



MINUTES

Thursday – May 18, 2017

- 1. Call to Order** - Chairman Lavoie called the meeting to order at 7:10p.m.
- 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
Boxford	Jim Barnes
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	Jerry Klima
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
Jim Terlizzi, Sr. Transportation Engineer
Nancy Lavallee, Office Administrator
Jen Dunlap, Finance Administrator

3. Adoption of April Meeting Minutes

The minutes were reviewed and recommended for adoption.

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

4. Adoption of April Warrant

Treasurer Bob Snow reported that the April 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 April warrant was unanimously approved.

5. Chairman's Report

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

- We are pleased to bring forth this evening the formal slate of Officers and I would like to thank Kevin Hagerty for working with me on the Nominating Committee and for all of you who either nominated someone or volunteered to step up!
- It is wonderful to finally see the hard copy of the 2016 Annual Report, and I would like to thank the entire staff for working together on this effort and especially recognize Nancy Lavalée for her work in coordinating everything. Another year of job well done.
- I know that the staff has responded recently to a request from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) to apply for funding specifically for the City of Lawrence. I am pleased to highlight tonight that EDA received a grant request to study the feasibility of a Textiles Innovation Center. Congresswoman Niki Tsongas' office was kind enough to not only draft a letter of support but also get Senators Warren and Markey as co-signers.

6. Executive Director

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

Meetings with Community Leaders

- Attended the April monthly MPO meeting held here on April 26th
- Attended and presented at 2 meetings of the Boxford Housing Partnership in furtherance of getting Boxford to sign on to our Regional Housing Plan efforts
- Helped lead the 2nd CEDS Committee Meeting at NECC Lawrence. Over 40 stakeholders attended. NECC President and CEDS Chairman Lane Glenn lead a fun and interactive exercise on where we see the region in 5 years.
- Met with the Town of West Newbury to plan for our first Community Housing Needs Presentation to be held May 31st
- Met with City of Methuen officials to plan for our first Community Housing Needs Presentation to be held June 14th
- Met with Nitsch Engineering at their Lawrence office to discuss potential mutual projects and collaboration – invited them to participate as a CEDS Committee member
- Met with Amesbury staff to plan for our first Community Housing Needs Presentation – date to be determined
- Attended and presented at the North Andover Planning Board Meeting to provide information about our Regional Housing Plan
- Hosted the Monthly DPW Directors Meeting –topics included our ongoing efforts to provide and coordinate joint services contracting/procurement and a general discussion of topics to cover moving forward
- Met with Greater Lawrence Technical School's Athletic Facility Campaign Fundraiser Sarah Starkweather to continue discussions on ways to finance the completion of their \$6 million athletic complex improvements
- Met with Newburyport officials regarding the status of their existing Housing Production Plan and how our Regional Housing Plan efforts can include their "old" and new data moving forward
- Presented with Angela Vincent at the Newburyport Economic Development Action Committee meeting
- Met with Groundwork Lawrence Executive Director Heather McMann to discuss ways to work together even more so than currently
- Met with the Merrimac Affordable Housing Board of Trustees and presented at their May meeting regarding our Regional Housing Plan project and process

- Attended a press conference at Battlegrounds Café in downtown Haverhill with Lieutenant Governor Karin Polite, Chairman Brian Dempsey, State Rep. Diana DiZogio, Mayor Fiorentini, MassDevelopment President Marty Jones and others to announce new grant awards and opportunities for TIDE communities, of which Haverhill is one (of 10 statewide)
- Met with Salisbury officials to plan our Community Housing Needs Presentation, set for June 28th
- Attended the Baker-Polite Administration Small Business Listening Session, in recognition of Small Business Month at Salem State University
- Attended and presented at the Andover Community Housing Needs Session, which was attended by over 20 stakeholders including very good information from and dialogue with the Town's Committee on Disabilities

Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMMC)

- Held the monthly DPW Directors meeting – see above
- Planning for a May 25th MVMMC meeting, hosted by Town Manager Andrew Maylor at North Andover Town Hall. 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 six 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 Committee met on March 30th. Below is a quote from Janet Pierce's email:

“Although this was the first posted meeting, it was obvious the Admin and Finance and Retirement Board members are anxious to get the various groups represented on the Working Group to commit to a payment arrangement.”

