

## **MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Monthly Meeting October 15, 2020

### **Virtual Go To Meeting**

Time: 11:00 am

**For details to join this meeting  
contact Nancy Lavallee at email [nlavallee@mvpc.org](mailto:nlavallee@mvpc.org) or call her at 978-374-0519**

### **AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of September Meeting Minutes
4. Warrant for September
5. Chairman's Comments
6. Director's Report
7. Contracts
8. Environmental Program Update
  - Hazard Mitigation Plan, Jen Hughes, Environmental Program Manager
9. Local and Regional Issues
10. Other
11. Adjourn



MINUTES

Thursday – October 15, 2020

**Virtual Commission Meeting (GoToMeeting)**

Recorded from MVPC, 160 Main Street, Haverhill, MA

Consistent with the Governor’s orders suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and banning gatherings of more than 10 people, this meeting will be conducted by remote participation to the greatest extent possible. The public may not physically attend this meeting, but every effort will be made to allow the public to view and listen to the meeting in real-time. Persons who wish to do so are invited to watch the meeting on the MVPC web site or join the meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone by using the link:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/748821525> or you can also dial in using your phone by calling +1 (571) 317-3112 and using access code 748-821-525. If live transmission proves infeasible, an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive records of the meeting will be made available on the MVPC website as soon as possible.

1. **Call to Order** – Chairman Snow called the meeting to order at 11:00 am
2. **Roll Call** – Secretary Laplante called the roll and declared a quorum of 9 commissioners and 1 alternate commissioner present at the time of roll call. The following Commissioners and Staff were in attendance:

Commissioners

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Amesbury     | Robert Laplante, Secretary, Angela Cleveland (alternate) |
| Boxford      | Jim Barnes, Treasurer                                    |
| Georgetown   | John Cashell   |
| Groveland    | Rebecca Oldham   |
| Methuen      | Kathleen Bradley Colwell, Vice Chair                     |
| Newbury      | Martha Taylor  |
| Rowley       | Robert Snow, Chairman                                    |
| Salisbury    | Lou Masiello   |
| Rep-At-Large | Brad Buschur   |

Staff

Theresa Park, Executive Director  
Tony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager  
MaryKay Beninati, Senior Transportation Planner  
Betsy Goodrich, Senior Transportation Planner  
Jerrard Whitten, GIS-IT Program Manager  
Mikayla Minor, GIS Analyst  
Steve Lopez, Senior GIS Analyst  
Jennifer Hughes, Environmental Program Manager  
Nate Robertson, Community & Economic Development Planner  
Jenifer Dunlap, Finance Administrator  
Nancy Lavallee, Office Administrator

### **3. Adoption of September 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Secretary Laplante reviewed the September 17 minutes and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Colwell and seconded by Commissioner Masiello to approve the September 17 meeting minutes. The September 17 minutes were unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call vote of 9 attending commissioners.

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

MVPC's Jen Dunlap reported on the September Warrant and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Colwell to approve the September Warrant. The September warrant was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call vote of 9 attending commissioners.

### **5. Chairman's Comments**

Chairman Snow reported on the following activities since the September meeting.

Mr. Snow noted that the Hazard Mitigation Plan is valid for 5-years and the current plan is set to expire in May 2021. MVPC's Environmental Program Manager, Jen Hughes will report on its current status and efforts to update the document. Mr. Snow added that MVPC's Data Portal ([mvpc.org/data-portal/](http://mvpc.org/data-portal/)) is live and active and highly recommended the commissioners to visit the website. This great data tool was developed through the efforts of MVPC's Community and Economic Development Planner, Nate Robertson, and MVPC's GIS Program Manager, Jerrard Whitten.

Mr. Snow announced that the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) will be releasing online workshops of interest to planning boards, zoning boards of appeals, and other municipal boards and commissions. Once the dates and times are finalized, the information will be provided to you to share with your peers.

MVPC's Executive Director, Theresa Park, and Nate Robertson attended the Amesbury Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Committee meeting. The "podcast" of this meeting can be viewed here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m\\_wnql9gFX8&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_wnql9gFX8&feature=youtu.be)

Mr. Snow reported that the Personnel Committee will regroup before the November commission meeting to review the MVPC personnel evaluations and recommendations for salary increases. Current members are Chairman Bob Snow, Vice Chairwoman Kathleen Colwell, and Secretary Robert Laplante.

### **6. Executive Director's Report**

MVPC's Executive Director, Theresa Park, gave a comprehensive update of MVPC activities since the September meeting highlighting the following. She noted that the Social Media Committee has been quite busy identifying and amplifying the many good things MVPC has been doing as well as in our communities. MVPC's focus is to encourage more engagement with the region's elected officials, municipalities, communities and expand our relationships with other organizations. MVPC participated with the Executive Office of Housing and Development's review of MassWorks applications and provided input to the state as part of the wrap-around review for four communities in the region. Ms. Park took part in the review of 39 economic security grant applications with Essex County Community Foundation which is helping several local organizations with COVID efforts. Participating in this review gave Ms. Park a good indication of the great organizations whose mission is to reach out to help people in their region by addressing the needs of small businesses, the disparity on food issues, and childcare.

Ms. Park announced that the staff is undergoing annual performance reviews and the Personnel Committee will be meeting and will be prepared to present their recommendations at the November meeting for the commission's authorization. She then turned the meeting over to MVPC's program managers for their reports.

