Grant Program. Proposals due to MA Office of Coastal Zone Management by June 5<sup>th</sup>. Only coastal communities can apply—in MVPC region (Amesbury, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley and Salisbury) Funding can be used for 1) community vulnerability and risk assessment; 2) Public education & communication; 3) Local bylaws, Adaptation Plans & other management measures; 4) Redesigns and retrofits of facilities & infrastructure; and 5) Natural storm damage protection techniques (green infrastructure). Local match is 25%.

## **12. Local and Regional Issues**

MVPC's Executive Director Karen Conard reported that Curt Bellavance has accepted the Planning Director position with the City of Peabody. Mr. Bellavance was a recent last round candidate for the MVPC Executive Director position.

## **13. Other**

It was decided to have a June 15 Commission Meeting due to not having a Regional Planning Day event.

## **14. Adjourn**

**There was a motion by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Weis to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.**

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on April 20, 2017.

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Ed Ramsdell, Secretary