



MINUTES

Thursday – March 17, 2016

- 1. Call to Order** - Chairman Byers called the meeting to order at 7:15pm.
- 2. Roll Call** –Secretary Ramsdell called the roll and declared no quorum present; all votes taken will be by the Executive Committee. The following Commissioners and Staff were in attendance:

Commissioners

Amesbury	Robert Lavoie, Vice Chairman
Lawrence	Abel Vargas (Alternate)
Newburyport	Ed Ramsdell, Secretary
North Andover	Richard Byers, Chairman
Rowley	Robert Snow, Treasurer
Salisbury	Lou Masiello
Rep-At-Large	Brad Buschur

Staff

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

3. Adoption of February Meeting Minutes

The February minutes were reviewed and recommended for adoption.

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Lavoie and second by Commissioner Snow. The February Minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Warrant for February

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

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Lavoie and second by Commissioner Ramsdell. The February warrant was unanimously approved.

5. Chairman's Report

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

- This year MVPC will be holding the RPD 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, how it has changed over the last 10 years and how the MVPC program activities can help address many of the challenges that are identified. It has been almost 10 years since the recession and how the region fared will be discussed. EOHED Secretary Jay Ash has agreed to be the keynote speaker and discuss the economic blueprint just released from the Governor's office. A save the date notice will be sent out to our list serve.
- As you know Bob Lavoie, will Chair the search committee established to find the new Executive Director. I would like to ask Bob to brief the Commission on his work to date and the next step.
- Commissioner Lavoie reported the following five Commissioners volunteered to participate on the Executive Director Hiring Committee, Robert Lavoie, Theresa Park, Bob Snow, Kevin Hagerty and Ed Ramsdell. Mr. Lavoie noted the schedule the committee will follow:
 - April – Review consultants qualified to assist in the hiring process and contact.
 - May – Hire a consultant to advise the Hiring Committee
 - June – Advertise Executive Director Position – media options
 - July – Meet with consultant to review resumes
 - August/September – Interview candidates and bring recommendation(s) to the September Commission Meeting
 - October – Present the Commission with a signed contract for new Executive Director
 - November 1 – Start Date

6. Director's Report

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

Meetings with Community Leaders

- On February 19th MVPC's Executive Director, Dennis DiZoglio attended the monthly MARPA meetings. Transportation Program Manager Tony Komornick, Sr. Transportation Planner Todd Fontanella and Mr. DiZoglio attended the MARPA/MassDOT consultation meeting on March 10th and also participated in the MassDOT sponsored ADA training workshop.
- On February 23rd Mr. DiZoglio attended the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce Congressional breakfast in Andover.
- On February 25th Mr. DiZoglio attended the MassDOT Performance Asset Management Advisory Council.
- On March 1st Mr. DiZoglio attended the MMA Local & Regional Policy Sub-Committee.

MVPC Citizen Planner Training

- MVPC will be holding our annual training program this year. As you know we need at 10 individuals to sign up for the program to pay for itself. We have 11 signed up and the first session will be held on March 21, the second on March 28th and the third on April 4th. It is still not too late for people to sign up so if you have anyone from your community still interested please have them contact Nancy.

Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMMC)

- The March DPW meeting focused on mobile applications Jerrard's group has been developing for communities. We also continued our discussion regarding the Stormwater MS4 permit.

- The Merrimack Valley Mayors and Managers Coalition meeting was held on March 3rd. The agenda for the meeting was an overview of the Governor's Municipal Modernization Bill. David Lakeman, from MMA, provided a number of handouts regarding the Modernization bill. He highlighted the need to reduce the number of bills involving the Modernization to one bill. Currently the House has broken the bill into 5 bills. Highlights of the bills include giving more control over the issuing of liquor licenses to communities, reforming the ability to collect unemployment compensation for part-time municipal work like crossing guards, allowing a community to remove itself from civil service, revising 30 B to raise thresholds and advertisement requirements, meeting notice requirements in the newspaper, increasing fines for double poles, allowing direct deposit, allowing veteran services to be regionalized for more than one City. After consideration the Coalition asked Dennis to prepare a letter of support for the legislation and send it to the delegation.
- Ameresco, the region's ESCO provider has completed projects in Merrimac, North Andover, Salisbury and Lawrence. Methuen and Haverhill are under construction.
- Haverhill has selected a firm for electric aggregation, Newburyport and Methuen had their DPU public hearing and are setting dates to go out for competitive bidding, 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.

