



## MINUTES

**Thursday – October 20, 2016**

- 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
Groveland	Robert Arakelian
Haverhill	April Der Boghosian
Methuen	Kevin Hagerty
Newburyport	Ed Ramsdell, Secretary
Rowley	Bob Snow, Treasurer
Salisbury	Lou Masiello
West Newbury	Brian Murphey

### Staff

Joe Cosgrove, Environmental Program Manager  
Mike Parquette, Comprehensive Planning Program Manager  
Tony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager  
Jerrard Whitten, GIS Manager  
Jen Dunlap, Finance Administrator  
Nancy Lavallee, Office Administrator  
Jim Terlizzi, Transportation Engineer  
Betsy Goodrich, Sr. Transportation Planner

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

The September minutes were reviewed and recommended for adoption.

*Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Ramsdell and second by Commissioner Snow. The September Minutes were unanimously approved.*

### **4. Warrant for September**

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

*Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Hagerty. The September warrant was unanimously approved.*

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

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

- The Personnel Committee will be meeting next month to review staff evaluations and consider any personnel bylaw revisions. This standing committee is comprised of myself and Kevin Haggerty from Methuen. Rick Byers was the other member and with his resignation there is an opening. If any commissioner is interested in serving, please let me know.
- As reported last month long time Commission member Bob O'Hanley from Groveland has retired. The Groveland Planning Board has appointed Bob Arakelian to replace him on the Commission.
- As Chair of the search committee established to find the new Executive Director. I would like to brief the Commission on the committee's work to date and the next steps.

## **6. Executive Director's Search Committee**

As Chair of the Executive Director's Hiring Committee, Robert Lavoie, reported that the Executive Director's Hiring Committee activities since the last meeting.

The Search Committee received over 25 applicants of which 7 were chosen. One applicant backed out leaving six applicants for the first round of interviews, which have been completed. The Executive Director's Hiring Committee is expecting to offer the position to one of the final candidates by the November Commission Meeting with a start date of January 1, 2017.

There was discussion to reschedule the November 17<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting to possibly November 29<sup>th</sup>. The Commissioners will be notified on the date of the next Commission Meeting.

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

### **Meetings with Community Leaders**

- Attended the MARPA monthly meeting on September 9th.
- On September 21<sup>st</sup> we held our quarterly Regional Planners meeting. We had 3 guest speakers. The Smart Growth Alliance talked about zoning reform, the Mass Development representative talked about crowd funding for place making and the MHP representative talked about multi-family housing zoning technical assistance.
- On October 4<sup>th</sup> I attended the Regional and State Policy Committee for the MMA.
- On October 13<sup>th</sup> I was the guest speaker at the Amesbury Rotary Club.
- Attended the WIB Planning Committee meeting on October 18th.

### **Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMCMC)**

- We held an October DPW meeting and continued to discuss the MS4 permit. The group heard from the New England Environmental Finance Center regarding finance options to undertake stormwater improvements, and saw a Demonstration of the Newbury Stormwater Mobile App from Jerrard Whitten.
- The Merrimack Valley Mayors and Managers Coalition meeting was held on October 6th. The agenda for the meeting focused on the progress on the regional branding effort, textile recycling and SolSmart designation for communities.
- Ameresco, the region's ESCO provider has completed projects in Merrimack, North Andover, Salisbury and Lawrence. Methuen and Haverhill are under construction.
- Haverhill has selected a firm for electric aggregation and will be purchasing electricity for the community through 2016, Newburyport has their approved order from DPU and are eligible to

seek competitive bids, Methuen has entered into a contract with Trans-Canada to purchase electricity for 2 years, North Andover passed Town Meeting on May 10, 2016. Aggregation Plan has been posted for public review/comment [8/23-9/13]. Next steps: (1) sign Consultant Agreement and (2) Board of Selectmen vote on the Plan. Andover requires town Meeting vote. Salisbury filed for a DPU public hearing on 2/12/2016 and is waiting for pending order. Amesbury City Council passed public aggregator language on June 14, 2016. Next steps: (1) sign Consultant Agreement and (2) post Aggregation Plan for public review/comment. 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. MARPA has appointed the Executive Director of CMRPC to represent them on the committee required in the 2016 budget to resolve this issue. Still waiting for the meeting to be called by ANF. No change.

### **8. Contracts**

- A Contract with the Town of Boxford - Annual parcel update and MIMAP renewal for \$2,800

*Note: Commissioner Ramsdell made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned contract as presented. Commissioner Snow seconded the motion. The contracts were unanimously approved.*

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

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

**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 across all executive secretariats and agencies, 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.

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 is currently (or in the coming months) working with Salisbury on Comprehensive Water Resources Management; Georgetown on Complete Streets bylaw; and with North Andover and the MVMMC on job creation and retention.

