

New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions

Summary Minutes

Meeting of August 12, 2016

I. Call to Order

Chairman Glenn Coppelman called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. Members introduced themselves as follows.

Glenn Coppelman (Rockingham RPC); Mike Fimbel, Tim Roache (Nashua RPC); Barbara Robinson (North Country Council); David Preece (Southern NH RPC); Jeff Hayes (Lakes RPC); Steve Buckley, Mike Tardiff (Central RPC); Jonathan Edwards (Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC) Victoria Parmele (Strafford RPC); Tim Murphy (Southwest RPC); Becky Baldwin (staff).

II. Minutes of June 30, 2016 Meeting

The minutes of June 30, 2016 were approved as submitted by unanimous vote with Jonathan Edwards, Mike Fimbel, Tim Roache, and David Preece abstaining.

III. State GIS Committee - NHARPC Representative

Chairman Coppelman noted that at the June 30, 2016 meeting, the membership had appointed Sara Siskavich from the Nashua RPC to represent NHARPC on the State Geographic Information System Committee that was established by HB 377. He explained that we still need to appoint someone to represent the NHARPC Commissioners on that Committee and stated he would be willing to serve if no one else stepped forward. Jeff Hayes noted that Bob Snelling from Lakes RPC has expressed interest in serving in that capacity. Jonathan Edwards asked what the duties of the Committee would be and Tim Murphy provided him with a brief description of HB 377.

Motion: To appoint Bob Snelling to serve as the NHARPC Commissioner Representative on the State Geographic Information System Committee that was established by HB 377.

Motion by Steve Buckley, seconded by Mike Fimbel.

Tim Murphy suggested that should Bob Snelling, who was not present, decline the appointment we should consider appointing Glenn Coppelman to the position. Steve Buckley and Mike Fimbel agreed to change their motion and second as follows.

Motion: To appoint Bob Snelling to serve as the NHARPC Commissioner Representative on the State Geographic Information System Committee that was established by HB 377. Should Bob Snelling decline the appointment, Glenn Coppelman will be appointed to serve in that position on behalf of NHARPC.

Motion by Steve Buckley, seconded by Mike Fimbel. Approved by unanimous vote.

Jeff Hayes noted that he would contact Bob Snelling regarding the appointment and report back to staff.

IV. NHARPC Strategic Direction

Chairman Coppelman explained that at the June 30, 2016 NHARPC meeting, the executive directors had been charged with discussing a strategic direction for NHARPC and bringing recommendations to today's NHARPC meeting. Tim Murphy referred to the NHARPC strategic direction summary report that was included in the agenda packet (attached to these meeting minutes). He noted that the executive directors discussed the subject at their July 7th meeting at which all nine regional planning commissions were represented. He explained that identifying a strategic direction for NHARPC is not a new topic and has been brought up several times in the past. The executive directors as charged looked at the most effective ways to make use of our limited NHARPC resources. Items that were discussed included:

Legislative Oversight: Our current efforts are perhaps more detailed than they need to be. Further, this level of detail may be more than we can afford given our limited funding. Tim Murphy referred to a footnote in the report that recommends de-emphasizing our legislative oversight by limiting our focus to a small number of initiatives that are core to NHARPC and relying on NHARPC members and the administrative support staff rather than employing the services of a legislative consultant.

Funding Opportunities: Explore joint funding opportunities that involve the sharing of resources. Chairman Coppelman noted that sharing resources and staff talent allows for a wider range of opportunities. Jeff Hayes suggested that the title of this category be changed to Capacity Building rather than funding opportunities. Members present agreed to change the title.

Education: Sponsor sessions that will help to inform and educate as well as consider publishing a periodic technical bulletin with each of the RPCs participating over a period of time. Mike Fimbel asked who the audience would be for this type of education and Tim Murphy responded that it could include our commissioners, communities, professional planners, and elected officials. Jeff Hayes noted that this would serve as a primer and could be done in conjunction with news-blasts provided by individual RPCs.

Communication and Marketing: Make better use of the NHARPC website. Jeff Hayes suggested that an item should be added to the budget for this purpose. Tim Roache noted that in the future we might want to discuss the use of social media to get our messages across. It was suggested that NHARPC might want to consider publishing an annual report. Jeff Hayes noted that an end of session update on legislative bills that affect our communities should be considered.