**Transportation:** MVPC's Transportation Program Manager, Tony Komornick reported that he and MVPC's Senior Transportation Planner, Betsy Goodrich met with MVRTA's Kathleen Lambert to discuss the development of Transit project evaluation criteria for the Authority. It is a very important component of the Regional Transit Plan that the MVRTA is working on and should be adopted by the Authority by the end of this year.

Transportation staff completed traffic data collection for three intersection studies in the City of Amesbury which include Kimball Rd/Route 110, Main Street and Merrimac Street, and Market Square. This data will be analyzed and adjusted to project what may be considered normal future traffic volumes.

MVPC's Transportation Engineer, Jim Terlizzi is participating in a Road Safety Audit at the Canal Street corridor in Lawrence that involves three intersections. This is in support of the City's proposal to make Amesbury Street two-way from Canal Street to Lawrence Street.

Mr. Komornick reported that he and Ms. Goodrich will be meeting with officials in Andover to discuss proposals to improve access to the Shawsheen Greenway.

**Economic Development:** MVPC's Community and Economic Development Planner, Nate Robertson proudly announced that the virtual on-line Data Portal ribbon cutting took place on October 7. The Data Portal is an unprecedented on-line analytics tool for regional stakeholders.

Mr. Robertson reported that the Cultural Asset Mapping Project is wrapping up and will be available online and print version within the month.

He added that MVPC is actively working on two economic development projects that are eligible for EDA EAA funding; Lawrence's Revolving Test Kitchen Expansion and Haverhill's E for All Expansion.

**Environmental:** MVPC's Environmental Program Manager, Jen Hughes, reported that Green Communities REPA grant funded reporting is underway and MVPC is working with the communities of Haverhill, Lawrence, Merrimac, and Salisbury at this time.

Ms. Hughes added that MVPC has expended 70% of the brownfield assessment grant and can therefore apply for new assessment funding. MVPC is working with consultants Credere Associates to apply by the due date of October 28. The EPA funds will allow continued assessments focusing on the Opportunity Zones in Lawrence, Methuen, and Haverhill, but the funding is also open to all communities.

**GIS:** MVPC's GIS Program Manager, Jerrard Whitten highlighted that MVPC is working with the Town of Merrimac to submit an IT Grant application for the launch of the DIMS (document intake and management system). This is a system that will support the upload and access to scanned files. If the grant is funded, MVPC will be creating an application that will allow Merrimac employees to add files to the system and those files will be available to all end users. Merrimac's goal in creating this system is to store their electronic files in a centralized location. Secondly, it is the hope of both MVPC and the Town that this application can serve as a model for other communities in the region to utilize. Mr. Whitten added that MVPC is working with the MIMAP software developers to advance the software functionality in the existing MIMAP application, making the interface more efficient and logical for the MIMAP users.

## 7. Contracts

### Grants/Local Community Contracts (by MVPC Program)

#### GIS

- **Rowley - \$ 1,500 (No match required)** – FY21 Stormwater Inspector Mobile application

MVPC to receive funding from the Town of Rowley to provide the above GIS products and updates.

## **Transportation**

- **Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA) - \$ 80,000 (\$20,000 Match Required (20%))**

MVPC to receive funding from the MVRTA for the Annual FY21 Planning contract to conduct transit planning tasks for the Authority as spelled out in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

## **Consultants and Subgrant Agreements / Loans (by MVPC Program)**

### **Environmental**

- **Town of Merrimac - Coastal Metals EPA Brownfields Site – \$150,000 Amendment to earlier EPA Brownfields RLF Loan/Grant agreements - TOTAL +/- \$372,900 (40% Loan, 60% Grant & \$74,580 Match Required (20%))**

The Town of Merrimac is to be paid the amended loan and subgrant amounts directly from the EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund programs to remove and remediate contamination to prepare the site for an affordable housing developer.

Original Subgrant Agreement: from EPA Award BF-96109001 \$150K subgrant and \$72,900 loan

Amended Subgrant adds: \$75k subgrant and \$75k loan from EPA Award BF-00A00246

Total agreement with Town of Merrimac from EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Now \$225,000 subgrant and \$147,900 loan. The Town will provide 20% match of \$74,580.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Colwell and seconded by Commissioner Taylor to authorize the above- mentioned contracts. The contracts were unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante’s roll call vote of 9 attending commissioners.

## **8. Environmental Program Update – Hazard Mitigation Plan**

MVPC’s Environmental Program Manager, Jen Hughes reported on the FEMA BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities) available grant funding to update to MVPC’s Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. MVPC and FEMA discussed the application process and FEMA recommended that a lead community apply, and the remaining communities are the sub-applicants. Georgetown and North Andover have individual HMP plans that they did under the MVP Program. The remaining communities, except for Amesbury, will expire this coming spring, Amesbury expires the following year. The state is only getting \$300,000 for planning initiatives, therefore MVPC is not sure how much funding will be provided. Ms. Hughes stated that all communities have signed on.

## **9. Local and Regional Issues - None**

- 10. Other** – In closing Chairman Snow noted that despite the COVID guidelines, he thanked all the Commissioners and the MVPC staff for making the virtual meetings successful.

## **11. Adjourn**

There was a motion by Commissioner Cashell and second by Commissioner Taylor to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 am. The motion was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante’s roll call of 9 attending commissioners.

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Robert Laplante, Secretary