



MINUTES

Thursday – June 15, 2017

- 1. Call to Order** - Chairman Lavoie 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

Amesbury	Robert Lavoie, Chairman
Andover	Lisa Schwarz
Georgetown	John Cashell
Groveland	Robert Arakelian
Haverhill	April Derboghosian
Lawrence	Theresa Park
Methuen	Kevin Hagerty
Newbury	John Weis
Newburyport	Ed Ramsdell, Secretary
Rowley	Bob Snow, Treasurer
Salisbury	Lou Masiello
West Newbury	Brian Murphey

Staff

Karen Conard, Executive Director
Joe Cosgrove, Environmental Program Manager
Tony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager
Nancy Lavallee, Office Administrator

3. Adoption of May Meeting Minutes

The minutes were reviewed and recommended for adoption.

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Ramsdell and second by Commissioner Cashell to approve the May meeting minutes. The Mayminutes were unanimously approved.

4. Adoption of May Warrant

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

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Weis. TheMay warrant was unanimously approved.

5. Chairman's Report

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

- It is great to learn of the EPA's recent award of \$300,000 to be used for assessment activities throughout the region. This is another feather in our cap here, and I know that Joe already has a pipeline of deals ready to take advantage of this new funding source. Since we will not meet again until September, I would like to take a vote tonight to authorize Karen to execute the contract with the U.S. EPA, assuming there is the opportunity to do that sometime this summer as anticipated.

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Murphey and second by Commissioner Snow to authorize MVPC's Executive Director Karen Sawyer to execute the EPA contract (\$300,000) with the U.S. EPA, assuming there is the opportunity to do that sometime this summer as anticipated... The motion was unanimously approved.

- I know that in terms of the FY 2018 state budget, the matter of DLTA is once again in a precarious situation. The Governor's and House budget both funded this critical program, while the Senate zeroed it out completely. It currently is a matter that is included in the debate performed by the Conference Committee. We await word from our legislative delegation. Karen has reached out and directly communicated with House Ways & Means Chairman Brian Dempsey on this issue, and has also contacted the staff in every member of our delegation to stress the importance of DLTA inclusion at the full House figure of \$2.8 million.
- The organization is doing something this evening that as far as I know has never been done! We will be working with a strategic planning consultant, Ms. Liz O'Connor, Principal of Strategy Matters (welcome Liz) to go through an exercise that will help inform the visioning and the planning efforts of MVPC for the next several years. This is truly our chance as Commissioners to speak freely and to give our honest opinions about what we like and perhaps don't like, and what we'd like to see this wonderful place tackle moving forward.

6. Executive Director

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

Meetings with Community Leaders

- Attended the Smart Growth Alliance annual conference in Worcester and attended a great workshop on different housing plans and efforts in Williamstown, Natick, Concord and Devens
- Attended the May MARPA meeting with Jen Dunlap. Topics discussed included MAPC's new Arts and Culture Planning Practice and Arts and Planning Toolkit (looking to additional RPA partners), NADO Executive Director Joe McKinney and a MassMoves update. Internal discussion took place at length about the FY18 state budget status, concern with Community Compact Cabinet (CCC) and DLTA funding and planning for the upcoming fall statewide conference on Regionalization – Best Practices, Efficiency and CCC.
- Attended the May MPO Meeting, at which the draft 2018-2022 TIP was voted and approved
- Hosted and led the MVPC staff in conducting the first Regional Open House event at Northern Essex Community College's Lawrence Campus. Over 50 people from across the region attended and participated in our interactive, table-led activities. Keynote speaker was MA Housing Partnership's Executive Director Clark Ziegler.
- Led the MVMMC meeting on May 25th at North Andover Town Hall. Topics included a branding and marketing update, a Regional Housing Plan update and a conversation about potential future speakers.
- Attended the May monthly Performance and Asset Management Advisory Council meeting in Boston

