

## **MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Monthly Meeting September 17, 2020

### **Virtual Go To Meeting**

Time: 11:00 am

Contact Nancy Lavallee if you are interested in joining this  
online meeting at [nlavallee@mvpc.org](mailto:nlavallee@mvpc.org)

### **AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of June Meeting Minutes
4. Warrants for June, July and August
5. Chairman's Comments
6. Director's Report
7. Contracts
8. Community and Economic Development Update
  - Data Portal, Nate Robertson
9. Transportation Update
  - Active Transportation Program, Betsy Goodrich
10. Local and Regional Issues
11. Other
12. Adjourn

## MINUTES

**Thursday – September 17, 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 2 alternate commissioners 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 (left the meeting at 11:32 am)
Methuen	Kathleen Bradley Colwell, Vice Chair
Newbury	Martha Taylor, Larry Murphy (alternate)
Newburyport	Rick Taintor
North Andover	Rick Byers
Rowley	Robert Snow, Chairman

#### Staff

Theresa Park, Executive Director  
Tony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager  
MaryKay Beninati, Senior Transportation Planner  
Jim Terlizzi, Transportation Engineer  
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  
Peter Phippen, Coastal Coordinator  
Nate Robertson, Community & Economic Development Planner  
Jenifer Dunlap, Finance Administrator  
Nancy Lavallee, Office Administrator

### 3. Adoption of June 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Secretary Laplante reviewed the June 18 minutes and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Colwell to approve the June 18 meeting minutes. The June 18 minutes were unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call vote of 9 attending commissioners.

### 4. Warrants for June, July, and August

#### Warrant for June

Treasurer Barnes reported on the June Warrant and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

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

#### Warrant for July

Treasurer Barnes reported on the July Warrant and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

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

#### Warrant for August

Treasurer Barnes reported on the August Warrant and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Snow and seconded by Commissioner Taylor to approve the August Warrant. The August 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 June meeting.

He noted that despite the day-to-day challenges of living under COVID's uncertainties there's still lots of positive news to share. Andover, Merrimac, and Newburyport received the Shared Streets and Spaces grants from MassDOT in the most recent round. Haverhill, Lawrence, Newburyport, and Salisbury received Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grants from EOEEA. And U.S. EDA awarded \$400K in CARES funds to MVPC to support its resiliency planning and small business assistance.

Chairman Snow added that MVPC is entering into the film industry. It recently partnered with the Society for the Protection of NH Forests to screen a documentary titled "The Merrimack – River at Risk." If you missed it, the Merrimack River Watershed Council is screening it on September 24 at 7 pm. Details are on the MVPC website. <https://mvpc.org/2020/09/14/merrimack-river-watershed-council/>

Chairman Snow announced the new Executive Committee as voted at the May meeting as well as the Nominating Committee and welcomed new Commissioner Alternates.

Chairman:	Robert Snow of Rowley
Vice-Chairman:	Kathleen B Colwell of Methuen
Secretary:	Robert Laplante of Amesbury
Treasurer:	James Barnes of Boxford

Nominating Committee Members: Robert Snow of Rowley and Robert Laplante of Amesbury

Welcome to MVPC's new Commissioner Alternates:

Amesbury Alternate – Angela Cleveland, Director of Community and Economic Development  
Newbury Alternate – Larry Murphy, Planning Board member

Chairman Snow announced that April Der Boghosian stepped down as Haverhill Commissioner and extended the Commission's appreciation and thanks for her contribution to the group adding that she has been a valuable voice and we wish her continued success. In recognition of her service, we have sent her flowers as a small token.

## 6. Executive Director's Report

MVPC's Executive Director, Theresa Park, referred the commission to her report of activities over the summer since the June meeting.

Ms. Park gave a comprehensive update, highlighting the following. Ms. Park reported that she met one on one in person with 13 of the 15 municipal leaders. She noted that the meetings were informal, yet very informative and allowed her to be in the community and hear first-hand each municipality's concerns. A couple of issues that emerged and able to address is Race and Equity and how the community can train their staff and learn about how to approach what needs need to be done. With that request and COVID concerns, the Mayors and Managers invited Leon Andrews, Jr., inaugural director for Race, Equity, and Leadership (REAL) at the National League of Cities to give a presentation on this topic at the Mayors and Manager's September meeting. The presentation is available for those interested. Ms. Park added that MVPC is working with communities on many levels such as DLTAs and LTAs and providing support and resources where necessary. She added that MVPC was approached by UMass Lowell, who is heading up a statewide application to the TBA. UMass Lowell is collaborating with Mass Tech Collaborative of MIT and other partners to submit a statewide application to assist manufacturers and businesses who have pivoted during COVID and how they can sustain their operation going forward. By doing this they are hoping to scale the domestic supply chain and re-assure manufacturing operations. MVPC is proud to be included and join other RPA's across the state in supporting this application.