For this coming year the administration has 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 intends to apply for funds to complete a Merrimack Valley Regional Housing Production Plan. The application for this grant program is due November 15<sup>th</sup>, and we can apply for up to \$200,000.

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL MARKETING PROJECT:** MVPC is well under way on the MVMMC marketing project. Numerous meetings have been held with local businesses and individual communities as well as a "roundtable" meeting 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. Currently, 3-4 logo's and tagline's are being developed and these will be presented to the MVMMC in November to solicit their opinion and advice as they will be key players in owning and

selling the marketing slogan and logo. After all parties agree on a tagline and logo the next step will be to develop a strategy for rolling out the new marketing campaign.

**MASSWORKS REVIEW:** Seven of our communities applied for MassWorks Street and Roadway improvement funds. As in the past four years, MVPC has reviewed the applications and submitted our comments to EOHED on the proposed use of the MassWorks funds for our region. Communities applying include: **Andover** - \$6,000,000 for Dascomb Road Improvements; **Haverhill** - \$9,480,000 for infrastructure support for the Merrimack Street Transformative Development project; **Lawrence** - \$5,950,000 for improvements to western section of Merrimac Street; **Merrimac** - \$500,000 to replace existing failing culverts on Bear Hill Road; **Newburyport** - \$880,000 for public safety improvements in the smart growth 40R district; **North Andover** - \$3,300,000 for infrastructure improvements along the Main Street corridor; **Salisbury** - \$4,500,000 for sewer and sewer pump stations on Route 1. Requests for our region total **\$30,610,000**.

**DLTA:** The October 15, 2016 DLTA Legislative Report is in your packet. Please let me know if you have any comments or questions. As we reported last month the DLTA program faces the budget cutting axe. State revenues haven't met expectations so the program may be eliminated. If this happens, MVPC's budget will be compromised. We are currently seeking alternative sources of revenue.

**PLANNING DIRECTOR'S MEETING:** On September 21 we met with the region's city and town planners and/or economic development directors. Andre Laroux and Larry Fields of the Smart Growth Alliance discussed zoning reform and the possible compromises needed to get it approved this coming legislative session; Jonathan Berk discussed the "Commonwealth Places" initiative; and Carsten Snow of Mass Housing Partnership discussed the latest housing initiatives by MHP.

**CITIZEN PLANNER TRAINING COLLABORATIVE, 2016:** The October 24 CPTC workshop titled - "**Reading a Subdivision Plan**" has been cancelled due to low enrollment. On November 28 MVPC will host "**Creating Master Plans**". In this course local officials will learn why and how to prepare, adopt, and implement the master or comprehensive plan described in MGL Chapter 41, Section D. This session will identify the sections of a master plan and specific steps by which the plan will be carried out.

**MEETINGS:**

- September 20<sup>th</sup> – Workforce Housing analysis with MAPC and other RPA's
- September 21<sup>st</sup> – Planning Director's meeting
- September 22<sup>nd</sup> – Mass Clean Energy Conference
- October 6<sup>th</sup> – Mayors/Managers meeting in Lawrence
- October 17<sup>th</sup> – Brownfields RFP review

**10. Environmental Program Update**

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

**Region Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning:**

- Submitted \$10,000 grant application to Mass. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs/Office of Technical Assistance for training program targeting manufactures on chemical safety and climate change resiliency planning. Award announcements expected end of October.
- CZM workshop on Coastal Resiliency grant programming held Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> in Ipswich.

**Brownfields Program:**

- MVPC received consultant proposals for environmental engineers/licensed site professional teams to assist in operation of the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Program. Finalist interviews are

being set for next week and we expect to have proposed contract selections for Commission award authorization at your meeting next month.

- Making a Visible Difference Stakeholders meeting held in Lawrence Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> included outreach regarding MVPC RLF Program and MassDEP Brownfields Assessment Program targeting Lawrence properties.

### **Green Communities:**

- Met with West Newbury Energy Advisory Committee September 21<sup>st</sup> on program review and annual reporting. Annual performance report will be prepared for Town and submitted to state by December 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline.

### **Stormwater Collaborative:**

- MV DPW Stormwater Collaborative met October 5th with representatives of the Environmental Finance Center who outlined financing options and models for compliance with newly issued MS4 permit requirements. Also, Jerrard Whitten gave demo of mobile stormwater infrastructure app being developed with the Newbury Stormwater Committee. Next meeting of the Collaborative is November 2<sup>nd</sup> at MVPC.
- Statewide Stormwater Collaborative meeting was held Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> in Worcester attended by Lt. Governor Polito and MassDEP Commissioner Suuberg. The state network is being supported by \$50,000 grant from the Section 604B program to assist with stormwater public information and training.
- New England Stormwater Finance Forum is set for Nov. 15-16<sup>th</sup> at University of New Hampshire. Registration is free. Let Joe know if you or anyone from your community is interested.