- Attended the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce Annual State of the City Breakfast, with guest speakers Mayor Fiorentini and his department heads
- Guest speaker at the Annual Lawrence Industrial Park Association Meeting. Great group of over 40 business leaders. Spoke with Betsy and Tony about the organization in general and how we can help coordinate transit services to better meet the needs of the park employers and employees. MVRTA's Joe Costanzo was there to echo our sentiments.
- At our monthly staff meeting, topics discussed included the development of "at the ready" factoids about our region and our communities (i.e. CPA communities, Green communities, who's achieved 10% affordable housing, number of Cultural Districts, etc.
- Interviewed 3 branding/marketing firms along with Jerrard Whitten, Mike Parquette and Eric Kfoury, Economic/Community Director for the Town of North Andover in furtherance of our MV regional branding work. Recommending Primary Design of Haverhill at the June 21st MVMMC.
- Hosted the Monthly DPW Directors Meeting –topics included ADA transition plans, the FY18-22 regional TIP, MS4 updates and schedule, municipal vulnerability preparedness program. We agreed to skip the July monthly meeting and resume business in August, unless a need for a meeting arises.
- Met with Groveland Finance Director Denise Dembkoski to discuss and plan for the June 29th Community Housing Needs Presentation
- Hosted the quarterly Planners luncheon meeting. Topics discussed included MIMAP 2.0 and a Pictometry update from Jerrard and Steve Lopez, and a presentation by Strategy Matters CEO Liz O'Connor about strategic planning and visioning for MVPC (staff were not present for this portion).
- Visited the office of Primary Design, met with President John Schroeder and VP Annaliza Nieve to discuss a scope of services for the MVMMC branding effort.
- Attended the Working Group Retirement Contribution meeting at the Executive Office of Administration & Finance in Boston with Jen Dunlap. Please see notes below for details.
- Attended the weekly meeting of the Haverhill Toolkit project, hosted by Bill Pillsbury and including Office of Planning and Urban Affairs and Greater Haverhill Foundation along with TDI Fellow Noah Koretz. The project involves preparation of a developer's kit to entice the redevelopment of the municipally owned area within Haverhill's TDI District into a large mixed-use project, adjacent to which the City plans to erect a parking garage. The City hopes to put this proposal out this summer/fall.
- Joined a conference call with Mike and members of the Central MA Regional Planning Commission to explore establishing a regular meeting schedule of all 13 RPAs to discuss regionalization and best practices. Considering ever limited resources and in recognition of the Baker-Polito push with the Community Compact Cabinet and Efficiency & Regionalization funding, this is a timely matter and one in which we are excited to participate. The first meeting is scheduled for late July.
- Held the Lawrence Community Housing Needs Assessment meeting in conjunction with the City's Housing Staff. Well attended, with a great cross-section of representation (non-profits, housing advocates, developers, realtors, Housing Authority).
- Met with City of Haverhill staff to plan their July 18th Community Housing Needs Assessment with Mike and Angie.
- Met with the Newbury Board of Selectmen to explain/introduce the subject of our Regional Housing Plan, which will tee up nicely our Community Housing Needs Assessment there next week. In attendance were Commissioner John Weis, Planner Martha Taylor, DPW Staff and Mike.
- Met with North Andover staff to plan their June 27th Community Housing Needs Assessment with Angie.
- Met with Georgetown Town Administrator Mike Farrell and Commissioner/Planner John Cashell to discuss a variety of topics.
- Panelist at the MA Association of Planning Directors Conference in Pittsfield – Recovering Planners – Moving on after serving as Planner

Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMMC)

- Held the monthly DPW Directors meeting – see above
- Planning for a June 21st MVMMC meeting, hosted by Mayor Donna Holaday at the Newburyport Senior/Community Center. Topics discussed included the MV branding effort and planning for a session re: stormwater management in conjunction with the Town Administrators and DPW Directors

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 Legislative Working Group on Non-State Agency Retirement Contributions met on June 8th. Jen and I were in attendance along with one other affected RPA representative (Old Colony), representatives of the other agencies affected, Nick Favorito of the State Retirement Board, and two A&F Representatives. A&F and the Group are charged with putting forth a draft recommendation by December for contributing to the system to come back into compliance - as an alternative to the pay-as-you-go outrageous bills that they have sent in recent years - that is implementable, agreeable and understandable to the affected groups.

