



## MINUTES

**Thursday – April 21, 2016**

- 1. Call to Order** - Chairman Byers called the meeting to order at 7:10pm.
- 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, Vice Chairman
Haverhill	April Der Boghosian
Lawrence	Theresa Park
Merrimac	John Thomas
Newbury	John Weis
Newburyport	Ed Ramsdell, Secretary
North Andover	Richard Byers, Chairman
Rowley	Robert Snow, Treasurer
Salisbury	Jerry Klima
West Newbury	Brian Murphey

**Guest** - Lori Millette, Town of Plaistow NH Planning Board

### 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 March Meeting Minutes**

The March minutes were reviewed and recommended for adoption.

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

## 5. Chairman's Report

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

- On March 19, attended the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative, Advanced Tools and Techniques for Planning and Zoning Conference, the conference was at Holy Cross. It was a daylong event and had a number of seminars in which to choose from. Attended the Preparing Now for a More Resilient Community, Stormwater Regulations Update and Green Communities Program- Partnering with Massachusetts Cities & Towns and found all three extremely interesting and pertinent to the work being done by the Commission.
- Regional Planning Day (RPD) is on June 23rd, at NECC in Haverhill from 8:00 to 11:30. The focus of the meeting will be the "State of the Region". It has been almost 10 years since the recession and how the region fared will be discussed. MVPC program managers will report how their activities can help address the Region's challenges. EOHED Secretary Jay Ash has agreed to be the keynote speaker and discuss the economic blueprint just released by the Governor. Chairman Byers encouraged the Commissioners and their representatives from their Communities to attend. There will not be a June Commission meeting because of the event.
- MVPC publishes an annual report each year to provide an overview of the commission's accomplishments. A copy of the 2015 annual report is included in your packets and also available online.
- 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. The Chairman asked the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Bob Lavoie, to 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 the Chairman know.
- Bob Lavoie is Chair of the search committee established to find the new Executive Director. The Chairman asked Bob to brief the Commission on his work to date and the next step.

## 6. Director's Report

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

### Meetings with Community Leaders

- March 18th and April 15th - attended the monthly MARPA meetings.
- March 18<sup>th</sup> - met with Representatives Dempsey's office regarding DLTA funding in the FY 2017 budget.
- March 30th - attended the MPO meeting and represented MVPC.
- April 4th –Dennis and staff met with a group from Haverhill preparing an application for Federal Reserve Working Cities funding.
- April 6th - attended the MassDOT Performance Asset Management Advisory Council meeting.
- April 5th - attended the MMA Local & Regional Policy Sub-Committee.
- April 14th - attended the semi-annual Essex National Heritage Commission meeting held in Newburyport.
- April 19<sup>th</sup> - attended the Planning Committee meeting of the MVWIB.

### MVPC Citizen Planner Training

- The annual Citizen Planner Training complete. 13 individuals completed the course.

### Town Administrators

- April 7<sup>th</sup> MVPC held a Town Administrators/Finance Director meeting. The primary focus was on collective purchasing. Of particular interest was insurance coverage. All the communities are currently insured by MIIA (MMA). It was agreed that a letter be sent to MIIA asking for a potential discount based on the desire by the communities to reconsider re-bidding their insurance needs.

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

- April DPW did not meet due to any pending items to discuss. A May meeting is scheduled since the MS4 permit was issued in April.
- The next Merrimack Valley Mayors and Managers Coalition meeting is scheduled for April 26th. The agenda for the meeting will focus on the Chapter 70 school funding formula, Complete Streets and the CCC MVMB grant, as well as a support letter for the Governor's Municipal Modernization Bill.
- Ameresco, the region's ESCO provider has completed projects in Merrimack, North Andover, Salisbury and Lawrence. Methuen and Haverhill are under construction. A Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is being reviewed by DOER for a new solar project in Lawrence.
- Haverhill has selected a firm for electric aggregation, Newburyport and Methuen had their DPU public hearing and are reviewing the competitive bids, and North Andover will bring the concept to town meeting. Andover is considering whether to put it on the town Meeting agenda for the spring. Salisbury filed for a DPU public hearing on 2/12/2016. Preliminary meetings have been held in Lawrence and Newbury.