The Committee was supposed to meet on May 1st, with all affected parties welcome to join. This meeting was postponed due to issues with staffing at the state level. Jen Dunlap and I plan to attend all meetings on this matter to be held on behalf of MVPC. Including the May 19th MARPA meeting at which a game plan for moving forward will be discussed.

Other

The first Merrimack Valley Regional Open House is on Wednesday, May 24th at NECC in Lawrence from 6-8pm. The Open House will focus on the housing needs in the Merrimack Valley. Clark Ziegler, Executive Director from the MassHousing Partnership is the keynote speaker. The evening will include interactive booths, baseline information about Merrimack Valley's demographics, and lively discussions about the housing issues facing our residents in the Valley.

Commissioner John Thomas from Merrimac is stepping down from the Merrimac's Planning Board and the MVPC. We will pursue a replacement from Merrimac.

There's a Press Release in your packets – EPA Recognizes Great Marsh Partnership Work in Habitat Restoration & Resilience Planning. The Great Marsh Resiliency Partnership received the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Merit Award in a ceremony on May 3rd at Faneuil Hall in Boston. Peter Phippen represents MVPC's participation in this effort.

7. Contracts

- North Andover – Annual Parcel Mapping for \$2,750 (No matching funds from MVPC required)

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

8. Nominating Committee – Election of Officers

2017 Report of the Nominating Committee

Committee Members:

Kevin Hagerty of Methuen
Robert Lavoie of Amesbury

The Nominating Committee reviewed the roster of MVPC Commissioners and recommends for election the following:

Chairman: Theresa Park of Lawrence
Vice Chairman: Robert Snow of Rowley
Secretary: Ed Ramsdell of Newburyport
Treasurer: James Barnes of Boxford

Vote: Commissioner Weis made a motion to accept the Nominating Committee as presented. Commissioner Murphey seconded the motion. The Nominating Committee was unanimously approved.

9. Affirmative Action Plan

The Affirmative Action is required by the state to be updated annually. Changes were made to reflect the results annual survey required by MVPC staff. MVPC's Executive Director, Karen Conard requested the Commission's authorization to adopt the Updated Plan and further authorize to change the name of the plan if so needed.

There was discussion on the terminology of the actual name of the plan. This will be confirmed. If the plan's name is determined to be different it will be changed.

Vote: Commissioner Weis made a motion to authorize the Affirmative Action Plan as presented. Commissioner Snow seconded the motion. The Affirmative Action Plan was unanimously approved.

10. 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 April.

Merrimack Valley MPO (MEMO)

The Merrimack Valley MPO met on April 26th and agreed to release the following documents for public review and comment:

- Draft Fays 2018-2022 TIP;
- Proposed amendments to the Memo's Fays 2017-2021 TIP;
- Draft FRY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program;
- Proposed Critical Urban Freight Corridor in Andover and Lawrence (see handout).

The public review and comment period for the above items will expire tomorrow (May 19th).

US DOT has informed us that the **Memo's Planning Certification Review** will take place on July 11th. Conducted every four years, these reviews certify that the transportation planning process conducted by the MPO, MassDOT and the MVRTA is being carried out according to state and federal regulations.

The next meeting of the Merrimack Valley MPO will be held on May 24th.

MPO-Related

Betsy Goodrich attended the 25% Design Hearing for the **I-95 Trail Connector project** that was held in Amesbury on May 9th. This project appears in the FFY 2018 element of the MVMPO's Draft FFYs 2018-2022 TIP.

Betsy is attending tonight's 25% Design Hearing for the **Groveland Community Trail**. That project appears in the FFY 2019 element of the MVMPO's Draft FFYs 2018-2022 TIP.

MassDOT advertised the following projects for construction:

- Andover, Methuen – **Resurfacing of I-93** (April 15th);
- Andover – **Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements on I-93**: (May 6th).

