

New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions

Summary Minutes

Meeting of February 14, 2019

I. Call to Order

Chairman Steve Buckley called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Members introduced themselves as follows.

Tim Moore, Glenn Coppelman, Tim Roache (Rockingham RPC); Peter Griffin, Sylvia von Aulock (Southern NH RPC); Steve Buckley, Mike Tardiff (Central RPC); Larry Robinson, Gus Lerandean, Tim Murphy (Southwest RPC); Ed McLaughlin, Steve Schneider (Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC); Marcia Gasses, Donald Hamann, Jen Czysz (Strafford RPC); Karin Elmer (Nashua RPC); Michelle Moren-Grey, (North Country Council); Susan Slack (Lakes RPC); Becky Baldwin (staff).

Guests: Barbara Kravitz, Rockingham RPC; Michael Klass, NH Office of Strategic Initiatives; Cordell Johnston, NHMA.

Chairman Buckley introduced Margaret Byrnes, who is the newly appointed Executive Director of the NH Municipal Association (NHMA). Ms. Byrnes noted that she assumed her position in January and is pleased that most of the RPCs are members. She encouraged the group to let her know if they have any ideas on how to expand our partnership with NHMA.

II. Minutes of January 10, 2019 Meeting

Motion: To approve the minutes of January 10, 2019 as submitted.

Motion by Larry Robinson, seconded by Peter Griffin. Approved by unanimous vote with Karin Elmer, Gus Lerandean and Michelle Moren-Grey abstaining.

III. Featured Topics

Chairman Buckley asked members for suggestions as featured topics at future NHARPC meetings. It was explained that the presentation should be about 10 - 15 minutes followed by brief discussion. Chairman Buckley added that each of the RPCs should be taking turns doing the presentations. He said that we are looking for someone to volunteer to do the featured topic at the next meeting and Tim Roache agreed to determine whether Rockingham RPC can do a presentation on the Agricultural Tool Kit. Topics that are part of the NHARPC-NHMA partnership would be good candidates. It was suggested that the recent article on bike sharing as well as something on the Regional Housing Needs Assessment including transitional housing and tiny homes on wheels would be good candidates. Sylvia von Aulock noted that she would like to do a presentation of the RPC story map that she put together for the NHMA conference and would also like to see it added to the Association website. It was agreed that all of the topics mentioned above represent good candidates and Chairman Buckley asked members to send any additional ideas to staff. He shared copies of the most recent edition of Town and City magazine and several members asked if they could be added to the distribution list.

IV. 2019 Legislative Session

A. Partner Updates

Chairman Buckley shared a list of bills provided by Cordell Johnston of NHMA that might be of interest to the membership. Cordell Johnston noted that the list of approximately 55 bills was taken from a list of over 300 that are of interest to NHMA. Tim Moore provided a description of the bills that are being discussed by the legislation coordination group comprised of members from NHARPC, NHMA, NHPA, and NH OSI.

B. Legislation of Interest

Chairman Buckley asked those in attendance if there are any bills that NHARPC should consider of special interest. He reminded the membership that NHARPC tries to maintain its focus on legislation that relates to the core purpose and functions of RPCs. The following bills were identified as bills we might want to consider our focus:

HB 104: Relative to establishing a housing appeals board within the attorney general's office. Cordell Johnston noted that this bill has already been found inexpedient to legislate.

HB 143: Relative to incompatibility of offices.

HB 312: Relative to establishing a committee to study tiny houses.

HB 542: Relative to establishing a grant program to support municipalities in updating their wetlands regulations. Jen Czysz asked if the funding for RPC's associated with this bill would be one time only or continual. Mike Klass said that if the bill passes, NH OSI will need to work out the details.

SB 43: Relative to establishing a commission to study barriers to increased land development in New Hampshire. Tim Murphy inquired what the makeup of the commission would be and Cordell Johnston replied that it would include representation from both the RPCs and NH OSI. Tim Murphy noted that since we are specifically mentioned in the bill that this is an example of something that would be core to our functions.

SB 69: Relative to short-term rentals.

SB 152: Relative to third party inspections conducted pursuant to a planning board approval.

SB 202: Relative to establishing a stormwater management and flood resilience fund within the Department of Environmental Services and making an appropriation to the fund.

SB 285: Relative to establishing a coastal resilience and economic development program.