Ms. Park announced that a couple of MVPC staff are celebrating notable years of service – Tony Komornick with 37 years and Mary Kay Beninati with 35 years. She thanked them for their devotion and long-term commitment to MVPC.

## 7. Contracts

### Community and Economic Development

#### • Economic Development Administration (EDA)

- **\$ 70,000 (\$22K cash and \$8K in-kind match required (30%))** – Annual FY21 Economic Development Planning Grant
- **\$ 400,000 (no match required)** – CARES Act Recovery Assistance Program to provide funding over 2 years to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19, develop a regional resiliency plan, fund ongoing resiliency planning efforts, and help MVPC work with communities to develop EDA eligible economic development projects. Just over half of the funding will go toward consultants to provide technical assistance to businesses.

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

## Environmental

- **Dept. of Energy Resources (DOER) \$ 9,500 (No match required)** – Additional funding granted for FY21 under the Regional Energy Planning Assistance (REPA) program to provide municipal energy technical assistance to Lawrence, Haverhill, and Merrimac.
- **Lawrence** – Green Communities contract extension of funding from \$5,000 to **\$10,537, (No match required)**, and period extended to 3/31/21.
- **Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs/Coastal Zone Mgt. (EOEEA/CZM) \$ 63,000 (No match required)** – Annual FY21 Regional Service Provider contract for Mass Bays under National Estuary Partnership federal grant with the US Environmental Protection Agency. This grant is used for the most part to fund Peter Phippen’s efforts in the Great Marsh Restoration and Resiliency and related efforts.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Byers and seconded by Commissioner Taylor to authorize the above-mentioned contracts. The contracts were unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante’s roll call vote of 8 attending commissioners.

## Transportation

- **Groveland - \$ 7,000 (No match required)** – Pavement Management Contract.
- **Mass. Department of Transportation (MADOT) - \$ 972,242 (No match required)** – Annual FY21 Combined 3C Planning and Transit contract used to fund 90% of all MVPC transportation planning efforts.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Taintor and seconded by Commissioner Taylor to authorize the above- mentioned contracts. The contracts were unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante’s roll call vote of 8 attending commissioners.

## GIS

- **Amesbury- \$ 2,000 (No match required)** – FY21 Annual MIMAP Operation renewal
- **Andover- \$ 3,000 (No match required)** – FY21 Annual MIMAP Operation renewal
- **Groveland**
  - **\$ 2,500 (No match required)** – FY21 Parcel Mapping Update
  - **\$ 2,000 (No match required)** - FY21 Annual MIMAP Operation renewal
- **Lawrence**
  - **\$ 3,500 (Includes use of 21 LTA hours)** – FY21 Parcel Mapping Update
  - **\$ 2,000 (No match required)** - FY21 Annual MIMAP Operation renewal
- **Merrimac**
  - **\$ 2,000 (No match required)** – FY21 Annual MIMAP Operation renewal
- **Methuen**
  - **\$ 2,500 (No match required)** – FY21 Annual MIMAP Operation renewal
  - **\$ 1,500 (No match required)** – FY21 Open Space and Rec Plan (OSRP) Mapping contract
- **Newbury**
  - **\$ 2,000 (No match required)** – FY21 Stormwater Inspector Mobile application
  - **\$ 4,500 (No match required)** – FY21 Parcel Mapping Update
- **North Andover**
  - **\$ 2,000 (No match required)** – FY21 Annual MIMAP Operation renewal
  - **\$ 5,000 (No match required)** – FY21 Parcel Mapping Update
- **Rowley - \$ 2,000 (No match required)** – Annual FY21 Operation of Mobile Electrical application

- **Salisbury- \$ 2,000 (No match required)** – FY21 Annual MIMAP Operation renewal
- **West Newbury - \$ 2,000 (No match required)** – FY21 renewal of Stormwater Inspector Mobile application

MVPC to receive funding from municipalities to provide the above GIS products and updates.

*Note:* There was a motion by Commissioner Cashell and seconded by Commissioner Colwell to authorize the above- mentioned contracts. The contracts were unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante’s roll call vote of 8 attending commissioners.