### **Great Marsh Management:**

- 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Marsh Symposium is set for November 17<sup>th</sup> at Woodman's in Essex. Early registration is through Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> at <https://squareup.com/store/greenbelt>
- Submitted application for GPS/GIS hardware and software to ESRI and Leica Geosystems. If funded, technology equipment will be used to monitor Great Marsh conditions and invasive species management. Grant award decision expected by end of October.
- Peer meeting of regional Conservation administrators held Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Upcoming Events:**

- Watershed Planning Roundtable planned for November 9<sup>th</sup> at MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Westboro.
- Stormwater Finance Forum at UNH, Nov. 15-16<sup>th</sup> (New England Environmental Finance Center)

## **11. 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 May.

As noted at the September Commission meeting, USDOT in June released a **Notice for Proposed Rulemaking** (NPRM) that would significantly affect how many of the larger MPOs around the country would be defined and function. Since then, USDOT announced that the comment period for the NPRM would be extended through October 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **Studies**

Mr. Terlizzi continued to prepare the Road Safety Audit Reports for the **River Street/Lowell Avenue Traffic Study in Haverhill**, the **Merrimack Street/I-495 Traffic Study in Methuen**, and the **Parker Street/Market Street-Parker Street/Merrimack Street Traffic Study in Lawrence**.

Staff completed the **Draft MVMPO Regional Park and Ride Lot Study**, which analyzes the recent performance and effectiveness of the park and ride lots in and around the Merrimack Valley MPO region, reviews expected future demand for park and ride activity and recommends what steps should be taken to improve the existing lots and construct new lots where needed.

The GIS staff has converted the Park and Ride Lot Story Map into a **Park and Ride Lot Index Map** that now appears on the MVPC website. It provides a wealth of information on the location of existing and proposed lots, available facilities at each facility, and directions to each location.

Mr. Komornick met with the **Newbury Master Plan Transportation Subcommittee** on September meeting. Staff is now putting together the draft Transportation Element Goals and Objectives for the Plan.

### **Other**

Ms. Goodrich worked with staff from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to allow Merrimack Valley cities and towns to participate in that agency's **Bicycle Parking facilities program**.

Mr. Komornick has been giving guidance to the **City of Haverhill and the City of Lawrence** in examining options for developing TIP projects that could be advertised using FFY 2017 MVMPO Target Funds.

Ms. Goodrich attended the **MassDOT Moving Together Conference** that was held in Boston on September 29<sup>th</sup> and moderated the 'Open Streets' session.

Danny Ovalle continued to collect 48-hour traffic counts throughout the Valley.

Mr. Komornick and Ms. Beninati continue to work on updating the MVMPO's **Congestion Management Process**.

Ms. Beninati completed updating **Greenhouse Gas emissions analyses** for all highway and transit projects that appear in the MVMPO's upcoming FFYs 2017-2021 TIP.

On October 17, Ms. Goodrich participated in the MassDOT right-of-way site walk for the **Groveland Community Trail**.

Mr. Komornick participated in the **Great Marsh Coastal Community Resiliency Project Salisbury, Newbury, Newburyport (SNN) Task Force** meeting that was Held in Salisbury on September 27<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Goodrich worked with MVRTA staff to finalize a **new system map poster** in English and Spanish that will be posted at all transportation centers. The poster contains additional information about fares and frequently asked questions.

The MVRTA is participating in a **statewide mobility management program called Ride Match**, which will make it easier for people to find out about all their transportation options. Ms. Goodrich has been working with staff at the MVRTA to populate the database with information about transit options in the Merrimack Valley.

Ms. Goodrich finalized the **MVRTA's Language Assistance Plan** that was then approved by the Advisory Board and submitted to the FTA.

### **Technical Assistance**

MVPC is now collecting vehicle turning movement 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.

Staff has prepared a revised Concept Plan for a rooftop boat launch facility on **Church St. in West Newbury** for the Town's River Access Committee.

### **Other Meetings and Outreach Efforts**

- **Mt. Washington Neighborhood:** Ms. Goodrich met with John Cuneo, Community Works, and Tracy Fuller, Haverhill YMCA, to discuss transportation needs in the Mount Washington neighborhood.
- **Andover Council on Aging:** Ms. Goodrich arranged for a meeting on September 16 with the Andover Senior Center and the MVRTA to talk with Chinese-speaking elders about transit services.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

- DPW Directors: November 2<sup>nd</sup> – 8:30 a.m. @ MVPC Offices
- MVRTA Advisory Board: November 3<sup>rd</sup> – 9:30 a.m. @ MVRTA Offices, Haverhill

**12. Local and Regional Issues - None**

**13. Other – None**

**14. Adjourn**

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

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on October 20, 2016.

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Ed Ramsdell, Secretary