



## MINUTES

Thursday – November 20, 2014

1. **Call to Order** - Chairman Byers 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

<b>Amesbury</b>	Robert Lavoie
<b>Georgetown</b>	Howard Snyder
<b>Haverhill</b>	April Derboghosian
<b>Lawrence</b>	Abel Vargas
<b>Methuen</b>	Kevin Hagerty
<b>Newbury</b>	John Weis
<b>Newburyport</b>	Ed Ramsdell
<b>North Andover</b>	Richard Byers, Chairman
<b>Rowley</b>	Robert Snow
<b>Salisbury</b>	Jerry Klima
<b>West Newbury</b>	Brian Murphey

### Staff

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

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

Secretary Ramsdell reviewed the October minutes and declared them in order and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

*Vote: **Commissioner Murphey made a motion to accept the October minutes and second by Commissioner Snow. The October minutes were unanimously approved.***

### 4. **Warrant for October**

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

*Vote: **Commissioner Hagerty made a motion to approve the October warrant and second by Commissioner Murphey. The October warrant was unanimously approved.***

## 5. Chairman's Report

- As we traditionally do our December meeting on the 18th will be brief and we will have a social hour to help celebrate the Holiday season and the Commission's accomplishments in 2014.
- MVPC will conduct its Citizen Planner Training Program next year. We have included the notice in your packets. In an effort to understand how we could increase participation from board members we surveyed previous trainees to see what changes they would suggest that would make the training more convenient. Based on the survey results we have made changes to the format to 2 sessions, 2 consecutive weeks and outside the winter months. Please let your communities know of this useful training and encourage them to participate.

## 6. Executive Director's Report

### Meetings with Community Leaders

- On October 21st Ted and I met with Costar, a real estate marketing firm, regarding upgrading the Merrimack Valley Means Business (MVMB) website to use Costar in lieu of Loopnet. There are significantly more listings under Costar but the cost is more as well. If the CIC grant is awarded the upgrade may be worth the investment.
- On October 24<sup>th</sup> I attended the monthly MARPA meeting.
- On October 28th I attended the Merrimack Valley WIB Annual meeting.
- On October 7th Joe, Mike and I met with Merrimack Town Officials, TRC and MassDevelopment to discuss possible next steps to address the Coastal Metals Brownfield site.
- On October 31st I attended the newly formed Downtown Methuen Task Force meeting. Methuen is participating in our Valley Support Team Program and we will be providing technical assistance in their downtown revitalization efforts. Methuen has filed a Gateway Cities Transformative Development fund grant and MVPC will be included as a partner. Haverhill also reached out to MVPC and we will play a similar role as part of their application as well.
- On November 10th I met with Bev Donovan, economic development director for the Haverhill Chamber of Commerce and discussed ways of working together to promote economic development.
- On November 13th I participated in a NARC webinar regarding the potential impact the mid-term election will have on the program and legislative agenda of Regional Councils.

### Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy

- We are currently updating the Priority Growth Strategy which was approved by the Commission in 2009. It is five years old and it was decided that the plan should be consistent with the 2014 State Merrimack Valley Plan, which identifies State PPA and PDA. We had hoped to bring the plan for your consideration to the November meeting but we wanted to give you time to review the plan so we will distribute it later this month and seek your approval at the January meeting.

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

- The November 5th DPW meetings focused on the new EPA stormwater draft regulations and our regional stormwater collaborative effort. Action items included: Defining GIS role in meeting the expanding mapping requirements, coordinating comments on the draft regulations from both the collaborative and the communities and develop a MS4 checklist and timeline.
- At the October 23rd MVMMC meeting we focused on new revenue opportunities with wireless technologies. It was decided to draft a region RFP to identify a vendor who can work with the communities to advance this concept further.
- At the November 20th MVMMC meeting we provided a MVMB update (the site has had 4,300 hits and over 900 users since the October 6th release to November 13th), Stormwater Collaborative update (see November 5th DPW notes) and reviewed a draft of the wireless RFP.
- ACE the selected Solar developer is on the wait list for the SREC II solar managed growth category of projects. We have also begun discussions with other solar developers (Borrego and Nexamp) while we wait for the green light for their project. Communities currently participating are: Amesbury, Newburyport, North Andover, Lawrence and Haverhill.
- Electric aggregation is moving forward with Newburyport, Haverhill and Methuen. Newburyport City Council has passed the language, entered into a contract with Colonial and is reviewing the aggregation plan for adoption. Haverhill and Methuen are working collectively with their new energy manager Orlando Pacheco and has requested an aggregation plan.