A&F and the Retirement Board proposed a flat rate contribution as food for thought of approximately \$30,000 (much improved from previous amounts) but still very taxing on our unique budget constraints. Jen and I had the opportunity to explain how we are funded, how the overhead rate works, and the fact that our major funding sources (FTA, EPA, DLTA, and EDA) have limitations regarding administrative expenditures. The State appeared to have heard us and we feel they have a much better understanding of the difficulties we have making even small payments. They encouraged us as RPAs to discuss options as a group and find a contribution scenario that would be reasonable, workable and implementable, but also financially responsible.

The good news is that we have time. The State has decided at least preliminarily to treat RPAs and the other groups separately, and the State seems open to hearing more from us. We are scheduled to meet individually with Nick Favorito and A&F on July 21st at the MARPA meeting to present further information educating them on our uniqueness and fiscal challenges. The next meeting of the working group is set for September 7th.

7. Contracts

- Newburyport – A signed contract for the operation of their mobile sewer applications (PI and Mainland) for FY2018 and there is no match for \$3,000.
- Strategy Matters – To Facilitate MVPC's strategic Visioning - \$3,700
- JM Goldson – To produce data for the Housing Plan - \$24,000

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

8. Guest Speaker – Liz O’Connor, Strategy Matters

MVPC Staff Members were asked to leave the room while Ms. O’Connor met with Commissioners to discuss MVPC operations.

9. Transportation Report Update

Mr. Tony 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 May.

Merrimack Valley MPO (MVMPO)

The Merrimack Valley MPO met on May 24th and endorsed the following:

- MVMPO FFYs 2018-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
- Amendments to the MVMPO’s FFYs 2017-2021 TIP;
- MVMPO FFY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program;
- Proposed Critical Urban Freight Corridor in Andover and Lawrence.

MVPC has been working with staff from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration to prepare for and organize the **MVMPO’s Planning Certification Review**, which will take place on July 11th.

MPO-Related

Tony attended the May 25th meeting of the **Rockingham Planning Commission MPO’s Technical Advisory Committee**.

Tony, Mary Kay and Betsy Goodrich met with staff from MassDOT’s Office of Transportation Planning on June 9th to discuss the MVMPO’s progress in addressing the topics that must be included in the region’s upcoming **Title VI Plan**.

Studies

Mary Kay has begun to update the **MVMPO’s National Highway System Intermodal Facilities Report**, which was originally completed in 2011. This study looks at the condition of and adequacy of access to the major highways in the region from intermodal facilities such as park and ride lots, transit stations, and freight terminals.

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

Jim and Danny Ovalle collected AM and PM Peak period turning movement counts at the **intersection of Pelham Street/Osgood Street/Railroad Street/Lowell Street in Methuen** in support of the Road Safety Audit for that location.

Danny continued to collect Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) volume counts around the region.

Other

Tony attended the **Program Managers Performance Management Subcommittee** meeting that was held in Boston on June 6th. MassDOT presented information that can be used by the state and the MPOs to establish their Safety Performance Management targets, as required under federal planning regulations.

Tony attended the June 8th meeting of the **Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee**. Discussions centered around analyzing the traffic impacts of the proposed West End Development and Newburyport Parking Center projects and assessing how the City should implement its proposed 25 MPH speed limit.

Betsy and Tony prepared and submitted budgets for our next **Transit Planning contract with MassDOT**, which will go into effect on April 1, 2018.

Staff continued to collect **National Transit Database ridership counts** for the MVRTA's fixed route bus system. This year-long effort will wind up in July.

Betsy attended the **Mount Washington Alliance** meeting on June 15th, discussing options for improving safe pedestrian travel in the Mount Washington Neighborhood area.

Betsy met with Jennifer Chesnulovitch of the International Institute of New England and Chris Curry of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) to discuss **job access issues to employment areas in and around the MVPC/NMCOG regions**.

Betsy and Danny reviewed bicycle and pedestrian activity at **Washington Square in Haverhill** to assist the City in identifying possible improvements such as relocating or adding crosswalks, building sidewalk 'bump outs' or other measures that would improve bicycle and pedestrian travel through this busy area. Tony has been working with and the **Newbury Master Plan Committee** in revising the Goals and Objectives to be included in the Transportation Element of the update to this document, which is to be completed later this year.

