



MINUTES

Thursday – March 16, 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
Boxford	Jim Barnes
Georgetown	John Cashell
Haverhill	April Derboghosian
Lawrence	Theresa Park
Methuen	Kevin Hagerty
Newbury	John Weis
Newburyport	Ed Ramsdell, Secretary
Rowley	Bob Snow, Treasurer
West Newbury	Brian Murphey
Rep at Large	Brad Buschur

Staff

Karen Conard, Executive Director
Joe Cosgrove, Environmental Program Manager
Mike Parquette, Comprehensive Planning Program Manager
Tony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager
Betsy Goodrich, Sr. Transportation Planner
Jen Dunlap, Finance Administrator
Nancy Lavallee, Office Administrator

3. Adoption of February Meeting Minutes

The minutes were reviewed and recommended for adoption.

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Ramsdell and second by Commissioner Hagerty. The February minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Warrants

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 Weis. The February warrant was unanimously approved.

5. Chairman's Report

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

- On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Lavoie officially welcomed John Cashell, Town Planner for the Town of Georgetown, as the Commissioner representing Georgetown. John most recently served as the Planner for the Town of Hudson, NH.
- Chairman Lavoie reported that Rick Byers of North Andover has recently been reappointed and will be with us again starting with the April Commission meeting.
- Chairman Lavoie noted to the group that the MVPC Annual Report is not yet out! Due to the transition, staff has been working to complete not only a standard, hard copy version such as the one you've been used to receiving ALONG WITH a digital version known in the industry as a "storymap." Staff plans to unveil this new, online feature for at our April Commission meeting, with a presentation from GIS technician Kelsey Quinlan.
- Mr. Lavoie noted that he is excited to see tonight's Merrimack Valley Branding Campaign presentation this evening, which he knows is of particular interest to the Mayors and Managers Coalition.

6. Executive Director

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

Meetings with Community Leaders

- Attended the Merrimack River Beach Alliance meeting at PITA Hall
- Attended the monthly MPO meeting
- Collaborated with MAPC and HCOG along with Meister Consultants Group, Inc. to submit a grant application for the MA Clean Energy Center's Solar Thermal Challenge
- Attended MVCC event showcasing available commercial space at 20 Computer Drive, Haverhill
- Hosted the annual Legislative Caucus meeting – Senators L'Italien and Tarr, Representatives Moran, Kelcourse, Campbell and Commissioners Park and Schwarz attended
- Attended the Lawrence Partnership Board Meeting with guest speaker UMass Chairman Marty Meehan
- Advanced the Regional Housing Production Plan by hosting and presenting at the Quarterly Planners Luncheon, along with DHCD's Phil DeMartino. Other topics presented at the luncheon included updates to the TIP and UPWP from Tony Komornick and updates on MIMAP 2.0 and Pictometry from Jerrard Whitten.
- Met with Mayor Ken Gray to discuss what MVPC has accomplished recently in Amesbury and talk about future opportunities
- Hosted the monthly DPW Directors/Stormwater Collaborative meeting
- Met with Georgetown's new Town Planner, John Cashell (who will join us as Commissioner)
- Participated in a webinar (along with Betsy Goodrich, Kelsey Quinlan and Mike Parquette) relative to Placemaking
- Attended the MVCC State Senate Breakfast
- Visited DesignWerkes (custom fabricator of engine parts for hybrid vehicle) in Amesbury along with Jerrard Whitten, Bill Scott of Amesbury and MassDevelopment's Wendy O'Malley to discuss the use of PACE (property assessed clean energy) financing
- Met with Bob DeFusco relative to requests from the Town of Groveland and others about assistance with procurement efforts
- Met with Noah Koretz and staff to discuss ways to help establish the Haverhill Partnership small business loan program (similar to the Lawrence Partnership format)
- Attended the Link House annual St. Patrick's Day fundraiser, and witnessed first-hand the singing of Mayors Gray and Holaday, Town Manager Neil Harrington and Representatives Kelcourse and Mirra

- Met with MassDOT's Jack Moran to discuss taking Dennis's place on the Performance & Asset Management Council
- Anyone attending the March 18 CTPC training sessions?

Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMMC)

- We held the monthly DPW Directors meetings in March and continued to discuss the MS4 permit. MA Coastal Zone Management representatives were on hand to discuss the upcoming grant opportunities for Coastal Pollution Remediation and Water Quality Management Planning
- The Merrimack Valley Mayors and Managers Coalition meeting will meet on March 21st at Methuen City Hall. The agenda for the meeting will include an update on the regional branding effort and a presentation by Clean River Project's Rocky Morrison

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 the Executive Director of CMRPC to represent them on the committee required in the 2016 budget to resolve this issue. UPDATE: Meeting set for March 24th.

7. Contracts

- Amesbury – Annual Parcel Mapping - \$\$2,500 plus the use of 21 hours of LTA time
- Georgetown – Executive Work Scope Agreement with the Town of Georgetown in the amount of \$18,000. MVPC will prepare Open Space land linkage analysis that will include parcel mapping inventory and prioritization for trail connections.
- Georgetown – Annual Parcel update - \$1,300 (plus 14 hours of LTA)
- Newburyport – Annual Parcel Mapping and MIMAP 2.0 upgrade - \$6,000 (No MVPC Match Required)
- West Newbury – Execute Work Scope Agreement - \$4,000 to provide assistance to the Town in development of the Town's Stormwater Management mobile application and in preparation of the Town's MS4 compliance Notice of Intent filing.
- Rowley – Annual Parcel Mapping/Annual MIMAP - \$2,800
- Groundwork Lawrence – Execute agreement to expend up to \$20,000 to provide community outreach and translation assistance in implementation of the MVPC Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Program. (Funding through FY16 RLF funding award from EPA to MVPC)

Vote: Commissioner Weis made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned contracts as presented. Commissioner Ramsdell seconded the motion. The contracts were approved. Rep at Large Brad Buschur abstained.

8. 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 February.

The Merrimack Valley MPO met on February 22nd. Key discussion 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.

Staff is taking steps to secure CMAQ funding for **Amesbury's Elm Street Reconstruction project**.

MVPC's Tony Komornick and Mary Kay Beninati met with Connie Raphael of MassDOT District 4 to update the MVMPO's **Transportation Evaluation Criteria project scores** (see attachment).

MVPC has received the following requests for **traffic and/or safety studies** to be included in the FFY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program:

- Traffic study of **Route 125/Route 125 Connector Intersection** in Haverhill;
- Road Safety Audit of **Railroad Avenue/River Street/Moulton Street/Washington area** in Haverhill;
- Road Safety Audit of **I-93/I-495 Interchange** in Andover;
- Road Safety Audit of **Route 28/Essex Street Intersection** in Lawrence, and
- Road Safety Audit of **Route 28/Lowell Street Intersection** in Lawrence.

The next meeting of the Merrimack Valley MPO will be held on March 22nd.

Studies

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

Other

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

Staff is developing draft list of **Critical Urban and Rural Freight Corridor segments** in the region for submission to MassDOT. 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.

MVPC's Betsy Goodrich participated in the **Merrimack Valley TMA's strategic planning meeting**.

Betsy also participated in **MassDOT's Statewide Pedestrian Plan meeting**.

Completed **review of the MVRTA's ADA service** from Jan-Jun 2016.

Completed **review of the MVRTA's Equal Employment Opportunity program**.

MVPC along with all the other RPAs has partnered with MAPC to offer our communities **discounts on bicycle parking**. Feel free to contact Betsy if you'd like additional information.

MVPC's Danny Ovalle is completing work on the **Community Traffic Counting Summary reports**.

Tony attended the **Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee** meeting. A key item of discussion was how the City might proceed with the possible implementation of a 25 MPH speed limit (e.g., on selected roads, city-wide, etc.).

Tony met with local officials and interested citizens to discuss options for improving **bicycle and pedestrian access to and along Route 114 in Lawrence and North Andover**.

Reviewed updated **statewide bridge list** and provided bridge list information to **Congresswoman Tsongas's** office.

Assisting the **City of Haverhill with their ADA ramp project** that was initiated through the bicycle and pedestrian safety program. The project was in jeopardy of being dropped this year due to problems encountered by the MassDOT, but which had not been communicated to the City in a timely fashion. Through quick action, the City has continued to pursue the project. MVPC continues to monitor progress and advocate for the City.

Technical Assistance

MVPC completed its analysis of vehicle turning movement, pedestrian/bicycle and Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) counts in and around the **Loring Street/Salem Street intersection in Lawrence**. The City requested that MVPC analyze this intersection as part of their effort to change the signal from flashing to multiphase operation.