Victoria Parmele asked how the above items pertain to our Commissioners, their role within NHARPC, and how we plan to inform and engage them in planning issues. She noted that we need to find a way to attract Commissioners that want to get involved. Jeff Hayes noted that the Nashua RPC is currently coordinating a training session for planners and NHARPC might want to consider conducting a similar series of sessions for our Commissioners. Chairman Coppelman stated that the Annual Commissioners Meeting is a step in the right direction by bringing Commissioners together. Jonathan Edwards agreed that the breakout session at the last Annual Meeting was good but there seems to be a disconnect in providing follow-up information to those that attended. Jeff Hayes noted that survey results have been shared. Victoria Parmele said that it would also be good to see the results of the SWOT analysis that the Commissioners took part in. Tim Murphy suggested that we could call upon the expertise of our Commissioners in developing technical bulletins and participating in training sessions to get them more involved.

Chairman Coppelman asked where we should go from here and David Preece suggested that we recognize the report as a living document that outlines the direction we want to follow. He also suggested that sub-committees be formed to explore each of the areas suggested and that they report back to the full Association at a future meeting. Chairman Coppelman noted that what we choose to do with the budget might determine further action on these items. David Preece suggested that we return to this item after

adoption of the budget. Steve Buckley suggested we simply approve the NHARPC Strategic Direction Plan rather than trying to tie it into the budget at this time.

Motion: To accept the NHARPC Strategic Direction plan.

Motion by Steve Buckley, seconded by David Preece. Approved by unanimous vote.

V. Annual Meeting Business Items

A. FY 2016/2017 Budget

Tim Murphy drew attention to the FY 2016/2017 Budget Worksheet that was included in the agenda packet. He noted that the difference in the bank balance of \$2,166.45 reported as of June 30, 2016 and the \$233.27 balance as of August 12, 2016 represents the \$1,933.18 that was approved at the June 30th meeting for SWRPC to continue support services through today's meeting. Annual dues were level funded at last year's rate of \$2,250.00 per RPC.

Tim Murphy went on to explain that figures entered under the expense portion of the budget reflect discussions that took place at the Annual Meeting. This includes \$8,000 for staff support, \$1,500 for the Annual Commissioners meeting, \$500 for conferences, \$500 for the legislative breakfast and \$1,000 in support of affiliate initiatives. The remaining items on the expense portion were left black to be discussed at today's meeting.

It was noted that based on the discussion during the prior agenda item there may not be much entered under legislative oversight. Steve Buckley agreed noting that in the past this item was necessary because our main focus was on legislation and now since that has changed we may be able to check on the status of legislation remotely rather than having someone there on a regular basis. Jonathan Edwards asked what our legislative consultant did for us and Chairman Coppelman responded that they served as our eyes and ears regarding legislation, attended our meetings, assisted in creating a list of bills we might want to track, provided us with legislative updates and delivered correspondence regarding our position on bills to the legislature. Jonathan Edwards asked if these services could be provided by NHMA or NHPA and Steve Buckley responded that although they both track legislation they might not see eye to eye with us on all bills and therefore, it would not be a clean mesh of services. David Preece noted that in the past we have been invited by both organizations to attend their legislative meetings and through that process have been able to gain information that can be shared with the membership. Victoria Parmele noted that she would be interested in working on legislative efforts on our behalf. Tim Roache noted that the Association should only focus on legislation that directly affects the RPCs and let both NHMA and NHPA cover those that directly affect the municipalities. Jonathan Edwards asked if we could set aside funds to pay them for any assistance they provide and Steve Buckley explained that as affiliate members we are eligible for their service but it is not customized specifically for us. Jeff Hayes noted that we are moving from an advocacy to a more educational role. He further cautioned that considering our use of public funds we need to move away from any perceived attempt at lobbying. Chairman Coppelman pointed out that we paid \$8,275 to our legislative consultant last year. Mike Fimbel questioned if we do not have a legislative consultant would we be losing our connection with the legislators. Chairman Coppelman pointed out that we could rely on volunteers to attend important legislative sessions on our behalf. Jeff Hayes agreed noting that our opinions might be better received if delivered by a commissioner rather than a legislative consultant. Steve Buckley acknowledged that as we evolve from a legislative to an educational role there might be a minor amount of disconnection. Mike Fimbel expressed concern that this is the first year of the biennium and there will be more bills presented this year than next year. Jeff Hayes noted that a couple of years ago the executive directors met with their counterparts in other states and learned that their associations all focus on education rather than legislation. Tim Murphy noted that we need to find ourselves over the next couple of years and see what kind of a role our volunteers can play in the process. He went on to explain that he and Becky Baldwin