Studies

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

Danny Ovalle collected AM and PM Peak period turning movement counts at the intersection of **Route 110 and Main Street in Amesbury** in support of the Road Safety Audit for that location.

Danny's also been collecting 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 May 3rd.

Tony attended the May 11th meeting of the **Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee**. Assisting the Committee in its efforts to identify roadways in the City that should have speed limits higher than 25 MPH.

Betsy and Tony have begun preparing 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.

Betsy has been assisting the Town of Georgetown in developing a **Complete Streets policy** and reviewing their prioritization plan;

Provided traffic count data for Amesbury and Common Streets in Lawrence in support of City's efforts to secure grant to make **aesthetic improvements to Buckley Transportation Center**.

Betsy attended the **Mount Washington Alliance Community Health Fair** on April 29th, providing information about the TIP and receiving information about the region's transportation system.

Participated in webinar of **MassDOT's Socioeconomic Projections Committee**, which is overseeing the development of the socioeconomic projections that will be used by all MPOs in the Commonwealth when developing their FFY 2020 Regional Transportation Plans.

Betsy and Jim have been working with the Haverhill DPW Director Mike Stankovich in evaluating alternative technologies for providing enhanced protection at select high-crash **pedestrian crosswalk locations** in the City.

Betsy is assisting the City of Lawrence with its preparations for this year's **Ciclovía**.

Upcoming Meetings

- Merrimack Valley MPO Meeting: May 24th – 12 Noon @ MVPC Offices.

11. 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 will complete 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 is on **Wednesday, May 24th from 6-8p.m at the El Hefni Center** located at 414 Common Street in Lawrence. The Open House will focus on the housing needs in the Merrimack Valley. We are pleased to have Clark Ziegler, Executive Director from the MassHousing Partnership, as our keynote speaker. The evening will include interactive booths, baseline information about Merrimack Valley's demographics, and lively discussions about the housing issues facing our residents in the Valley.

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.

EDA PARTNERSHIP PLANNING APPLICATION – Yesterday we received our annual invite to submit the 2nd year application of our 2016 three year EDA Partnership Planning Grant. The application is due on June 5th and this funding provides the salary for a portion of the Economic Development Planner position.

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 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 a "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 also have received bids to develop a marketing campaign and launch the new tagline and logo. We will discuss the next steps with the MVMMC on June 25th.

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.

The scope to implement this project includes:

1. Conduct a Project Kick-off with the Project Partners/Stakeholders
2. Collect Existing Studies and Plans
3. Conduct a Thorough Market Analysis Focused on Textile Manufacturing:
4. Investigate Existing Sites to Locate the Innovation Center
5. Develop Site Selection Criteria
6. Develop Final Recommendations, Next Steps and Implementation Plan

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.

12. 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 April. . MVPC Environmental Program reports the following:

Region Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning/Climate Change Adaptation:

- MVPC's application to become a certified provider for the state's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP) has been approved by the State Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs. The MVP Program will provide planning and technical assistance to communities in developing vulnerability assessments and adaptation plans. First round applications from communities are due to the state May 22nd. Under the program, cities and towns with approved plans and designated MVP communities will receive allocation of funds to implement resilience projects including green infrastructure and hazard mitigation structural projects and be eligible for competitive grants.

- Joe represented MVPC at the May 11th Economic Resilience workshop sponsored by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and FEMA on the National Disaster Recovery framework and models for incorporating economic development interest into hazard mitigation planning. The event was held at Northeastern University's Kostas Research Institute for Homeland Security in Burlington, MA.

Brownfields Program:

- EPA approved property eligibility Clipper City Rail Trail Phase II parcels in Newburyport for cleanup based on preliminary application from the City for subgrant assistance.

Mr. Cosgrove requested the Commissions authorization to allow the Executive Director to execute a program for EPA.

Vote: Commissioner Cashell made a motion to authorize the above-mentioned request. Commissioner Weis seconded the motion. The request was unanimously approved.