Upcoming Meetings

- Mass Moves Transportation Workshop: March 21st – 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. @ Ipswich Ale Brewer’s Table.
- Merrimack Valley MPO Meeting: March 22nd – 12Noon @MVPC Offices.
- Georgetown Branch Trail Working Group Meeting: March 22nd – 7:00 p.m. @ MVPC Offices;
- Lawrence Mayor’s Health Task Force Working Group Meeting: March 29th – 10 a.m. at YMCA, and
- CMAQ Consultation Committee Meeting: April 12th – 10:00 a.m. @ Office of Transportation Planning Offices in the Transportation Building

9. Comprehensive Planning Update

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

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, which has the potential to be used as a model for other RPA’s. Staff has met several times to discuss this initiative, and the first “public” open house discussion will be on May 24th. Also, MVPC will be partnering with Salem State University students to do much of the data collection which 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 DLTA 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 which 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. Logo’s and taglines weredeveloped 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 12th. 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.

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.

DLTA: As reported last month, DLTA was in jeopardy of not being funded this year, but at the last minute it was approved. Funds were wired to our account 2 weeks ago. Much later than usual, but nice to have them in place.

MEETINGS:

- February 17th – MARPA conference call meeting
- February 22nd – Meister Group to discuss MassCEC Solar Thermal Challenge proposal
- February 24th – Annual Legislative Caucus to discuss DLTA, CCC, MS4, marketing project, Housing Plan, Transportation priorities, Brownfields, and other Legislative initiatives and interests
- March 1st – Planning Directors meeting to discuss the regional HPP and other topics
- March 2nd – Webinar on placemaking
- March 7th – OTA Chemical Safety Project meeting with Karen, Joe, Angie, Jerrard
- March 10th – Noah, Karen, Angie to discuss RLF program

MVPC’s Angela Vincent presented the new Merrimack Valley branding project that will replace Merrimack Valley Means Business branding and website. There was discussion among the Commissioners on opportunities with the new branding and the value of the vendor’s (Co-Star) database (Site Finder) and accuracy of data. There were comments that Co-Star provides 80% accuracy. The data is updated weekly on the current MVMB.biz website.

10. 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 February.

Region Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning:

- Annual Progress Meeting of Regional Planning Team held March 9th at MVPC. See summary brief attached of community implementation measures/issues over past year. Meeting includes presentation by Roy Crystal, EPA Pollution Prevention Coordinator on disaster mitigation best practices to minimize pollution risk.
- MVPC initiated start-up planning with Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Office of Technical Assistance of an outreach and training program for first responders, local businesses and communities to incorporate chemical safety into climate change resiliency planning and emergency preparedness. First training session is to be held Fall 2017.

Brownfields Program:

- Progress meeting on Newburyport waterfront parcel remediation plan development and Meetings held on potential RLF cases in Amesbury and Lawrence.
- EPA Region 1 holding RLF Finance and Administration workshop in Southbridge April 6-7 to be attended by Joe Cosgrove and Jen Dunlap.

Green Communities:

- Meeting with City of Lawrence staff 3/16 on consideration by City in applying for Green Community designation later this year. Next steps will involve designation criteria review by

City departments and seeking funding assistance for development of the City's Energy inventory baseline and 5-year Energy Reduction Plan.

Stormwater Collaborative:

- Salem State University GIS Department grad students began field work on West Newbury project developing mobile app inventory of system infrastructure for Operations & Maintenance as well as system catchment area prioritization.
- With MassBay and Merrimack River Watershed Council and in partnership with Amesbury, Salisbury and Newburyport Conservation, staff is preparing 604B Water Quality Management Planning application focused on water quality monitoring. Application is due to MassDEP March 24th.

Great Marsh Management:

- Peter Phippen is gearing up for Spring field monitoring season and will be seeking intern assistance.
- Partnered with application through National Wildlife Federation and Ipswich River Watershed Association partners for funding through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Resilience Grant. Should grant be awarded, funding will be used to implement resilience plan measures including Great Marsh management and preservation.

11. Local and Regional Issues

There was discussion among the Commissioners on the recent potholes and poor condition of the Route 495 Bridge in Haverhill over the Merrimack River. Transportation Program Manager Tony Komornick noted that the bridge is scheduled on the TIP for 2017-2021 and advertised in August.

MVPC's Rep At Large Brad Buschur inquired about the status of the Lawrence Rail Trail. Commissioner Park of Lawrence said she would contact him on an update.

12. Other - None

13. Adjourn

There was a motion and a second to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:10.

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on March 16, 2017.

Ed Ramsdell, Secretary