



## MINUTES

Thursday – March 19, 2015

1. **Call to Order** - Chairman Byers called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
2. **Roll Call** – In Secretary Ramsdell's absence MVPC's Executive Director Dennis DiZoglio called the roll and declared a quorum present. The following Commissioners and Staff were in attendance:

### Commissioners

Amesbury	Robert Lavoie
Groveland	Robert O'Hanley
Merrimac	John Thomas
Methuen	Kevin Hagerty
Newbury	John Weis
Newburyport	Bonnie Sontag
North Andover	Richard Byers, Chairman
Rowley	Robert Snow
Salisbury	Lou Masiello
Rep-at-Large	Brad Buschur

### Staff

Dennis DiZoglio, Executive Director  
Anthony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager  
Joe Cosgrove, Environmental Program Manager  
Todd Fontanella, Sr. Transportation Planner  
Jerrard Whitten, GIS Program Manager

### 3. **Adoption of February Meeting Minutes**

The February minutes are tabled to the April Meeting.

### 4. **Warrant for February**

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

*Vote: **The February warrant was unanimously approved.***

### 5. **Chairman's Report**

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

- As I 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.
- As you know we attempt to identify speakers and invite them to talk about issues important to the Merrimack Valley region. Tonight we have invited the Executive Director of the Essex County Greenbelt Ed Becker. Ed has 35 years of experience in land conservation, environmental protection and nonprofit management. Since 1987, he has served as the executive director of Essex County Greenbelt, a nonprofit land trust, where he has been involved in over 250 land conservation projects. Ed has presented workshops and provided technical assistance on land conservation in the U.S.,

Latin America and Europe. He sits on a number of state and national environmental boards and is the recipient of a Massachusetts Governor's Award for Open Space Protection

## **6. Guest Speaker – Ed Beck, Director – Essex County Greenbelt**

Mr. Becker, Executive Director of Essex County Greenbelt talked about work of the land trust in open space preservation, environmental stewardship and community engagement. Greenbelt has been central to preserving 16,000 open space acres in Essex County since 1961. The organization has a goal of protecting another 10,000 acres over the next ten years and is looking to do so primarily through partnerships with communities. Greenbelt has title to 250 parcels of about 5,500 acres and holds conservation easements/deed restrictions involving another 6000 acres. Working with communities, private property owners and developers, the Trust has also been able to assist in leveraging other funding and preservation tools (Community Preservation Act, open space developments, Conservation tax credits) to expand the region's supply of protected public land. Recent initiatives include partnership with the Town of Boxford in the community's acquisition of the 61A Nason property and with the Town of Georgetown in securing a conservation restriction at Wheeler Brook Farm.

Mr. Becker also relayed information on issue workshops (Agriculture preservation, succession planning) and stewardship events (sponsored walks, trail days) Greenbelt hosts throughout the year. Commissioners asked questions about how the conservation tax credits work and expressed support for coordinating with Greenbelt initiatives.

## **7. Director's Report**

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

### Meetings with Community Leaders

- On February 24th Tony and I met with Senator Ives and Jim Jalbert from C&J Bus Lines regarding a park and ride parking expansion in Newburyport.
- On February 26th I attended the State of the City address by Mayor Holaday at the Newburyport Chamber of Commerce meeting.
- On February 26th I attended the MassDOT Performance & Assets Management Advisory Council. I along with the other members of the Council heard a presentation from the MBTA on their asset management program.
- On February 27th I attended the monthly MARPA meeting
- On March 6th I attended the Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee meeting.
- On March 10th I attended the WIB Planning Committee meeting.
- On March 11th I met with Representative Linda Campbell from Methuen to discuss revitalization efforts for Downtown Methuen