had discussed how we could track the few bills that are of specific interest to the Association and she would be willing to spend about 1 hour per week tracking a small amount of legislation and reporting the results back to the membership. Mike Fimbel asked what SWRPC would charge to do this and Tim Murphy responded that they could do it for \$1,500. Jonathan Edwards suggested going without the services of a legislative consultant for a year as an experiment to see if there is a downside to discontinuing the position. Chairman Coppelman noted that he feels there is enough representation within the Association that can identify any legislation that needs to be tracked or commented on. Tim Roache noted that the only concern he has is if we can get along without having a set of eyes and ears at the State House. Barbara Robinson agreed noting that she would not be able to spend time at the State House on behalf of the Association. Chairman Coppelman noted that our position could be modified in the future if we felt it was necessary. Mike Fimbel pointed out that we need to make sure the legislators know we are still out there. David Preece noted that while some legislators might ask where we are others in the past have questioned why we are there. He added that if we have SWRPC track a small amount of legislation for us and volunteers like Victoria Parmele have a presence when needed we should be in good shape. It was agreed to enter \$1,500 under the budget item for legislative oversight.

Tim Murphy reported that Mike Tardiff has spoken with Jennifer Mock, who maintains the NHARPC website through Central NH RPC about what it would take to enhance our site. They feel that they could enhance the website and maintain it for \$2,700. Steve Buckley asked what the enhancement would include and was told that in addition to continuing posting of our meetings and minutes it would also include publishing of technical bulletins, any presentations we might sponsor, and posting of an annual report. He suggested we might also want to consider posting webinars similar to what NHMA does. It was suggested and agreed to increase the communications and marketing line item to \$3,000. Barbara Robinson asked if the other RPCs could post items on the NHARPC website and Steve Buckley responded that it should be passed through a gatekeeper such as administration support. David Preece suggested that this would be a good item for the communications and marketing sub-committee to discuss once it has been established.

Steve Buckley asked if the education sessions that are being planned by Nashua RPC are specific to planners or open to the public. Tim Roache responded that it is specific to RPC planners. It was agreed to enter \$1,750 on the budget item for education.

Tim Murphy pointed out that the \$1,500 amount budgeted for the Annual Commissioners meeting does not include finding a venue or developing an agenda. He noted that SWRPC could assist with locating a venue and meeting logistics for \$500. Steve Buckley noted that the NHMA event planner might be able to assist with this but was not sure of the cost. He offered to look into it and provide staff with the information. It was agreed to increase the Annual Commissioners meeting line item from \$1,500 to \$2,000.

It was agreed to enter a figure of \$1,750 under the line item for Capacity Building to be used for grant writing efforts. Tim Murphy questioned what would happen if during the year we learned that grant writing efforts would exceed the \$1,750 that was budgeted. Steve Buckley noted that there are talented people working for the RPCs that are good at grant writing. Jeff Hayes pointed out that it is unfair to expect and RPC to do grant writing without some kind of compensation. It was also noted that the RPCs should not expect this to be the only avenue for identifying grants and that each of them needs to be on the lookout for opportunities. It was agreed that if at any time during the year there was a need to change a particular budget item it could be revisited.

It was noted that if all of the income and expense items were collected and expended during the year, the ending bank balance would be \$483.27.

Motion: To approve the FY 2016/2017 budget as discussed above with the understanding that it could be revisited, if necessary, during the year.

Motion by Steve Buckley, seconded by David Preece. Approved by unanimous vote.

B. Annual Dues Assessment

It was unanimously agreed that the NHARPC dues for FY 2016/2017 would be assessed at \$2,250.00 per RPC based on the approved budget.

C. Other Action Related to Budget

Staff Support: Chairman Coppelman asked Tim Murphy if SWRPC would be willing to continue providing staff support for NHARPC for the amount of \$8,000 that was approved in the budget and he responded that they would. It was suggested that the \$1,500 approved for legislative oversight be added to that figure. Steve Buckley suggested that should be treated as a separate contract should SWRPC be asked to provide that service in the future.

Motion: To enter into an agreement with SWRPC for \$8,000 to provide staff support for NHARPC from August 12, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

Motion by Steve Buckley, seconded by David Preece. Approved by unanimous vote with Tim Murphy abstaining.

Website and Social Media Support: Chairman Coppelman asked Mike Tardiff if Central NH RPC would be willing to provide website and social media support for NHARPC for the amount of \$3,000 that was approved in the budget and he responded that they would.

