

New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions

Summary Minutes

Meeting of January 12, 2017

I. Call to Order

Secretary/Treasurer Larry Robinson called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Members introduced themselves as follows.

Tim Moore, Cliff Sinnott (Rockingham RPC); David Preece (Southern NH RPC); Bob Snelling, Jeff Hayes (Lakes RPC); Jonathan Edwards (Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC); Cynthia Copeland (Strafford RPC); Barbara Robinson (North Country Council); Tim Roache (Nashua RPC); Larry Robinson, Tim Murphy (Southwest RPC); Becky Baldwin (staff).

Guests: Shayna Sylvia, Strafford RPC; Nate Miller, Southern NH RPC.

It was suggested and agreed that we begin with Agenda Item III to allow time for Chairman Coppelman to arrive.

III. Featured Topic - Constant Contact: A Tool for NHARPC Outreach Activities

Tim Murphy explained that since the Association previously agreed to focus more on education and outreach, we invited Shayna Sylvia from the Strafford RPC to come and talk to us about the use of Constant Contact. She distributed a handout and provided a brief presentation on how Constant Contact can be used for multiple purposes. Distribution of items such as meeting minutes can be sent to a specific group whereas items such as newsletters and educational materials can be sent to a wider audience. Constant Contact also provides the ability to link to social media such as Facebook and Twitter. She noted that she utilizes Constant Contact at the Strafford RPC to distribute weekly updates, monthly newsletters, press releases and notifications of specific meetings. The platform also has the ability to track the number of people that open communications that are being distributed. Cost is based on the number of contacts you create and can be as little as \$35/month for a basic plan. Tim Murphy noted that the functions provided with Constant Contact might fit in nicely as a component of the Association's outreach efforts. Nate Miller cautioned that if someone chooses to opt out of Constant Contact notifications you are unable to send them any future communications and this might be a down side to using it.

Having arrived during the presentation, Chairman Coppelman took over the responsibility of chairing the meeting.

II. Minutes of December 8, 2016 Meeting

The minutes of December 8, 2016 were approved as submitted by unanimous vote with David Preece abstaining.

IV. Orientation Session with House Municipal and County Government Committee

Chairman Coppelman reported that the Association received an invitation from Representative Belanger to attend an orientation session with the House Municipal and County Government Committee. He and

Tim Roache attended the meeting earlier this week and were given the opportunity to explain what the RPC's can and can't do, as well as some of the programs we are working on. Tim Roache noted that there are several new members on this Committee and one of the questions was what our role is regarding Agenda 21. This provided the opportunity to explain that we have no connection to Agenda 21. Bob Snelling wanted to know if the Committee was interested in our opinion on certain pieces of proposed legislation. Chairman Coppelman responded that the question was asked and he replied that we haven't identified any particular bills at this point but will be discussing them at a future meeting of the Association..

V. 2017 Legislative Breakfast

Becky Baldwin reported that she has received confirmation that we are scheduled to host our 2017 legislative breakfast on April 6, 2017. The event will take place between 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. at the State House cafeteria. Jonathan Edwards asked who should plan to attend and Chairman Coppelman responded that all of the RPCs should be represented. Jeff Hayes noted that it would be nice if we purchased a NHARPC banner that could be displayed at the event and volunteered to help with the logistics of obtaining one.

Chairman Coppelman suggested that Agenda Item VII be taken up next since several people will need to leave the meeting that would like to participate in that part of the discussion. Those in attendance agreed.