Betsy made a presentation at the June 6th meeting of the **Lawrence Industrial Park Association** on how the MVPC assists the City in improving roadway and transit access to the area.

Staff provided support at the MVPC's **Regional Open House** that was held at NECCO's Lawrence Campus on May 24th, and participated in the June 7th **Regional Planners Meeting**, providing an update on the MVMPO's FFYs 2018-2022 TIP.

Upcoming Meetings

- Merrimack Valley MPO Planning Certification Review Public Meeting: July 11th – 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. @ 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 April.

MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL HOUSING PLAN: Using funds from the CCC program, MassHousing, and DLTA, MVPC is in the process of developing a Regional Housing Plan for the Merrimack Valley. The goal for the Plan is to develop a strategy for meeting the housing needs of today and tomorrow's residents in the region. Using current data, population projections, and state-of-the-art mapping, MVPC will work collaboratively with each community in the region to understand their housing needs, set goals, and craft appropriate, tailored strategies that address their needs over the next five years. MVPC has developed a three-tiered process to develop the Regional Housing Plan: Public Engagement, Align with Existing Planning Efforts, and Information Gathering. Each of these steps will help to ensure that this plan is comprehensive, inclusive, and respectful of existing local, regional and statewide planning efforts. This Plan is a "first of a kind", and has the potential to be used as a model for



other RPAs. Over the next several months, there will be numerous opportunities for people to participate in developing the Housing Plan. In addition to in-person events in the region's communities, and regional open houses, we have partnered with coUrbanize to launch a virtual engagement tool that can be accessed anytime, anywhere (including your PC,

Mac, or mobile device) to provide ideas for this project. The first [Regional Open House](#) was on **May 24th at NECC** in Lawrence. The Open House focused on the housing needs in the Merrimack Valley. Clark Ziegler, Executive Director of MassHousing Partnership, was the keynote speaker and presented some interesting data. The meeting also included interactive booths, baseline information about Merrimack Valley's demographics, and lively discussions about the housing issues facing residents in the Valley.

Over the next few weeks, we have meetings and workshops in Newbury, Boxford, North Andover, Salisbury, Groveland, Amesbury, Rowley, Methuen, and Haverhill.

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS): By June 30th, MVPC will submit the CEDS annual update to the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The update will highlight initiatives from the past year to support the Commission-approved five-year CEDS such as our Valley Support Team, continued regional Brownfields assistance, continuing and improving our Merrimack Valley Means Business marketing effort, and new Census data from the latest American Community Survey. A "Resilience Component" is now a required part of the CEDS and its annual update. Next year our Five-Year CEDS is due and we have begun the planning process for this important document. The CEDS committee has been expanded and met on April 27th with a robust discussion regarding workforce skills development; community based innovation strategies, emerging economic development issues in the Valley, and ended with a roundtable session gathering members' thoughts and ideas as to what the economy of the Valley is like five years from now. Many interesting ideas emerged. The next CEDS meeting is scheduled for June 22 at the new Harbor Place in downtown Haverhill. The focus of the meeting will be on the "manufacturing" industry in the Merrimack Valley.

EDA PARTNERSHIP PLANNING APPLICATION –On May 17, we received our annual invite to submit the 2nd year application of our 2016 three year EDA Partnership Planning Grant. The application was due on June 5th and this funding provides the salary for a portion of the Economic Development Planner position. The application was successfully submitted on June 1st.

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. 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 completed our work with [Georgetown](#) on a Complete Streets policy; 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.

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 to solicit their opinion and advice. The tagline and logo was also presented to the "roundtable" committee. All parties agreed on a tagline and logo. We solicited and received bids to develop a marketing campaign to launch the new tagline and logo and to re-work and update the mvmb.biz website. A committee comprised of MVPC staff and representatives from North Andover, Salisbury, and Newburyport was formed to interview the three finalists. A firm has been chosen by the committee and this firm will make a presentation to the MVMMC on June 21.

EDA APPLICATION: MVPC partnered 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. We await word from EDA on the success of the application submitted.