### Consultants and Subgrant Agreements / Loans

- **All In Energy - Consultant, Dept. of Energy Resources (DOER) Affordable Access Regional Coordination (AARC) Contract - \$ 8,100**

Consultant to be paid directly from the DOER AARC grant to assist with outreach on energy efficiency programs.

- **Innovative Mosquito Management, Inc. (IMM) - Consultant, National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Restoring New England’s Largest Saltmarsh: Multi-Benefit Resiliency Enhancement Contract - \$ 20,000**

Consultant to be paid directly from the NWF grant to perform phragmites/weed control with sprayed herbicide in areas of the Great Marsh in Salisbury, Newbury, and Rowley as identified in the request for services. Work to be completed by October 2020.

- **Josh Walker - Consultant, National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Restoring New England’s Largest Saltmarsh: Multi-Benefit Resiliency Enhancement Contract - \$ 5,500**

Consultant to be paid directly from the NWF grant to perform phragmites/weed control using a backpack sprayer to spray herbicide in areas of the Great Marsh in Salisbury, Newbury, and Rowley as identified in the request for services. Work to be completed by November 2020.

- **John Snell - Energy Consultant, various contracts**

It was decided to Contract with John Snell, formerly of Peregrine Energy Group, to assist with green energy work for two communities as the most cost-effective and efficient way to complete the work within the limited budget and time constraints. Mr. Snell has worked with the two cities in the past and is familiar with their energy management planning.

- **Lawrence - \$ 3,600** – The decision was made to use a portion of the Lawrence Green Communities contract funding to hire a consultant to assist with the organization of the City's Mass Energy Insight accounts. This is a portion of the additional contract funding MVPC received from Lawrence to assist with the closeout of its Designation Grant.
- **Newburyport - \$ 2,700** –At DOER’s request, the decision was made to use a portion of the Newburyport REPA contract funding for Green Communities to hire a consultant to assist with the City’s Building Energy Analysis.

## **8. Community and Economic Development Update – Nate Robertson**

MVPC’s Community and Economic Development Planner Nate Robertson presented the Data Portal application, a result of an EDA Grant; a super tool everything a Planner would ever need. The Data Portal synthesizes and displays all data sources available over the years, such as non-residential real estate lists, business inventory, educational, workforce, and demographic attainable data. He added that this tool synthesizes all this information allowing communities to see what is available in their own backyard. Mr. Robertson gave a brief overview of the application and announced that a notice is going out for the official Data Portal ribbon cutting on October 7<sup>th</sup> at 11

am, all are invited to attend this virtual event. Commissioner Jim Barnes requested a link to review the Data Portal before it is released. Mr. Robertson will send out the information to the commissioners.

## **9. Transportation Update**

MVPC's Transportation Manager, Tony Komornick reported that the MPO meeting will be on Wednesday, September 23. The focus of discussion will be on updating the Performance Targets required by USDOT that needs to be presented to the MPOs by the end of the Federal Fiscal Year. Mr. Komornick added that MVPC has been conducting traffic counting for the last two months as part of the effort to monitor how traffic has been affected by COVID. The traffic counts indicate we are functioning at 80% of what pre-COVID volumes were. Traffic counting will continue through the end of the year and the information we are gathering will be used in preparing the traffic studies due by the end of this month.

MVPC's Sr. Transportation Planner Betsy Goodrich reported on the Active Transportation Plan public sessions, which yielded mixed results in terms of attendance. Ms. Goodrich reported that at this time 158 participants have used the Wikimap online public engagement tool. They provided 74 comments on barriers to biking in the region, 55 comments on barriers to walking in the region, and have identified 77 lines showing the bicycle routes they would like to see in the region. She noted that some communities have had more participants than others. She will be working with MVPC's GIS department to provide further data analysis.

## **10. Local and Regional Issues**

Commissioner Byers (North Andover) reported that the Royal Crest project on Route 114 presented their redesign. MVPC's Tony Komornick commented that he has seen the previous design that was provided to MassDOT and understands there are minor differences and hopes the project continues to move forward.

## **11. Other**

Chairman Snow noted that the Commission will continue virtual meetings until further notice. Commissioners Laplante (Amesbury) and Cashell (Georgetown) noted that their Planning Boards voted to continue their virtual meetings and more work is getting done.

## **12. Adjourn**

There was a motion by Commissioner Laplante and Commissioner Byers to adjourn the meeting at noon. The motion was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call of 8 attending commissioners.

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Robert Laplante, Secretary