



MINUTES

Thursday – January 15, 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 |
| Rep-at-Large | Brad Buschur |

Staff

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

3. Adoption of December Meeting Minutes

Secretary Ramsdell reviewed the December minutes and declared them in order and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

Vote: Commissioner Snow made a motion to accept the December minutes and second by Commissioner Murphey. The December minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Warrant for December

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

Vote: Commissioner Murphey made a motion to approve the December warrant and second by Commissioner Weis. The December warrant was unanimously approved.

5. Chairman's Report

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

- MVPC completed the draft update of the Priority Growth Strategy which was approved by the Commission in 2009. It is five years old and it was decided that the plan should be consistent with the 2014 State Merrimack Valley Plan, which identifies State PPAs and PDAs. We held our meeting with the regional planners on January 8th to receive final comments. We held a public meeting at 6:00 this evening, which was advertised 10 days before the hearing. As per our enabling legislation voting of any regional plan "shall take place at a subsequent meeting from that at which it is proposed". So we will have adoption of the Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy update on the February Commission meeting agenda.
- As mentioned at previous Commission meetings MVPC will be conducting its Citizen Planner Training Program this year. We have included the notice and the course outline in your packets as a reminder. Please let your communities know of this useful training and encourage them to participate.
- Included in your packets is a copy of a new article regarding our work with West Newbury on a traffic issue where MVPC is providing technical assistance.

6. Executive Director's Report

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

Meetings with Community Leaders

- On January 7th I attended the MPO meeting and represented MVPC.
- On January 8th we held our quarterly meeting with the planners in the region. We reviewed the Priority Growth Strategy update and solicited comments and discussed the status of the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, Merrimack Valley Transportation Committee, the Stormwater Collaborative and the upcoming Citizen Planner Training Program.
- On January 29th I will be attending the next Transportation Performance and Asset Management Advisory Committee. You may recall I was appointed to the committee by Governor Patrick to represent the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) on this legislatively created Council

Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMMC)

- The January 7th DPW meetings focused on the new EPA stormwater draft regulations and our regional stormwater collaborative effort. Discussion included: comments on the draft regulations from MVPC and a draft training program outline and timetable.
- On January 13th the Mayors and Managers met. The focus of the meeting was a discussion with Ann Marie Casey, Executive Director of the North of Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau.
- ACE the selected Solar developer to sell net metering credits to our communities is on the wait list for the SREC II solar managed growth category of projects. To meet the communities' needs we have solicited offers from other solar developers. Borrego has made an offer and we are setting up a meeting to review it with the communities. Communities currently participating are: Amesbury, Newburyport, North Andover, Lawrence and Haverhill.
- Electric aggregation is moving forward with Newburyport, Haverhill and Methuen. No additional progress to report.
- 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. 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 has collectively hired a lawyer to help us make our case against the change. Corrective legislation has been drafted and I met with Representative Dempsey seeking his help on October 28th. Representative Dempsey will be coordinating a meeting with the Pension Board to discuss options.

7. Contracts – None

8. Comprehensive Planning Update

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

PLANNING AHEAD FOR GROWTH/PRIORITY GROWTH STRATEGY- MVPC has completed the five-year update/revisions to the *Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy - The Regional Land Use Plan for the Merrimack Valley Region* in order to reflect changes (such as new development, new zoning, revised PDA's or PPA's, or completed infrastructure projects) that have taken place since the PGS was completed in 2009 and also to reflect its introduction into the statewide Planning Ahead for Growth initiative. In spite of the economic recession, this region has accomplished some great things in the last 5 years and communities have advanced new initiatives and adopted new smart growth zoning which has been reflected in the update. Also, many road and bridge projects planned 5 years ago are now completed and new projects are planned or under construction. These changes are incorporated into the new Strategy. The updated Strategy has been available for review on our website and we have solicited comments, it has been the focus of a recent Planning Directors meeting, a Public Hearing has been held to obtain comments and questions, and we ask that the Commission adopt the Strategy this evening.

DLTA PROGRAM – MVPC continues to implement the "Planning Ahead for Growth/Planning Ahead for Housing" and "Regional Services" activities programmed with DLTA funds. We executed a new contract in October and executed a revised contract in December which recognizes a 1.5% reduction in funds. An outreach and solicitation for projects is enclosed in your packet.