7. Contracts

- Rowley – Annual Parcel Mapping Update and MIMAP Operation - \$2,800
- Salisbury – Development of Mobile application for inventorying and maintaining water hydrants - \$2,000

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

8. Comprehensive Planning Update

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

VALLEY SUPPORT TEAM

Merrimac: The *Merrimac Housing Production Plan* (HPP) completed by MVPC was formally adopted by the Merrimac Planning Board and Merrimac Board of Selectman on January 19th and January 25, respectively. The Plan has been approved by DHCD effective February 3, 2016. The Plan has a five-year term and expires on February 2, 2021. A Housing Production Plan is a proactive strategy for planning and developing affordable housing. By taking a proactive approach in the adoption of a HPP, cities and towns are much more likely to achieve both their affordable housing and community planning goals.

Groveland: We received comments/edits back on the *Groveland Development Permitting Guide* from the town in February. The edits were made and the Permit Guide was accepted by the town on February 25.

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 be updating the housing section of Methuen's Master Plan and analyze their housing needs and conditions - a requirement for the 40R District application.

Haverhill: We are assisting 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.

EDA MONITORING/PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - On January 20th, our regional EDA representative from the Philadelphia office conducted a Performance Evaluation. EDA must evaluate the management standards, financial accountability, and program performance of each funded economic development district (EDD) at least once every three years. The evaluation centered on the continuing regional eligibility of the EDD, the management of MVPC, and the implementation of the CEDS - including the EDD's performance and contribution towards the retention and creation of employment in the region. Dennis, Mike, Jen Dunlap, Heidi Murphy, Joe Cosgrove, and Chairman Rick Byers represented MVPC for the evaluation. The on-site monitoring was followed up with a "peer review" conducted on February 18 with EDA and a regional planning agency from central Vermont.

DLTA - Just a reminder that we have DLTA funds for 2016. If you have any potential projects please let us know. 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.

MVED REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM - On January 29, we closed on a \$200,000 loan to Jessica's Brick Oven, 1630 Osgood Street, North Andover. Jessica's moved from Woburn to North Andover in 2011, and has continued to grow and add new customers. Jessica's products are in Market Basket, Stop and Shop, Hannaford, Shaw's, Giant, Costco, BJ's and Wal-Mart; and their sales have increased from \$2M to \$16.9 M in seven years. The company needs to increase manufacturing capacity to meet growth demands, and our funds are being used to purchase three pieces of equipment totaling over \$800,000. This is part of a greater growth plan that includes purchase of the former General Mills property in Methuen for \$3.85 million. In 2011 Jessica's employed 75 people; they now employ 130 and plan to create 5 additional jobs.

MEETINGS

- February 24 - Groveland (Permit Guide)
- March 3 - Merrimac Valley Mayor's/Manager's Coalition

Mike Parquette then asked Heidi Murphy, Economic Development Coordinator to brief the Commission on the following:

MERRIMACK VALLEY MEANS BUSINESS - We are now working with Costar Group, commercial real estate information and marketing company and Heidi is busy updating our MVMB website with their property listings for our region. We are also updating the "community profiles" and other aspects of the website. The MVMD website has a new "look" and "feel" to it and the changes are being well received. Heidi is writing a grant application to EDA to obtain funds for promotion and marketing of the website and the region. She is also seeking funds to provide the 50% "match" to any EDA funds we may receive.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT - Heidi continues to develop an "economic development toolkit" on the MVPC website. The goal is for it to be a resource for not only our member communities, but hopefully for municipalities throughout the commonwealth to utilize. Instead of having to wade through and research numerous state agencies, the goal is to find everything at the MVPC.org website. Heidi is not simply linking to other sites, but has examples of approved applications and grants and regulations on the website. We urge the Commissioners to visit the website and offer comments and suggestions.

9. Environmental Program Update

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

Massachusetts Bays Program/Great Marsh Partnership:

- Hired three Student Conservation Association (SCA) students for Sandy Great Marsh Resiliency work. This season's students are from Northeastern University, Univ. of Southern California and Western Michigan. The three are scheduled to start fieldwork in April and continue to October. Work will include dune restoration, eelgrass planting, tidal restriction surveys and pepper weed/phragmites mapping. We are looking for housing during the summer months so if you know of available housing sponsors let Joe or Peter Phippen know.