#### 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. Still waiting for the committee required in the 2016 budget to resolve this issue to be called by ANF. It appears that the legislature has extended the report date for this working group to November of 2016. MVPC did receive a status letter from the retirement board notifying us that additional reimbursement payments have been accumulating but deferred any payments until it can be address "in a mutually agreeable manner".

#### 7. Contracts - None

#### 8. Comprehensive Planning Update

Mike Parquette, MVPC's Comprehensive Planning Program Manager reported on the following Comprehensive Planning activities.

**COMMUNITY COMPACT CABINET:** One of the Governor's first initiatives was creation of the "Community Compact Cabinet" which 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 across all executive secretariats and agencies, 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.

In our region, 10 municipalities have signed "community compacts". MVPC will work with these cities and towns to assist them and assist the state in advancing their "best practices" in the areas of job creation and retention, regionalization and shared services, and professional development and training.

**COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY MEETING:** On Monday, April 25 from 1:00-2:30 at Sal's Restaurant in Lawrence, a meeting will be held of the CEDS committee. The topic for the meeting is: "Why Invest in the Merrimack Valley". Speakers include Dennis DiZoglio, MVPC Executive Director; Salvatore Lupoli, CEO, Lupoli Companies in Lawrence; Neil Beswick, Transmedics Company in Andover; and Curt Clark, Southwick Company in Haverhill. Speakers will tell why they chose to locate or expand their business in the Merrimack Valley and what we as a region and state we need to do to keep businesses here.

## **VALLEY SUPPORT TEAM:**

**Methuen:** Methuen has decided to pursue a 40R District for the downtown, and MVPC assisted them with an application for funding through the PATH program to secure funds to complete the application and create the zoning for the district. The PATH grant was approved by DHCD and Methuen was awarded \$25,000. In the next few months we will complete the update to the housing section of Methuen's Master Plan and analyze their housing needs and conditions - a requirement for the 40R District application.

**Haverhill:** We have met with Haverhill and its' partners (NECC, Community Action, Inc., Whittier Vocational Technical High, & Workforce Investment Board) in their "Working Cities Partnership" effort addressing employment, education, and quality of life issues in the Washington Heights neighborhood. We have offered our resources and assistance if they are fortunate to receive the \$475,000 funding they are seeking.

**MERRIMACK VALLEY MEANS BUSINESS** - Heidi Murphy continues to improve the MVMB.biz website as she presented to you last month. Major revisions include: new report generator for the 160 properties for sale or lease showcased on the site; updated and enhanced community links; new business incentive tab; updated demographics and data; new "economic studies and initiatives" link; and updated "the valley" section of the website. Heidi is also writing a grant application to EDA to try and secure funds to market the website and the region in order to create and retain jobs in the Merrimack Valley. This initiative is also being done in conjunction with the "community compact" initiative described above.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT** - Heidi continues to develop and improve the "economic development toolkit" on the MVPC website. The goal is to have the toolkit be a resource not only our member communities, but hopefully for municipalities throughout the commonwealth. Instead of having to wade through and research numerous state agencies, the goal is to find everything at the MVPC.org website. It allows one-stop shopping for approved land-use related applications, bylaws, ordinances, economic development incentives, finance documents, etc. We urge the Commissioners to visit the website and offer comments and suggestions.

**DLTA - Just** a reminder that we have DLTA funds for 2016. If you have any potential projects please let us know. Most all projects involving regional services or planning for industrial/commercial growth or for housing development will qualify. DLTA funding is a tremendous asset to MVPC. The funds provided allow us to undertake activities for your communities we would not be able to do otherwise. If you have contact with your local state representatives, please impress upon them the importance of DLTA to your community and this agency.