VALLEY SUPPORT TEAM – Dennis DiZoglio and Mike Parquette are members of the Methuen Downtown Redevelopment committee and we can offer MVPC's expertise in economic development and transportation planning to assist in their efforts. Meetings have been held on October 10, October 24, October 31, and December 2. The Committee submitted an application to MassDevelopment for the Transformative Development Initiative. Unfortunately, Methuen was not one of the 10 cities chosen, although Haverhill's application was successful and they were chosen for this new initiative. Methuen may be able to utilize one of many programs aimed for "Gateway Cities" such as: 40R District, Cultural District, Housing Development Incentive Program, 43D for Housing, Tax Increment Financing, and Compact Neighborhood District. Mike has had conversations with Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) folks about assisting Methuen with these programs and they are excited to come and discuss the merits of each tool to the Downtown Redevelopment Committee.

We also have had conversations with West Newbury regarding updating their Housing Production Plan which expires in October and we have discussed with Haverhill completing a Housing Needs Analysis and a Housing Production Plan.

DHCD REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDY - MVPC completed a questionnaire titled: "Around the Gateways"- Regional Economic Development Study. It is a survey for RPA's with Gateway Cities. The survey centers around the economic development needs of the Gateway Cities compared to the economic development needs of surrounding communities. The survey asked for educational, demographic, and economic data as well as employment data and regionalization initiatives.

MEETINGS - Attended the Regional Planning Directors meeting on 1/8/15 to discuss the Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy Update. Attended the Merrimack Valley Mayors/Managers Coalition on 01/13/15. Tourism, Net Metering, and the MVMB website were the main topics of discussion. Attended a workshop on 1/14/15 sponsored by the Mass. Office of Business Development. The workshop was to discuss changes in guidelines to the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP).

AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION WEBINAR - On December 3, MVPC sponsored a webinar titled "The Pro Forma". The lecture examined the key elements of development pro formas and discussed how to review the analysis and check the assumptions being made. Despite the heavy rain, several people attended from a broad area of eastern Massachusetts.

9. Environmental Program Update

MVPC's Environmental Program Manager, Joe Cosgrove, report on the following Environmental Program activity:

Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative:

- EPA has extended comment period to Feb. 27th on the draft MS4 permit for Massachusetts communities. (Original comment deadline was Dec. 29th.)
- Series of Stormwater Management best practices training workshop have been scheduled for March/April 2015.

Workshop 1 – Parks and Recreation Staff

Tuesday, March 10, 2015 (8 - 10:00 AM)

Northern Essex Community College – Classroom

This workshop will focus on the proper use, storage, and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and organic wastes. We will review the importance of following manufacturer's instructions, and how to evaluate and adapt the lawn management strategies to protect water quality. We will review and discuss methods for placing signage and instituting effective trash containment and removal programs at public parks.

Workshop 2: Buildings, Facilities, Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance

Friday, March 20, 2015 (8 - 11:00 AM)

Andover Public Safety Building and Public Works Maintenance Yard

This workshop is aimed at all municipal staff members that are responsible for maintaining municipally owned or operated buildings or facilities where pollutants are stored and may be exposed to stormwater runoff. This group includes staff from public works, police, fire, municipal pools, municipal parking garages, municipal golf courses, or other relevant staff. We will review responsible storage and handling of petroleum products and other potential stormwater pollutants at these sites, and present guidance for developing a spill prevention, control, and countermeasure plan (SPCC) .

Workshop 3: Stormwater Management and Infrastructure Maintenance

Friday, April 10, 2015 (8 - 11:00 AM)

Northern Essex Community College – Classroom

This workshop is geared toward primarily public works staff people that are responsible for maintaining roadways, sidewalks and municipal stormwater management infrastructure. This workshop will provide guidance on recommended maintenance schedules for stormwater infrastructure such as cleaning catch basins, street sweeping, winter snow and ice maintenance, disposal of catch basin and street sweeping waste, stormwater treatment structures, drainage ditches and swales. We will provide a sample format for an operation and maintenance plan to assist in managing the maintenance of these facilities.

MA Coastal Erosion Commission:

The Massachusetts Coastal Erosion Commission last week issued its Draft Report and Recommendations to reduce the magnitude and frequency of coastal erosion and adverse impacts on property, infrastructure, public safety, beaches and dunes. The report is available at www.mass.gov/eea/erosion-commission-report. 90-day public comment period is underway with public information meetings throughout the Commonwealth in Feb. and March. The North Shore Region meeting is scheduled for March 9th 5-7 P.M. at Ipswich Town Hall.

Tennessee Gas (Kinder Morgan) Pipeline:

Kinder Morgan announced open house meeting schedule on most current route options for proposed gas pipeline mainline and lateral project. Schedule includes Andover meeting at Wyndham Hotel, 123 Old River Road on February 17 from 6 to 8 P.M.