Motion: To enter into an agreement with Central NH RPC for \$3,000 to provide website and social media support for NHARPC through June 30, 2017.

Motion by Jeff Hayes, seconded by Victoria Parmele. Approved by unanimous vote with Mike Tardiff and Steve Buckley abstaining.

Tim Murphy volunteered to have staff prepare the above agreements on behalf of NHARPC for Chairman Coppelman's review and signature.

VI. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Association would take place on October 13, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.

VII. Other Matters

Jeff Hayes inquired if someone would be contacting our Legislative Consultant to let her know we are moving forward in a different direction and will no longer need her services. Chairman Coppelman volunteered to contact her and also send a letter of appreciation for her years of service on behalf of the Association.

Motion: To send a letter of appreciation to our Legislative Consultant thanking her for her years of service to the Association.

Motion by Jeff Hayes, seconded by David Preece. Approved by unanimous vote.

VIII. Public Comment

No public comments were made at this time.

IX. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin
On behalf of NHARPC

NHARPC Strategic Direction

A Summary Report to the NH Association of Regional Planning Commissions
August 12, 2016

Background

Over recent years, there has been a recurring question about how NHARPC should best focus its attention and energies. Several discussions on this general topic have taken place during regularly-scheduled meetings of NHARPC. For example, based on discussions during prior meetings, the June 23, 2014 NHARPC meeting featured an agenda item entitled *Maintaining an Effective and Vital NHARPC*. During this discussion, potential areas of focus included legislative initiatives, peer learning, marketing, education, and collaboration/support of similar organizations. At this same meeting, an idea hatched to merge our legislative tracking activities to develop a NHARPC-published educational “newsletter” to 1) inform communities on planning-related results of the recent legislative session, and 2) provide individual RPCs (and NHARPC) with some visibility and positive PR. Although there was agreement for publishing such a document following the 2015 session, attempts at doing so were unsuccessful. More recently, concerns expressed during Board meetings led to an evaluation and revision to NHARPC’s process of legislative review earlier this year. Although a process was agreed to for use during the 2016 session, it appeared clear that issues remain among some of the NHARPC membership.

During these on-going discussions, a fundamental question has emerged: *How do we make the most effective use of NHARPC’s limited resources?* There is merit in focusing on various activities including marketing, education, shared grant-writing, legislative oversight, annual Commissioner’s convening, etc.; however, we can’t do it all within available resources. At its June 30, 2016 Annual Meeting, it was determined that further discussion is needed in order to arrive at a consensus with clarity regarding NHARPC’s strategic direction prior to establishing a budget for the year which began July 1, 2016. To facilitate this process, the NHARPC Board charged the RPC executive directors with developing a proposal for an effective strategic direction for NHARPC within available resources. At its meeting of July 7, 2016, NH’s RPC executive directors discussed a strategic direction for NHARPC and arrived at consensus for a proposal.

Recommendation

Following is a summary proposal for a strategic direction for NHARPC as developed by NH’s RPC executive directors. It is based on the premise that some activities are fundamental and long-term in nature, while others are based on needs of the present and mid-term which may be re-visited on a periodic basis.

On-going Core Activities

- Operate as an Association
 - Maintain standing with State of NH and presence with other partner entities
 - Conduct periodic meetings and Association business
 - Maintain files, meeting agendas and minutes, finances, etc.

- Serve as a body to speak in a unified voice for NH's RPCs
 - Recognize that, as there are 9 individual RPCs in NH, there may be times when a single, unified perspective is called for
- Legislative oversight¹
 - Track legislation related to regional planning
 - Occasionally offer NHARPC perspectives in writing and/or through testimony on specific initiatives with a focus on educating legislators

Collaborative Initiatives

- Education
 - Participation in on-going programs of partner entities (NHMA, NHPA, NHOEP, etc.)
 - Periodic NHARPC-sponsored technical bulletins
 - Enhanced NHARPC web-site
- Communications and marketing
 - Messaging to audiences including local communities, state agencies, institutional and elected leaders, etc.
 - Enhanced NHARPC web-site
 - Sponsorships
 - NHARPC annual report
- Funding opportunities
 - Shared grant-writing
 - Joint projects/programs among RPCs

¹ As proposed, legislative oversight is a de-emphasized version of what it has been in previous years, to be focused on a small number of initiatives which are core to the functions and well-being of NH's RPCs. This proposal does not envision the need for a NHARPC-sponsored legislative consultant; rather, activities will be carried out as determined by the NHARPC Board involving its individual members and its administrative support staff.