- This week EPA announced that our program partner the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board is one of 14 organizations nationally to receive latest round funding of the Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program. MVWIB plans to use the grant to train 28 students and place at least 22 graduates in environmental jobs.

Green Communities:

- The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is making additional Green Communities Municipal Energy Technical Assistance grant funding available through RPAs. \$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. Lawrence, Haverhill and North Andover have executed MOUs with MVPC. Additional MOUs are being considered in West Newbury, Methuen, Newbury and Salisbury. MVPC will be submitting all META proposed MOU scopes to EOEEA by June 1st.

Stormwater Collaborative:

- The DPW Collaborative met May 3rd and received presentation from Salem State University GIS Dept. grad students on stormwater infrastructure fieldwork done in West Newbury for MVPC mobile app project. Next scheduled meeting of the Collaborative is June 7th.
- Attended MS4 Permit training sponsored by EPA in Worcester on municipal Notice of Intent preparation. The updated MS4 permit becomes effective July with communities required to file Notices of Intent on their stormwater management programs by Sept. 29th. MVPC is available to assist communities in their permit filings.

Great Marsh Management:

- Hurricane Sandy Resiliency Great Marsh Partnership received the EPA Environmental merit award for 2017 in May 3rd ceremony at Faneuil Hall attended by Peter.
- Sediment Erosion Model is being used to assist Merrimack River Beach Alliance on sand placement (Merrimack River, Piscataqua River) on Plum Island
- First round of 2017 green crab monitoring is underway. Preliminary indications are for a heavy green crab year. Team received \$20K grant from DMF for developing green crab culinary marketing.
- Peter was Green crab panelist at the Ipswich Ale Cask and Clam festival and green crab night earlier this month.
- Greenscapes 2016 products delivered to member communities and solicitation for membership in 2017
- April eelgrass planting took place at Essex Bay restoration site
- Spring Marsh Edge Erosion monitoring has begun at 24 sites throughout the Great Marsh
- Hired a Boston University summer technical assistant to work on all marsh projects
- Developed MassBays 2018 work plan for the upper north shore

- Annual meeting of Great Marsh Revitalization Task Force has been scheduled for 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.
- EPA held its 5-year federal certification review of the MassBay National Estuary Program the last week of April including the April 26th Management Committee meeting in Nahant. Program received positive review in Program activities and outreach. MVPC is management committee partner in the program that includes funding of MassBay Upper North Shore regional service coordinator.

Other:

State environmental agencies last month issued a number of notices of grant funding availability for programs that support municipal and regional projects in stormwater management and environmental resource protection Inc.:

- **Section 319 Clean Water Act NonPoint Source Pollution Grant Program.** Grant deadline June 2nd. Provides design and construction funding for stormwater Best Management Practices and climate change adaptation/resiliency projects as well as outreach/education. Local match required is 40% of project cost.
- **Coastal Pollutant Remediation Grants.** Proposals due to MA Office of Coastal Zone Management by May 25th. All MVPC communities are eligible to apply for project that can be used for stormwater pollution assessment, design and implementation of green infrastructure BMPs and installation of commercial boat-waste pumpout facilities to reduce pollution. Local match required is 25%.
- **Coastal Resilience Grant Program.** Proposals due to MA Office of Coastal Zone Management by June 5th. Only coastal communities can apply—in MVPC region (Amesbury, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley and Salisbury) Funding can be used for 1) community vulnerability and risk assessment; 2) Public education & communication; 3) Local bylaws, Adaptation Plans & other management measures; 4) Redesigns and retrofits of facilities & infrastructure; and 5) Natural storm damage protection techniques (green infrastructure). Local match is 25%.

13. Local and Regional Issues - None

14. Other

Commissioner Weis reported that the first 40B housing in Newbury is for Sale

The Andover resurfacing project section of I-495 is underway.

Commissioner Masiello reported that there will be a ribbon cutting on the construction of the Salisbury Boardwalk the end of June. The new Salisbury Police Station Open House was held in early May and the old Police Station will be torn down.

15. Adjourn

There was a motion by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Weis to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on May 18, 2017.

Ed Ramsdell, Secretary