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

- Work scope agreement executed with Mass. Association of Health Boards on MDPH Mass. in Motion Mini-Grant to conduct walkability assessment of downtown Methuen. Data collection begun.
- Newburyport Route 1 rotary redesign selected as pilot transportation health impact assessment project. Screening worksheet completed by staff and work program agreement to be finalized for \$8,800 planning project. Scoping session in Newburyport to be scheduled in April.
- MV Public Health Directors met February 24th at MVPC to discuss collaborative public health initiatives. IT team preparing mobile app demonstration on inspections/permit tracking for group's next meeting.

Stormwater Collaborative:

- 2nd meeting with Boxford Stormwater Committee held 3/15 in organization of Town's Stormwater Management Plan.
- Newbury held volunteer training program on stormwater monitoring—March 3rd at Newbury Library attended by a dozen from region. Second session in field to be held this spring.
- Staff working with Merrimack River Watershed Council and MassBays Program in preparing Section 604b Water Quality Management Planning funding for water quality monitoring program on tidal portion of the Merrimack River. Grant application deadline is March 25th.
- Daylong Stormwater Financing Workshop set with Mass. Rivers Alliance for April 26th in Salem, MA. Register at BayState Roads website.

Open Space Planning:

- Preparing scope for assistance to Haverhill in Update of Open Space Plan mapping requirements.

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 30th, 12:30 at MVPC.

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

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**. Dennis, Tony, and Todd Fontanella attended.

Mr. Komornick attended the February 25th meeting of the **Rockingham Planning Commission MPO Technical Advisory Committee**.

Studies

- **MVRTA Strategic Plan:** Mr. Komornick and Sr. Transportation Planner Betsy Goodrich are continuing work on updating the financial section of the document.
- MVPC's Sr. Transportation Planners, Todd Fontanella and Betsy Goodrich 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:** GIS Program Manager Jerrard Whitten and Ms. Goodrich 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:** Mr. Fontanella is continuing work on assessing the potential for implementing transit service in these areas.

Mr. Komornick met with two Newburyport City Councilors, the Chairman of the Newburyport Planning Board, and staff from the Newburyport Community Development Department on February 22nd to discuss options for **modifying/replacing the Route 1 Rotary in Newburyport**. Mr. Komornick and 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.

Mr. Komornick 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

Mr. Fontanella reviewed 14 applications for funding that were submitted to **MassDOT** under its **FY17 Community Transit Grant Program**. One application (not reviewed by Mr. Fontanella) 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.

Mr. Fontanella 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**.

Mr. Ovalle 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.

Mr. Terlizzi and Mr. Ovalle are working with GIS Program Manager Jerrard Whitten, 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**.

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

Mr. Terlizzi 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.

Mr. Komornick and Ms. Goodrich began preparing the **Draft Transportation Element of the Newbury Master Plan Update**. Mr. Komornick 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**.

Mr. Terlizzi and Mr. Komornick 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.

Mr. Terlizzi 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**, Mr. Ovalle 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:** Ms. Goodrich attended the March 8th meeting in Lawrence.
- **Lower Merrimack Valley and Seacoast Health Alliance:** Mr. Komornick 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:** Ms. Goodrich met with Andrew Herlihy, evaluator for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program.
- **Haverhill's Working Cities Team:** Mr. Fontanella and an MVRTA staff person attended the March 16th 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 19th @ Holy Cross College, Worcester, MA);
- CMAQ Consultation Committee Meeting (March 29th, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. @ State Transportation Building, Ten Park Plaza, Boston);
- MVMPO Meeting (March 30th @ 12:30, MVPC Offices - TBD);
- MARPA Transportation Program Managers (April 12, 2016 @ Worcester Union Station, 10:00am);
- MVRTA Advisory Board (April 7th @ 9:00 a.m. at MVRTA Offices);
- MassDOT ‘TIP Day’ Project Meeting (April 14th @ State Transportation Building, Ten Park Plaza, Boston);

11. Local and Regional Issues

There was discussion that construction of the new I-95 Bridge is impacting traffic in Salisbury and Amesbury.

12. Other – None

13. Adjourn

There was a motion and a second to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on March 17, 2016.

Ed Ramsdell, Secretary