## **MEETINGS:**

- April 4 - Staff met with Community Action, Inc., City of Haverhill, Haverhill Chamber and other "Working Cities Challenge" partners to discuss how MVPC may be able to assist the group in formulating a solid direction for their grant application, and to partner with them if the grant is received.
- April 7 - Lawrence - Planning for Infill Development workshop for the Arlington Neighborhood.
- April 7 - Town Administrators meeting to discuss "shared services" in relationship to Groveland's signed "community compact."

## **9. Environmental Program Update**

MVPC's Environmental Program Manager, Joe Cosgrove, reported on activities since the last meeting.

### **Region Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update:**

- MVPC and the 14 participating communities in the regional multi-hazard mitigation planning process received FEMA approval on April 18<sup>th</sup> for the Plan update. With an approved plan,

communities are eligible to apply for federal hazard mitigation grants to fund infrastructure capacity improvements, property acquisitions, structure elevations or emergency generators at critical facilities, all activities designed to reduce long-term risk of flooding or other hazard damage. MVPC is working with each of the communities to schedule formal adoption of the five-year plan by local Board of Selectmen, Councils and Mayors. With local adoption, the plan is valid for five years.

- The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency recently announced funding availability for Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant and Flood Mitigation Assistance Program. Deadline for communities to apply is May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

### **Stormwater Collaborative:**

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on April 13<sup>th</sup> issued the long awaited Final General Permit for Massachusetts communities in administering Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (referred to as MS4) under the federal Clean Air Act National Pollution Discharge Elimination System.

The new permit expands upon the first generation MS4 permit for Massachusetts cities and towns originally issued in 2003 as a five-year permit but has been extended since the original intended expiration date.

To give communities more time to plan and prepare budgets for the new requirements, EPA has delayed effective date of the new MS4 permit to July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

- MVPC will continue to work with member communities through the Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative, established in 2014, to prepare communities for permit compliance through development of regional training, education, public education programs as well as financing options review, planning and model bylaw templates and shared services and equipment.
- MVPC is co hosting EPA's northeast region information meeting on the MS4 permit scheduled for Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> from 8-10 A.M. at the Hartleb Technology Center on the Haverhill campus of Northern Essex Community College.
- In partnership with the Merrimack River Watershed Council and MassBays Program, MVPC submitted by March 25<sup>th</sup> deadline Section 604b Water Quality Management Planning funding for water quality monitoring program on tidal portion of the Merrimack River. Grant award announcements expected over summer.
- Stormwater Financing Workshop set with Mass. Rivers Alliance for Monday April 26<sup>th</sup> in Salem, MA.

### **MDPH/Mass. Association of Health Boards Mini-Grants:**

- Data report prepared for Methuen Downtown Walkability Assessment project. Group Meetings with stakeholders scheduled for:
  - Wed. April 27<sup>th</sup> @ 11:30 A.M.—Methuen Senior Center
  - Wed. April 27<sup>th</sup> @ 3:30 P.M. – Methuen Arlington Neighborhood Inc.
  - Wed. May 18<sup>th</sup> @ 6 P.M.—Nevins Library
- Agreement with MAHB executed on Rapid Health Impact Assessment pilot project of Newburyport Route 1 rotary redesign alternatives. Scoping session to be schedule (tent. May 4<sup>th</sup>) and community workshop planned for June.

### **Open Space Planning:**

- Staff attended Merrimac public meeting on Town's Open Space & Recreation Plan Update process March 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **NorthEast Energy Direct Natural Gas Pipeline:**

- Kinder Morgan announced this week that it was suspending activities on the natural gas pipeline project planned to include routing of lateral lines through Andover and Methuen in the Merrimack

Valley region. As of 4/21, the company's application with FERC has not been withdrawn and MVPC with other RPAs impacted will continue to monitor.

## **10. Transportation Report Update**

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

### **Merrimack Valley MPO (MVMPO)**

The next MVMPO Meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 at MVPC.

The MVMPO staff is accepting comments on the **Draft MVMPO Public Participation Plan (PPP)** through March 28<sup>th</sup>.