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

- At the March 4th DPW meeting we continued to focused on the new EPA stormwater draft regulations and our regional stormwater collaborative effort. The stormwater training program outline and timetable were distributed and registration is underway. The first workshop was held on March 10th.
- On February 25th the Mayors and Managers held their monthly meeting. Deputy Secretary Carolyn Kirk was the guest speaker and the planners and community development officials in the region were invited to attend as well. The Deputy Secretary reviewed the economic development agenda of the Baker Administration and discussed the Community Compact concept being led by Lt. Governor Karen Polito
- 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' perceived needs we have solicited offers from other solar developers. Borrego has made an offer and we are soliciting the interest level from participating communities. However it appears no communities are interested at this time.
- Electric aggregation is moving forward with Newburyport, Haverhill and Methuen. Our regional aggregator has met with the Haverhill City Council.
- 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 and a notice to proceed has been issued. 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. Corrective legislation has been drafted and I met with Representative Dempsey seeking his help. Representative Dempsey office is recommending that we engage the administration in this discussion. I have reach out to Deputy Secretary Rachel Madden from EOAF to discuss the issue and she has agreed to meet. Currently waiting to schedule a meeting.

### 8. Contracts

- A contract with the City of Amesbury for \$3,500 to update parcel mapping.

***Vote: There was a motion and a second to authorize the above mentioned contract. The contract was unanimously approved.***

- A contract with the City of Lawrence to update parcel mapping for \$4,800. This is the first contract with Lawrence to provide these services and this will bring the total number of communities in the region using these services to 13.

***Vote: There was a motion and a second to authorize the above mentioned contract. The contract was unanimously approved.***

### 9. Comprehensive Planning Update

In the absence of the Comprehensive Program Manager, Mike Parquette, MVPC's Executive Director, Dennis DiZoglio provided a quick overview of activities for March. The Director referred to the DLTA Quarterly Report dated March 20, 2015 recently submitted to DHCD and included in the Commissioner's packets. The Director highlighted March Valley Support Team activities, which included assistance to Groveland and Methuen to help them prepare a developer permitting guide, the update of the Merrimac Housing Production Plan with the potential to assist West Newbury and Haverhill in the development of their plans and the Newburyport 40R designation assistance for the area around the MBTA train station.

### 10. Environmental Program Update

MVPC's Environmental Program Manager, Joe Cosgrove, report on the upcoming Stormwater Workshops.

#### Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative:

- First of 3 Stormwater Management Housekeeping Workshops geared to DPW staff and municipal practitioners were held this month on March 10<sup>th</sup> in Lawrence. Session, attended by about 40 people, focused on best management practices at Park/recreation facilities and strategies for MS4 permit compliance. Next workshop March 20<sup>th</sup> on Buildings, Facilities, Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance will include field tour of Andover DPW yard and third session on Stormwater System Infrastructure Maintenance will be on Friday morning April 10<sup>th</sup> at Lawrence Riverwalk campus of Northern Essex Community College.
- Comment period by EPA on the draft MS4 permit closed February 27<sup>th</sup>. MVPC and the Stormwater Collaborative submitted comments the last week of February.

#### MA Coastal Erosion Commission:

The Massachusetts Coastal Erosion Commission has been holding public meetings throughout the state on 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. North Shore meeting was March 9<sup>th</sup> in Ipswich. The report is available at [www.mass.gov/eea/erosion-commission-report](http://www.mass.gov/eea/erosion-commission-report). 90-day public comment period ends April 7<sup>th</sup>.

### Brownfields Program:

The City of Lawrence received an EPA grant award of \$200,000 for an Area-Wide Brownfields Planning Grant supported by MVPC. Staff at MVPC will be working with Lawrence planners coordinating Brownfields program resources of Site Assessment funds and Revolving Loan Fund cleanup money with the planning project which will target the proposed Spicket rail trail corridor extension.

## **11. Transportation Report Update**

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

### Merrimack Valley MPO

The **MVMPO** released a series of **proposed amendments to the region's FFYs 2015 – FFY 2018 TIP** (see attachment). The Public Review and Comment period for these amendments will end on March 30<sup>th</sup>. Two Public Hearings were held at the MVPC Offices on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

The next meeting of the MVMPO is tentatively scheduled for April 9th.

### Studies, Analyses & Plans

Related to the **Regional Transportation Plan**, Tony, Betsy Goodrich and Todd Fontanella 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.

Steve Lopez and the GIS staff prepared a revised version of **the comprehensive list of all crashes at intersections in the Valley** using MassDOT data from 2010-2012 (see attachment).