MassBays National Estuary Program:

- Sandy Grant funding contract executed today Jan. 15th. Between National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and our grant lead agency National Wildlife Federation.
- Selection Committee reviewing marsh hydrodynamic modeling proposals has made tentative selection of team from Boston University, U.S. Geologic Survey and the Woods Hole Group.
- Cameras documenting bank erosion and green crab activity are being installed in the Great Marsh this week.

10. Transportation Report Update

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

Merrimack Valley MPO

The **MVMPO** met on January 7th and endorsed the ***Draft Human Service Transportation – Public Transportation Plan*** and the ***Draft Active Transportation for the Merrimack Valley*** as amended.

MPO members debated the status of the **Amesbury Powow Riverwalk Project – Phase I** project and reviewed what options might be available to the MPO in reprogramming FFY 2015 target funds if this project is not ready to be advertised for construction by the middle of September. Tony and Mary Kay are now identifying a range of options that could be considered by the MPO should this occur.

The next meeting of the MVMPO is scheduled for January 28th.

Studies, Analyses & Plans

Todd Fontanella and Betsy Goodrich spent time incorporating the comments received during the public review period on the Human Service Plan and the Active Transportation Plan, respectively, to create the final draft versions of these documents that were approved by the MPO at its January 7th meeting.

Related to the **Regional Transportation Plan**, Betsy has 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.

Tony and Betsy created a table that shows '**Crash Cluster**' locations in the **Merrimack Valley** region for the years 2010-2012 as identified by MassDOT that also identifies what actions have been taken by either MassDOT, MVPC or local communities to address traffic and safety conditions at these locations.

Danny Ovalle and Todd completed work on recoding the location of selected crashes from the 2012 MassDOT/Registry of Motor Vehicle crash database for the region. GIS staff began to develop a comprehensive list that will identify the number and type of crashes that took place in the Valley in 2010–2012 by location.

Todd created a table that tracked the number of bridges in the region that were classified by MassDOT as being Structurally Deficient and Functionally Obsolete for the years 2000 – 2014 to assist in the development of a **Bridge Performance Target** that could be used in the RTP.

MVPC hosted a meeting of the **Merrimack Valley Transportation Committee (MVTC)** yesterday where the information described above was presented and discussed. In addition, the MVTC established the **Nondiscrimination Working Group**, which will provide input to MVPC and the MPO in tailoring outreach efforts to the region's low-income, minority, and other 'at risk' population groups.

Other

Tony attended the January 8th meeting of the **Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee**. At the meeting, the City Engineer presented alternative concept plans for the improvements recommended in MVPC's **Low Street/Bashaw Way Intersection Study**.

Tony also worked with the Committee and the MVRTA in developing a scope of services for the Traffic Impact Study that will be included as part of the design of the **Newburyport Intermodal Parking Facility** that is proposed to be located on Titcomb Street near City Hall. The MVRTA has released an RFP for this design effort.

Todd attended a meeting of the **Merrimack Valley Regional Coordinating Council** that was held earlier today at the MVRTA Offices. The focus of this meeting was review how MVRTA staff could provide travel training to groups that operate transit services in the region and are seeking this type of assistance.

Transportation staff has completed efforts to editing project data contained in our GIS ESRI transportation data layers using the new **GIS-based tool** developed by Jerrard, Steve and Kelsey.

Betsy met with planners as **Upper Merrimack Valley Planners Group** in North Andover on January 12th.

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

Tony completed a memo that summarized the findings of his analysis of parking data collected by volunteers as part of the **North Andover Downtown Parking Study** that includes a section of Main Street and the Municipal Lot behind Town Hall. The study showed that when the Town's Community Development office moves from 1600 Osgood Landing into Town Hall in the coming months, it will exhaust any available capacity in the Municipal Lot and lead to an increase in the demand for on-street spaces near Town Hall along Main Street and First Street.

Jim completed his analysis of traffic and safety conditions at the **Moulton Street/Main Street/South Street intersection in West Newbury** and submitted a report outlining his findings and recommendations to the West Newbury Board of Selectmen. Jim appeared before the Board at their meeting on December 29th to discuss this matter in greater detail.

Tony met with Mayor Rivera and Community Development Director Theresa Park on December 29th to discuss the availability of funding in the current TIP to program the construction of the **Park Street/Lawrence Street intersection project**.

11. Local and Regional Issues

12. Other - None

13. Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Murphey. Meeting adjourned at 8:12pm.

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on January 15, 2015.

Ed Ramsdell, Secretary