For the **proposed amendments to the MVMPO's FFYs 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**, the MVMPO staff has received requests from:

- the **City of Amesbury**, to use any available FFY 2016 MVMPO Target funds to make improvements to the **Route 110/Route 150 intersection**;
- MassDOT and the City of Haverhill, to look into using its available FFY 2016 target funds to pay for the increased estimated cost for the **Haverhill Main Street Corridor project**, and
- the **City of Lawrence**, to add an intersection to its new signal upgrade project.

MARPA met on March 10th in Sutton, MA where MassDOT provided all MPOs with Draft STIP funding targets for use in preparing their upcoming **FFYs 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Programs** as well as budget numbers to be used in preparing their **FFY 2017 Unified Planning Work Programs**. MVPC's Executive Director Dennis DiZoglio, Transportation Program Manager Tony Komornick, and Sr. Transportation Planner Todd Fontanella attended.

Tony attended the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **Rockingham Planning Commission MPO Technical Advisory Committee**.

### **Studies**

- **MVRTA Strategic Plan:** MVPC's Sr. Transportation Planner Betsy Goodrich and Tony Komornick are continuing work on updating the financial section of the document.
- Todd and Betsy are responding to comments received from the MVRTA on the **Draft MVRTA Title VI Update** report that was prepared by MVPC for the Authority in January.
- **MVRTA Route Wayfinding Signage:** MVPC's GIS Program Manager, Jerrard Whitten and Betsy are completing work on mapping MVMPO staff-recommended locations for fixed-route bus marker signs. These maps will be sent to the MVRTA for review and comment.
- **Route 114 and Route 133 corridors:** Todd is continuing work on assessing the potential for implementing transit service in these areas.

Tony met with two Newburyport City Councilors, the Chairman of the Newburyport Planning Board, and staff from the Newburyport Community Development Department on February 22<sup>nd</sup> to discuss options for **modifying/replacing the Route 1 Rotary in Newburyport**. Tony and MVPC's Transportation Engineer Jim Terlizzi have prepared traffic capacity analyses for two options for modifying the Rotary; 1) Creating a roundabout that has one-lane approaches for Route 1 NB and Route 1 SB, and 2) Creating three signals in the area and reopening Parker Street in front of the courthouse.

Tony and MVPC's Environmental Program Manager Joe Cosgrove have been working with Barry Keppard of MAPC to develop a framework for integrating a **Health Impact Assessment** into the planning process for both the redesign of the Route 1 Rotary in Newburyport and the possible redesign of **Route 1 north of this rotary**.

## Other

Todd reviewed 14 applications for funding that were submitted to **MassDOT** under **its FY17 Community Transit Grant Program**. One application (not reviewed by Todd) was submitted by an organization in the MVPC region, that being from the **Northeast Independent Living Program** to acquire a van to provide transportation services to its clients. Grant awards are tentatively scheduled for April or May 2016.

Todd completed an analysis of how the **MVRTA's existing fixed route bus schedule** would interface with the MBTA's proposed **Commuter Rail Operation Changes** that are scheduled for implementation in May 2016.

MVPC's Field Services Specialist Danny Ovalle is continuing to upload traffic count information to MassDOT's MS2 transportation management system website and is wrapping up work on preparing our **2015 Community Traffic Count reports**.

Danny collected peak period turning movement/pedestrian movement counts at the **Parker Street/Merrimack Street and the Parker Street/Salem Street intersections in Lawrence** as part of our traffic and safety study of these two locations.

Jim and Danny are working with Jerrard to set up an I-Tablet application that will be used to collect roadway and sidewalk condition data as part of the **Walkability Study for the City of Methuen's Proposed 40R District**.

Tony attended a meeting at the State House on March 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss options for improving pedestrian movement along and across **Route 114 near Merrimack College in North Andover**.

Jim has been contacting community DPW Directors/Highway Supervisors to get updated information on **Pavement Management** activities in the region.