Betsy completed our revisions to the **Journey to Work data** for the region from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census and the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, which will be included in the RTP.

Betsy attended the **Methuen Arlington Neighborhood, Inc.** meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss the upcoming RTP, review traffic, safety and transit issues in the City and to solicit members' ideas of how transportation should be improved in their neighborhood, in Methuen and in the region.

### Other

Tony and Betsy attended the March 5th **MVRTA Advisory Board Meeting** and reported on the status of Transportation Planning process in the region.

Tony met with City of Lawrence Community Development Director Jim Barnes, Representative Moran, Abel Vargas and staff from Groundwork Lawrence to discuss the next steps for implementing the **Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail along the M&L Branch ROW in Lawrence**.

As a member of the Review Committee, Todd has been evaluating applications for operating assistance grants under the MassDOT Section 5310/Mobility Assistance Program for FFY 2016.

Todd participated in a Travel Training (ADA) session at the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission Offices on March 9<sup>th</sup>.

Earlier this week, Tony and Betsy met with Bill Buckley, Kathleen Colwell, DPW Director Patrick Bower and Kevin Dandrade of TEC to review Methuen's transportation project priorities for the upcoming RTP (see handout).

Tony attended the February 24th meeting of the **Haverhill Traffic and Safety Committee** as well as the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee** where he received feedback from committee members on the priority of roadway and bridge projects in the City for the upcoming TIP and RTP.

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**.

Jim reviewed road **surface condition data** in the region that was collected by MassDOT using their pavement management data collection vehicle. Jim's review showed that the results of MassDOT's analysis

matched those of MVPC on higher speed roadways; it did a poor job of analyzing pavement conditions on roadways in congested areas, such as downtown Lawrence.

Jim, Jerrard Whitten and Danny are finalizing work on an application that will accelerate collection of **road surface condition information** for federal aid roadways in the region.

Danny continued to prepare the **2014 Community Traffic Count Reports** and to upload the traffic count data we have collected to the MassDOT website.

Jim began to assemble crash data that will be considered as part of our **Broadway (Route 28) / Haverhill Street (Route 110) Intersection Traffic Study**.

Todd hosted a meeting of the **Merrimack Valley Regional Coordinating Council** here on March 12<sup>th</sup>. The group is focusing on developing a joint transportation/safety video proposal involving youth in the region and individual members are interested in the Section 5310/MAP grant submissions.

Betsy participated in a conference call on the **use of Health data in transportation planning** that was held earlier today and suggested a few options of how this data be incorporated into the MVPC's various planning disciplines.

Todd completed his review of the MVRTA's performance in FY 2014 in meeting **federal ADA service provision requirements**.

We were informed that the **City of Haverhill** received a **Mass in Motion grant** and will hire MVPC to assist them with developing a Complete Streets policy, strengthen public participation in and augment efforts of the Haverhill Bike/Ped Safety Program.

Tony, Mary Kay and Jerrard are working on a methodology for process travel time/travel speed data that will be used to identify **congestion along the region's National Highway System roadways**.

#### Upcoming Meetings

- 25% Design Hearing for project to repair I-495 bridges over the Powwow Riverwalk (March 19<sup>th</sup>);
- Quarterly Meeting of MassDOT/RPA Directors (March 24<sup>th</sup>);
- Lawrence Mayor's Health Task Force (March 26<sup>th</sup>);
- 25% Design Hearing for Lawrence St./Park St. intersection project (March 31<sup>st</sup>);
- Public Meeting on Central Street Roadway project in Rowley (March 30<sup>th</sup>);
- DPW Directors Meeting (April 1<sup>st</sup>);
- Merrimack Valley Transportation Committee (To Be Determined);
- MVRTA Advisory Board Meeting (April 2<sup>nd</sup>);
- MVMPO Meeting (April 9<sup>th</sup> (tentative));
- Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee (April 9<sup>th</sup>);

#### **12. Local and Regional Issues**

#### **13. Other**

#### **14. Adjourn**

**There was a motion and a second to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.**

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on March 19, 2015.

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Ed Ramsdell, Secretary