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. The application was partially funded and we will begin implementation in the coming months.

11. Environmental Program Update

Environmental Program Manager Joe Cosgrove reported on activities since the last meeting in May.

Brownfields Program:

- EPA announced award of a \$300,000 Brownfields Assessment grant to MVPC. The grant will be used to conduct environmental site testing and develop remediation plans at blighted properties that have been obstacles to community revitalization efforts.

The regional award is one of 279 grants totaling \$56.8 million in Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup funding made by EPA to 172 communities & organizations across the country. The Assessment funds will be used to help prioritize sites for environmental remediation financed by the MVPC Merrimack Valley Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund that was recapitalized with EPA funding last year. In addition to the MVPC award, EPA also provided the City of Lawrence \$550,000 in Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup funding for remediation at the former Tombarello site on Marston Street.

- MVPC Brownfields Program is working with the Town of Merrimac on two-phased plan for cleanup of the Coastal Metals site. The first phase will involve demolition of the site's dilapidated building that includes asbestos and lead hazards; subsequent phase will focus on subsurface cleanup. Application is pending from the Town for gap financing through the MVPC Revolving Loan Program. Public meeting and public comment period on analysis of cleanup alternatives is planned for July.
- Staff continues to work with City of Newburyport on planned cleanup at the Clipper City Rail Trail. Subgrant agreement and community outreach plans are being prepared with required public meeting expected this summer.

Green Communities:

- The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs announced additional Green Communities Municipal Energy Technical Assistance grant funding award to MVPC in the amount of \$45,000 for the coming fiscal year. \$5,000 is available for administrative support to existing Green Communities and up to \$7,500 is available for communities seeking designation in upcoming rounds. MOUs for technical assistance through the program have been executed with Lawrence, Haverhill, Methuen and Newbury as well as with existing designated Green Communities of North Andover, Salisbury and West Newbury.

Stormwater Collaborative:

- The DPW Collaborative met June 7th and discussed ADA plans and efforts preparing for new MS4 permit scheduled to become effective July 1st. Each city and town is required by Sept. 29th to file with EPA and MassDEP Notices of Intent providing outline of municipal tasks to implement the permit requirements.

- The Annual State of the Waters Workshop sponsored by Merrimack River Watershed Council will be held Friday, June 16th in Merrimack, NH. Joe Cosgrove will participate in panel on regional stormwater management planning.

Region Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning/Climate Change Adaptation:

- Date and Location for Chemical Safety and Community Resilience Training set for October 18th at Northern Essex Community College. Workshop is geared specifically to emergency responders and municipal facility managers. This will be first of two trainings through program funded by a \$10,000 grant to MVPC from the Mass. Office of Technical Assistance. Last week staff distributed a survey on chemical storage practices and hazard mitigation planning to municipal and regional officials. Responses are coming in and due by the end of June.
- The Mass. Dept. of Ecological Restoration will be issuing an RFR on June 23rd for its Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program. A total of \$1,050,000 is available to cities and towns to replace undersized and/or failing culverts with new infrastructure built and sized to recently enacted Mass. Stream Crossing design standards.

Great Marsh Management:

- Several Green Crab marketing events this past month
 - Tasting at Woodman's Restaurant in Essex
 - Tasting at Tonno in Gloucester for Senator Tarr and Rep Hill
 - Green Crab culinary attributes presentation for Ipswich/Rowley Rotary
- May monthly Eelgrass restoration plantings during negative tides
- Kickoff meeting of the Marsh Drainage and Impoundment Task Force
- High level GPS and bank monitoring of most of the 24 Marsh Edge Erosion sites in Essex Bay and Plum Island Sound
- Debut airing on PBS of *Ask This Old House* Rain Garden episode with Peter and Salisbury homeowner
- Began the annual control of perennial pepperweed in the Merrimack River
- Finalization of Greenscapes NOI deliverables for member Greenscapes North Shore communities
- Annual meeting of Great Marsh Revitalization Task Force will be Friday morning, June 16th 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.



12. Local and Regional Issues - None

13. Other

14. Adjourn

There was a motion by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Murphey to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:37p.m.

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on June 15, 2017.

Ed Ramsdell, Secretary