SB 306: Relative to establishing the housing appeals board.

Jen Czysz pointed out that four of the bills listed above mention the RPCs: HB 542, SB 43, SB 202, and SB 285.

Sylvia von Aulock pointed out that although HB 143 doesn't specifically mention the RPCs, it does affect our communities. Karin Elmer agreed noting that as currently worded the bill could create quorum issues. Cordell Johnston noted that NHMA spoke with the sponsor of the bill about this and it has been amended. He added that the bill is due to be voted on by the House today. Sylvia von Aulock suggested that rather than taking a position on this bill we watch it.

Marcia Gasses noted that it appears that SB 202 only affects MS4 communities. It was explained that the Association typically doesn't comment on bills unless they apply to the entire state. This does not stop individual RPCs from responding on their own behalf.

Glenn Coppelman asked if any of the bills provide specific funding to the RPCs and was told that HB 542 does.

Chairman Buckley suggested that the group choose no more than one or two of the ten bills that were identified to consider taking further action on. Those members present agreed to provide an educational letter pertaining to HB 542 to the legislature. Tim Murphy explained that when letters are written they are provided to staff for review and formatting and then sent to Chairman Buckley for his review and signature. It was agreed that the letter should be written now and if the bill makes it through the House it would be sent to the appropriate Senate Committee following crossover. Marcia Gasses said that she would be willing to write the letter and Jen Czysz agreed to provide assistance. Staff said that they would provide sample letters to provide an idea as to the format that is used.

Motion: To write an educational letter on behalf of NHARPC pertaining to HB 542 to be sent to the appropriate Senate Committee following crossover.

Motion by Gus Lerandeanu, seconded by Larry Robinson.

Tim Moore reminded the group that a couple of years ago Lakes RPC said that prior to agreeing to support or oppose any legislation they would need to get approval of the action from their Executive Board. Susan Slack said that she wasn't sure if that was for everything or just legislation related to transportation. Chairman Buckley pointed out that we are sending an educational letter rather than taking a stand to support or oppose the bill. Susan Slack said she would check with others at Lakes RPC and let us know if educational letters need their Executive Board's approval. Tim Murphy noted that the Association does not need a unanimous vote to take action on responding to legislation.

The motion was approved by majority vote with Susan Slack abstaining.

C. Legislative Breakfast

Staff member Becky Baldwin reported that April 18, 2019 from 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. has been confirmed as the date for the NHARPC Legislative Breakfast at the State House cafeteria in Concord. Tim Murphy provided background information on the event which is a good opportunity for the RPCs to showcase their work. Each RPC will be provided with a table to display their materials that often include posters, handouts and copies of recent reports. Since it is a good idea to showcase a variety of projects, each RPC was asked to let staff know what they will be featuring. Karin Elmer suggested that this might be a good opportunity for Southern to show their story map. Tim Murphy encouraged each RPC to contact their legislators to invite them to stop by during the event.

V. Annual Commissioner's Convening

Chairman Buckley reminded the membership that last June NHARPC hosted an Annual Commissioner's Convening and asked if there was interest in holding the event again this year. Those in attendance agreed that they would like to conduct a convening again this year. Chairman Buckley noted that we need to identify a date, venue and featured topic or theme to begin planning the event. He added that it had been suggested at a prior meeting that we could feature a panel discussion focused on planning for recovery at our next convening. Members liked the idea of moving forward with this subject as the featured topic. Sylvia von Aulock noted that her RPC had a similar panel discussion and she would be willing to contact the panelists to see if they might be willing to participate in the convening. She added that the Manchester Fire Department has a "safe station" and might be willing to participate as well. Gus

Lerandeau suggested holding the event in October and the group agreed to target October 17th from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. as the date and time for the convening. Chairman Buckley offered to see if the NHMA facility is available to host the event like they did last year. It was agreed to have Chairman Buckley check-in regarding use of their facility.

VI. Other Matters

Chairman Buckley referred to the NHARPC articles in Town and City magazine noting that we need to present some of them as webinars throughout the year. He added that this is another good venue to showcase the work of the RPCs. It was suggested that the recent article on GIS might be an appropriate topic for a webinar and the group agreed. Jen Czysz volunteered to coordinate with Tim Fortier at NHMA to make this happen.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for April 11, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

VIII. Public Comment

No public comments were made at this time.

IX. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin
On Behalf of NHARPC