- Ameresco, the region's ESCO provider, is still working with six communities: Lawrence (first phase completed exploring a second phase), Methuen(NTP to be issued plus exploring installing LED fixtures on light poles recently purchased by the City ), Haverhill, North Andover (estimated completion by end of the year), Merrimac (completed) and Salisbury (draft ESA under review). Five of the communities have approved projects totaling over \$10M, which will save the communities almost a \$1M a year. Haverhill has yet to finalize their project as they resolve net school spending requirements. Currently plans call for the city and the school department to split the costs.
- 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 issued a RFP for the solar development of their landfill. The RFPs were due April 17<sup>th</sup> for a 500KW solar facility and 3 proposals were received. Boxford has selected Borrego to develop their project.

### **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 has collectively hired a lawyer to help us make our case against the change. Corrective legislation has been drafted and I met with Representative Dempsey seeking his help on October 28th.

### **7. Contracts**

- A contract with the City of Newburyport to update parcel mapping and provide MIMAP operations. The total contract is for \$6,500.

***Vote: Commissioner Snow made a motion authorize the above mentioned contracts and second by Commissioner Murphey. The contract was unanimously approved.***

### **8. Personnel Committee**

Personnel Committee Chairman Rick Byers reported that the Personnel Committee met on November 12<sup>th</sup> and referred to the Personnel minutes in the Commissioner's packets. Members Present: Bob Lavoie, Kevin Hagerty and Chairman Rick Byers.

Chairman Byers reported that the Personnel Committee recommended a series of salary adjustments based on the staff evaluations:

- 10 – Exemplary 2.0%
- 4 – Very Good 1.0%
- 2 – no change

Personnel Committee Member Byers expressed that Executive Director DiZoglio has been doing an exemplary job in his position and the agency continues to demonstrate its importance in the region. Chairman Byers recommended that in lieu of a salary increase for Executive Director DiZoglio that there be an increase in the number of vacation days available by one week to give him more flex time. Executive Director DiZoglio currently has 4 weeks of vacation and this adjustment will bring it to 5 weeks.

Personnel Committee Member Byers requested a motion from the Commission to authorize the MVPC Staff salary increases.

**Commissioner Weis made a motion to authorize the salary increases and second by Commissioner Derboghiosian. The motion was unanimously authorized.**

### **9. Comprehensive Planning Update**

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

**DLTA PROGRAM** – We continue to implement the "Planning Ahead for Growth/Planning Ahead for Housing" and "Regional Services" activities programmed with DLTA funds. We executed a new contract in October with DHCD for 2015 DLTA funds. An outreach and solicitation for projects is enclosed in your packet. It appears there will be a reduction in funds of 1.5%.

**PLANNING AHEAD FOR GROWTH/PRIORITY GROWTH STRATEGY** - We continue to work on the update/revisions to the Priority Growth Strategy in order to reflect changes (such as new development, new zoning, new focus, or completed infrastructure projects) that have taken place in the five years since the PGS was written and also to reflect its introduction into the statewide Planning Ahead for Growth initiative. In spite of the economic recession, this region has accomplished some great things in the last 5 years and communities have advanced new initiatives and adopted new smart growth zoning which needs to be reflected in the update. Also, many road and bridge projects planned 5 years ago are now completed and new projects are planned. These all need updating. In addition, MVPC is working with state officials and local Planning Directors to upgrade local zoning to better develop the PDA's and PPA's.

**MASSWORKS** - As previously reported, there were 5 MassWorks applications submitted from the MVPC region. Awards were made to Lawrence (3.9 million) for Merrimack Street and to Salisbury (1.7 million) for Salisbury Square water lines.

**VALLEY SUPPORT TEAM** – Dennis and Mike are members of the Methuen Downtown Redevelopment committee and we can offer MVPC's expertise in economic development and transportation planning to assist in their efforts. Meetings have been held on October 10, October 24, and October 31. The Committee has submitted an application to MassDevelopment for the Transformative development Initiative. Unfortunately, this program may be subject to the recent budget cuts. The city may be able to utilize one of many programs aimed for "Gateway Cities" such as: 40R District, Cultural District, Housing Development Incentive Program, 43D for Housing, Tax Increment Financing, and Compact Neighborhood District. Mike has had conversations with EOHEC folks about these programs and have invited them to come and discuss the merits of each tool to the Downtown Redevelopment Committee.