VII. Legislative Tracking

A. Process

Chairman Coppelman thanked Tim Moore for developing a draft legislative tracking sheet and copies were distributed to those in attendance. Bob Snelling noted that he thought at the last NHARPC meeting we had agreed to work with a summary sheet that is prepared by NHPA as a starting point for reviewing proposed legislation. Tim Murphy pointed out that during the December 8th meeting of NHARPC, action was taken to appoint Victoria Parmele as our representative on the NHPA Legislative Committee. He added that Tim Moore had offered to develop a legislative tracking sheet. Tim Moore explained that he created the spreadsheet and populated it with bills he felt we might be interested in based on one he prepared for the Rockingham RPC. Bob Snelling pointed out that legislative tracking is a huge job and one that NHPA and NHMA do as part of a very organized process. Tim Moore observed that there are still over 20% of the LSR's that don't have text available for them as yet. Tim Murphy noted that if we are considering tracking about 100 bills we are reverting to the way we used to do things before it was agreed that we would limit out legislative focus to only a few bills that pertain directly to the RPCs. Becky Baldwin reported that the NHARPC Legislation Review Process that speaks to limiting our legislative involvement was adopted at the February 4, 2016 meeting. Chairman Coppelman pointed out that this could be considered a first run and we could use it to identify any bills we feel we need to be involved with. Jeff Hayes asked if this is the list that Rockingham RPC will be focusing on and Cliff Sinnott responded that it is an extensive list at this point and that probably 70% - 80% of it will be eliminated. He added that the Rockingham legislative committee might choose to cover some legislation that would not be of interest to NHARPC. Jeff Hayes suggested that the list be brought back for our consideration once it has been shortened and noted that any lists received from NHMA or NHPA might also contain legislation we don't want to become involved with as well. Jeff Hayes responded that individual RPCs can assume that role if they choose but NHARPC should not. Cliff Sinnott observed that this is something that both NHMA and NHPA look out for. Bob Snelling pointed out that NHARPC needs to focus on regional issues and made sure that any of our responses are only of an educational nature. Cliff Sinnott pointed out that tracking bills and taking positions on them are two different things to consider and that occasionally we might find a bill that we need to take a position on. Tim Roache noted that before he could endorse any positions that NHARPC might take regarding legislation he would have to run them by his Commission. Jeff Hayes agreed noting that both NHMA and NHPA have the

authority to take positions on bills in their bylaws whereas the NHARPC bylaws don't give us that authority. Nate Miller disagreed noting that any legislation pertaining to items that are contained in the regional plan gives us the authority needed to comment on them. Tim Murphy pointed out that this was all discussed and agreed upon in the NHARPC Legislative Review Process document that was adopted by NHARPC on February 4, 2016 and now less than a year later we are going over it again. Tim Roache asked if bills that NHARPC is providing comment on there could be a notation such as seven out of nine RPCs support this action. Jeff Hayes stated this would send a negative message that we are not in agreement as a group. Tim Murphy noted that the Association previously agreed to only comment on a bill if we were in unanimous agreement. He further pointed out that individual RPCs have the right to testify as individuals. Bob Snelling reminded those in attendance that the Association has been criticized for waiting to take a stand on legislation until after crossover. Jeff Hayes stated that is one of the reasons we have asked NHMA and NHPA for their input. Chairman Coppelman advised that the lists we receive from them will need to be shortened. Jeff Hayes noted that it is hard to identify the content of a bill from the several word description that is provided. Tim Murphy cautioned that members need to read the entire content of a proposed bill prior to agreeing to take action on it. Cynthia Copeland said it would be nice to have some sort of guidance as to how someone goes about bringing a particular bill to the Association's attention. Tim Murphy explained that he had to leave at this point to go and testify on a bill on behalf of his commission but urged the membership to decide where we are going from here. He suggested that we either identify a small subset of bills from the list prepared by Tim Moore or a list prepared by NHPA or establish a legislative sub-committee to look at the bills and bring a recommendation to the membership to consider.

Motion: To establish a legislative sub-committee to look at proposed bills and prepare a list for NHARPC's consideration.

Motion by Jeff Hayes, seconded by Larry Robinson. Approved by unanimous vote.

Tim Roache thanked Tim Moore for his efforts in preparing the legislative spreadsheet noting it will be helpful to his Commission.

Chairman Coppelman suggested that the legislative sub-committee be comprised of Tim Moore, Victoria Parmele and Steve Buckley. Those in attendance agreed with the legislative sub-committee roster as proposed. Chairman Coppelman asked that this item be placed on the next agenda with the hopes that the legislative sub-committee will present us with a refined list to consider taking action on. Cliff Sinnott noted that there were hard feelings last year when a sub-committee did a lot of work preparing a long list only to have most of the bills on it rejected. Jeff Hayes said this shouldn't happen if the sub-committee refers to the adopted NHARPC Legislative Review Process when reviewing potential bills. Bob Snelling added that in addition to coming up with a handful of bills, we will need to determine who will represent our positions in letters and at legislative hearings. Jonathan Edwards asked at what point NHARPC will be taking a position on bills and Nate Miller responded that many hearings have already been scheduled. Chairman Coppelman reminded members that each RPC can take positions on individual bills of interest to them and do not need to wait for NHARPC to take action on their own behalf.