## Technical Assistance

The Georgetown Board of Selectmen has approved submitting an application to MassDOT for instituting **Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusions** along roadways in the Searle Street area. This application was prepared for the Town by MVPC staff.

Tony and Betsy began preparing the **Draft Transportation Element of the Newbury Master Plan Update**. Tony also participated in the meetings of the **Newbury Board of Selectmen** (a hearing on a proposed parking lot on Plum Island) and the **Plum Island Study Committee**.

Jim and Tony will be meeting with City Engineer John Pettis and the engineer working for the developer of a parcel located on the east side of **Route 125 in Haverhill** just north of Haffner's filling station/car wash to discuss its potential traffic impacts and identify possible mitigation measures.

Jim is responding to comments received from **West Newbury** officials on MVPC's Concept Plan for a **proposed rooftop kayak/boat launch facility** that would be located off of Church Street near the Rocks Village Bridge.

In response to a request from the **Haverhill Police Department**, Danny collected vehicle/pedestrian/bicycle count data in support of locating a **crosswalk on Lawrence Street** near its intersection with Fountain Street.

The **City of Lawrence** has submitted a request for MVPC assistance in analyzing the potential traffic impacts of converting **Common Street** from one-way operation to two-way.

The **City of Amesbury** has asked MVPC to complete a signal warrant analysis for the **intersection of Elm Street/Clark Street/Railroad Avenue**.

## **Other Meetings and Outreach Efforts**

Staff continued participating in a variety of the region's groups on transportation-related topics, including:

- **Mass in Motion:** Betsy attended the March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting in Lawrence.
- **Lower Merrimack Valley and Seacoast Health Alliance:** Todd has begun working with Karen Kennedy of Holy Family Hospital to prepare for an April 2016 presentation to the Alliance on transportation.
- **Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee:** Tony attended this meeting, which included a discussion of options for replacing/modifying the Route 1 Rotary.
- **Haverhill Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program:** Betsy met with Andrew Herlihy, evaluator for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program.
- **Haverhill's Working Cities Team:** Todd and an MVRTA staff person attended the March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of this group. The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (FRB), the Living Cities Initiative (a group of 22 of the nation's largest philanthropies), the [Massachusetts Competitive Partnership](#) (a coalition of the state's largest employers), and the Commonwealth initiated the competitive Working Cities Grant program in 2013 and The City of Lawrence was a 2014 recipient. The Haverhill Working Cities team formed last year and is comprised of the City of Haverhill, Community Action, Inc. (CAI), Team Haverhill, NECC, the MVWIB, several area businesses, and others. This group is focused upon Haverhill's Mt. Washington neighborhood, and it received an FRB project design grant in October 2015 to design a program to work with local employers to determine skills sets and training opportunities for potential employees. The partners are also proposing to address other issues in the neighborhood including housing and transportation to work. The partners are preparing for a May 2016 submittal to the Fed for a more extensive grant. MVPC staff may be involved in one or more aspects of this project going forward.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

- Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Annual Conference (March 19<sup>th</sup> @ Holy Cross College, Worcester, MA);
- CMAQ Consultation Committee Meeting (March 29<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. @ State Transportation Building, Ten Park Plaza, Boston);
- MVMPO Meeting (March 30<sup>th</sup> @ 12:30, MVPC Offices - TBD);
- MARPA Transportation Program Managers (April 12, 2016 @ Worcester Union Station, 10:00 a.m.);
- DPW Directors Meeting (April 6<sup>th</sup> @ 8:30 a.m. at MVPC Offices);
- MVRTA Advisory Board (April 7<sup>th</sup> @ 9:00 a.m. at MVRTA Offices);
- MassDOT 'TIP Day' Project Meeting (April 14<sup>th</sup> @ State Transportation Building, Ten Park Plaza, Boston);

**11. Local and Regional Issues - None**

**12. Other – None**

**13. Adjourn**

**There was a motion and a second to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.**

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on April 21, 2016.

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Ed Ramsdell, Secretary