Also, we have offered our assistance to the City of Newburyport in their efforts to create a TOD 40R District at the Route 1 Rotary and MBTA Commuter Train Station. If approved, the new "smart growth" district could be in place this winter.

**DHCD REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDY** - We are completing a questionnaire titled: "Around the Gateways" – Regional Economic Development Study. It is a survey for RPA's with Gateway Cities. The survey centers around the economic development needs of the Gateway Cities compared to the economic development needs of surrounding communities. The survey asks for educational, demographic, and economic data as well as employment data and regionalization initiatives.

**MVMCC** – As previously reported, we have been working closely with the MVMCC on efforts to update the MVMB website and to submit a CIC grant application to help expand the website further and to better market the region for new business. The CIC application was submitted, but unfortunately, funds for the CIC program may be cut from the Governor's budget.

**CITIZEN PLANNER TRAINING COLLABORATIVE** - Information was made available to all Commissioners, Planning Board members, ZBA members, and other town officials regarding the Fall 2014 Workshops. MVPC hosted two workshops. The first was held on October 27 titled "Roles and Responsibilities of Planning and Zoning Boards Part 1." The second was held on November 17 titled "Special Permits and Variances." The sessions were extremely well attended with folks coming from as far away as Milton, Mashpee, and Harwich.

## 10. Environmental Program Update

MVPC's Environmental Program Manager, Joe Cosgrove, report on the following Environmental Program activity:

### **Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative:**

More than 100 people attended the MVPC-sponsored regional information session on October 28th at Northern Essex Community College on the EPA draft MS4 Stormwater Permit for Massachusetts. We are working with Collaborative members in formulating comments on the draft by the close of the comment period Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Brownfields Program:**

Staff is preparing application for the FY15 funding round of Brownfields Assessment grants to EPA. We will be applying for \$400,000 in funding to be used in planning and property assessments targeted to the

Gateway cities but available to all 15 MVPC communities. Mr. Cosgrove requested authorization to submit the application to meet the December 19<sup>th</sup> deadline.

**There was a motion by Commissioner Weis to submit the application with a second by Commissioner Hagerly. The motion was unanimously approved.**

### **MassBays National Estuary Program:**

- **Green Crab Count Blitz** was held earlier this month with New England Aquarium and other partners monitoring population of invasive species.
- **Sandy Funding:** Partner team is reviewing proposals submitted from research institutions seeking to undertake hydrodynamic and sediment modeling. This work will provide data tool informing more effective management and ecologic restoration of the Great Marsh.
- **Great Marsh Sea Level Rise Symposium:**– Full house last week (Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>) at Woodman's in Essex for the annual symposium that featured a number of case study panels on how communities are adapting to climate change by implementing programs and projects that incorporate principles of sustainability and resiliency
- And finally...the region celebrated completion of one of those infrastructure resiliency projects on October 31<sup>st</sup> with ceremonial dedication of the saltwater marsh tide gates reconstructed at the Marsh Trail in Salisbury. Three storms in the last decade wiped out the crossing and flooded several homes and businesses on Route 1. The new culverts and tide gates will help restore the creek and reduce area flooding risk. Funding for the project came from state and federal sources, including a \$250,000 environmental bond bill appropriation from the state, and an \$800,000 pre-disaster mitigation grant from FEMA.

### **11. Transportation Report Update**

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

#### **Merrimack Valley MPO**

The **MVMPO** will meet on November 25<sup>th</sup>. The key action items will be the release of the ***Draft Human Service Transportation – Public Transportation Plan*** and the ***Draft Active Transportation for the Merrimack Valley*** for public review and comment.

Todd has been working on making proposed changes to the MPO's **Public Participation Plan**, the document that identifies what steps the MPO will take to involve the general public, stakeholders and other parties in the federal transportation planning process. Todd's changes primarily address how the Plan must be modified to meet USDOT and MassDOT Title VI/Environmental Justice public outreach requirements.

#### **Studies, Analyses & Plans**

Tony attended the **Transportation Program Managers Meeting** that was held in Worcester on November 13<sup>th</sup>. A key item of discussion there was the availability of data from USDOT and MassDOT that will be needed by the MPOs in preparing their Regional Transportation Plans. Unfortunately, key data such as the anticipated levels of federal and state transportation funding over the next 25 years and the population and employment projections for the region out to the year 2040 will not be ready until late in the year.