B. Request to Consider HB 154

Nate Miller explained that HB 154 relative to interference to traffic devices is the same as HB 1156 that was introduced during last year's legislative session and although it passed the House it was "laid on the table" by the Senate. He noted that NHARPC wrote an educational letter pointing out the merits of HB 1156 and he is requesting that we submit the same letter regarding this year's HB 154. Jeff Hayes questioned if this bill pertains to our guidelines and Nate Miller responded that the door is wide open regarding writing educational letters. Jeff Hayes stated that he feels the broadband bill that Tim Murphy had to leave to testify on for his RPC is more relevant to our core issues than this one is. Larry Robinson noted that he sees no problem with us submitting a letter for HB 154 especially since we did last year for

the same bill which was then HB 1156. Due to other commitments, Tim Roache had to leave the meeting prior to a vote being taken on this agenda item.

Motion: To revise the letter that was written for HB 1156 last year and submit it for this year's HB 154.

Motion by Cynthia Copeland, seconded by Cliff Sinnott. Approved by majority vote (9-yes and 1-no).

Nate Miller agreed to update the letter and send it to staff to be finalized.

VI. 2017 Commissioner's Annual Convening

Becky Baldwin reminded those in attendance that if we are planning to host a Commissioner's Annual Convening we will need to begin working on identifying a date, venue and program. Jeff Hayes stated that he would like to have a look at where we stand with the budget prior to expending funds on this event. Chairman Coppelman noted that members could choose to hold this event later in the year or postpone it until next year. Nate Miller observed that if you don't continue to hold the event on an annual basis, attendance might drop off.

VIII. Further Definition of NHARPC 2016/2017 Work Program

Jeff Hayes referenced the NADO Best Practices document that was distributed for the December 8, 2016 NHARPC meeting noting that we have not discussed this as yet. He further mentioned the NHARPC Strategic Direction document that was presented at the August 12, 2016 NHARPC meeting and stated that we need to determine how the remaining current budget supports that document. Jonathan Edwards asked if he had specifics in mind and Jeff Hayes replied that both technical bulletins and an annual report have been mentioned. He asked where the funding will come from if we need to hire someone to do those for us. Cliff Sinnott pointed out that these were suggestions and were not specifically tied to budget items. He added that some of them such as collaboration/support of similar organizations does not have a cost factor associated with it.

Jeff Hayes said that we need to develop an informational piece that is better than our brochure to be used for outreach activities such as the legislative breakfast and the cost for that could be assigned to the budget item for Communications and Marketing. Becky Baldwin explained that the entire amount under Communications and Marketing was for the contract we entered into with Central NH RPC. Jeff Hayes suggested that any remaining budget funds that are not specifically obligated should be reallocated to accomplish specific tasks such as the development of an outreach document. Barbara Robinson volunteered to design something that could be used for this purpose provided the information we want included is given to her. Cliff Sinnott observed that the individuals who attend the legislative breakfast are interested in meeting and speaking with the RPC representatives rather than receiving handouts.

Jeff Hayes suggested that we identify specific tasks to be accomplished with any remaining budget funds rather than having general topics such as education and capacity building. He noted that we might for example want to explore tax credit funding or providing an annual award to a legislator who champions regional causes. Cliff Sinnott suggested that next year we might want to develop a detailed work program that is specifically tied to funding.

IX. Next Meeting

It was suggested that the next meeting of the Association would take place on February 9, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. Chairman Coppelman noted that he will be unable to attend but will contact Vice-Chairman Griffin to see if he is available.

IX. Other Matters

No other matters were brought before the Association at this time.

X. Public Comment

No public comments were made at this time.

XI. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin
On behalf of NHARPC