Related to the RTP, Betsy has been developing a series of proposed Goals and Objectives for use in the Plan, which should be available for public review shortly.

Betsy has completed the **Draft Active Transportation Plan for the Merrimack Valley**, the region's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Key components of the Plan are the identification of priority bicycle and pedestrian projects/proposals across the region with an emphasis on those with subregional and regional significance, maps showing their locations, and the identification of proposed Goals and Objectives for further improving bicycle and pedestrian transportation in the region.

Todd completed the **Draft Coordinated Human Services Transportation – Public Transportation Plan**, which we anticipate will be released by the MVMPO for public review and comment next week.

### Other

Tony attended the November 13th meeting of the **Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee**. At the meeting, he provided a brief summary of the results of MVPC's **Low Street/Bashaw Way Intersection Study**.

Tony attended the November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of **New Hampshire DOT's Capitol Corridor Rail and Transit Alternatives Analyses Study Advisory Committee** that was held in Concord, NH. NHDOT's consultant team presented the preliminary results of the study and responded to questions raised by Committee members and other stakeholders.

Transportation and GIS staff have been working together to implement a new **GIS-based tool** that will both allow transportation staff to access and edit project data contained in our GIS transportation data layers and may ultimately be used to provide the public with a tool to view information on the location and nature of virtually all transportation projects in the region.

Jim Terlizzi attended the November 19<sup>th</sup> Bay State Roads workshop in Wakefield on the **Local Public Agency Program in Massachusetts**. This workshop presented information on a potential pilot program in the state to promote the local administration of select federal aid roadway projects.

A **Bikeability Audit** for three locations in Haverhill was held on November 12<sup>th</sup> at the MVPC Offices. The locations considered in the Audit were:

- Winter Street between Main Street and Locust Street;
- Locust Street between Winter Street and Washington Square;
- Washington Square, and
- Bailey and Ginty Boulevard

Staff from MassBike performed the Audit, which was attended by MVPC staff, Haverhill Police, a representative from the Haverhill Community Development Office, and the bicycle/pedestrian coordinator from the MassDOT Boston office.

Betsy met with planners from our **Upper Merrimack Valley communities** on November 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss bike/ped and other planning issues in that section of the Valley.

She also participated in an **Active Streets Coalition** meeting on November 18th, sponsored through the Massachusetts Public Health Association, to discuss the development of the Complete Streets program.

Betsy also met with Haverhill Police Department staff and representatives from MassDOT regarding the status of the current **Haverhill Bike/Ped Safety program** and to plan ahead for next year.

Jim and Danny Ovalle completed work on collecting roadway pavement surface condition data as part of MVPC's contract to update **Haverhill's Asset Management Program**. Their efforts will now focus on collecting data on the location and condition of all sidewalks in the City.

Tony and Jerrard continued to work with officials from the **Town of North Andover** in support of their effort to conduct a **Downtown Parking Study** along a section of Main Street and in the Municipal Lot behind Town Hall. Jerrard developed a mobile application that was used by the Town to collect data on parking. This data collection effort took place over three days during the week of November 3<sup>rd</sup> and was forwarded to MVPC soon thereafter. Staff has completed a preliminary review of this information.

Danny has collected traffic volume data for all roadway approaches to the **Moulton Street/ Main Street/ South Street intersection in West Newbury**. This information will be used by staff in determining if an additional Stop Sign(s) is (are) needed at this location.

Danny also collected traffic volume data on Church Street, Bridge Street and Hoyt's Lane in West Newbury near the Rocks Village Bridge. This data will be used by staff to evaluate options for modifying traffic flow in and around the area to accommodate potential changes in providing access to the river.

Todd attended FHWA's **Freight Issues Seminar** that was held at the Volpe Transportation Center in Cambridge on November 6<sup>th</sup>.

Todd and Joe attended the **Moving Together 2014 Conference** that was held in Boston on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

At the request of MVRTA Administrator Joe Costanzo, Todd has been working on an analysis that compares the costs and benefits of the Authority purchasing **diesel/hybrid buses vs. purchasing clean diesel buses**.

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

Commissioner Lavoie asked about the 'strange' lane markings along Route 495 in the Ward Hill area. MVPC's Tony Komornick explained they are temporary markings highlighting areas being surveyed to collect data associated with the possible bridge replacement project over the Merrimack River.

## **13. Adjourn**

**There was a motion to adjourn by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Hagerty.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.**

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on November 20, 2014.

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Ed Ramsdell, Secretary