

New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions

Summary Minutes

Meeting of October 27, 2021

I. Call to Order

Chairman Buckley called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. and acknowledged that a quorum of the membership was in attendance. He explained that four members have requested that they be allowed to participate remotely since it would not be practical for them to attend today's meeting in person. Two stated that not being able to participate in-person was health related and two noted they had scheduling conflicts. Chairman Buckley explained that scheduling conflicts are not considered as a valid reason for attending remotely. It was asked if those two members could still attend today's meeting remotely and Chairman Buckley stated they could listen but would not be able to vote. Chairman Buckley asked for a motion to allow remote attendance by Meghan Butts and Barbara Kravitz and noted that all votes would need to be conducted by roll call to meet the requirements of RSA 91:A.

Motion: To allow Meghan Butts and Barbara Kravitz to participate in today's meeting remotely.

Motion by Mike Tardiff, seconded by Peter Griffin. Approved by unanimous vote.

Members introduced themselves as follows.

Barbara Kravitz (RPC), remote; Meghan Butts, remote; Bill Chaisson, Jerry Coogan (UVLSRPC); Peter Griffin, James Vayo (SNHPC); Steve Buckley, Mike Tardiff (CNHRPC); Tim Murphy (SWRPC); Jen Czysz (SRPC); Becky Baldwin, Megan Taylor-Fetter (staff).

Guest: Cordell Johnston (NHMA).

II. Minutes of July 28, 2021 Meetings

Motion: To approve the minutes of July 28, 2021 as submitted.

Motion by Barbara Kravitz, seconded by Peter Griffin. Approved by unanimous roll call vote with Bill Chaisson and Jerry Coogan abstaining.

III. NHARPC - NHMA Partnership

A. Identify Topics for Town and City Articles for 2022

Chairman Buckley announced that we need to identify topics or projects to be featured as articles/webinars for Town and City Magazine through our partnership with NHMA for calendar year 2022. It was suggested that we follow the process used last year whereby potential topics are identified at today's meeting then assign RPC directors with the task of presenting a proposal of topics, schedule and contributing authors at the next NHARPC meeting. Those in attendance agreed with this approach and proceeded to identify potential topics as follows (note: topic identified by individual indicated in parentheses):

- ARPA - Assistance for communities (Steve Buckley)
- Community Power Aggregation (Bill Chaisson)
- Natural Resource Inventories (Meghan Butts)
- Data Collection (Meghan Butts)
- Regional Housing Needs Assessments (Jen Czysz)
- Capital Improvement Program (Mike Tardiff)
- Equity in Environmental Justice (James Vayo)
- Economic Resiliency Planning Recovery (Meghan Butts)
- Emergency Management Planning (Tim Murphy)
- Age Focused/Friendly Opportunities (Tim Murphy)
- Rail Transportation - New England Approach (Peter Griffin)

Chairman Buckley noted that we should identify an article today for the January/February edition that has a copy deadline of December 1st which is prior to our next meeting. Following discussion it was agreed that an article on Community Power/electricity aggregation would be the topic for the January/February edition with UVLSRPC, RPC, NRPC, and SWRPC collaborating on the effort.

IV. ARPA - Municipal Assistance

Chairman Buckley announced that Katherine Heck has been hired by NHMA as their municipal finance director and will be working on providing ARPA assistance to municipalities in the State. Meetings are currently being scheduled with individual counties and RPCs to discuss management of the ARPA funds. Chairman Buckley then asked for an update on what RPCs are doing in this regard. Tim Murphy explained that the RPC directors met with Margaret Byrnes (NHMA) and Katy Easterly Martey (CDFA) to discuss a partnership for providing assistance to municipalities. Although we discussed potential parameters for such a partnership, there has not yet been further discussion. He further noted that SWRPC staff registered to attend a recent informational session targeted for Cheshire County, received a confirmation, but never received log-in credentials and was unable to gain access to the meeting. Meghan Butts reported that at the informational meetings, it is being announced that RPCs will be available to assist with training but no-one has contacted the RPCs with any information as to what the expectations might be. Others expressed concern that no communications have taken place since the initial meeting with NHMA, CDFA and the RPCs several months ago when a partnership between the three entities was referenced. It was acknowledged that there needs to be better communication if there is to be a partnership. Chairman Buckley offered to share feedback with appropriate NHMA staff and encouraged others to send an email as well.

Peter Griffin asked if any of the municipalities have declined to receive their portion of ARPA funds. Chairman Buckley noted the last he heard is that two municipalities declined statewide. Barbara Kravitz noted that it would be helpful to know what projects individual towns plan to use their portion of the funding for. Mike Tardiff noted that most are waiting to receive full details prior to committing to a specific project(s).

V. Regional Housing Needs Assessment - Update

Tim Murphy provided an overview of a project under grant agreement between the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs (NH BEA) and the nine RPCs to update individual Regional Housing Needs Assessments (RHNA). The grant period runs from September 2021 through December 2022. The Office of Planning Development within NH BEA is assisting in facilitating developing a framework for the approach and methodology that will be used by the RPCs. Chairman Buckley noted that it would be helpful to have information in each RHNA pertaining to affordable housing compliance for each community. It was acknowledged that publishing such information can create a conflict of interest in the relationship between RPCs and municipal members particularly if individual communities felt they were being singled-out. Chairman Buckley noted this type of information would be helpful when zoning

ordinance updates are being made and given the affordable housing crisis in NH, should be addressed somewhere if the RHNA is not the proper vehicle.

VI. 2021 Legislative Session

A. Partner Updates

Chairman Buckley noted that with Cordell Johnston's pending retirement on January 1, 2022 this would likely be the final meeting of NHARPC that he would be attending. Members thanked him for his guidance over the years and wished him well.

Cordell Johnston reported that to-date, 855 legislative service requests (LSRs) have been filed for the 2022 session and it is anticipated that over 1,000 will be introduced by the submittal deadline. He explained that we will not see actual bill text until sometime in late November or early December. It is anticipated that three bills will be introduced that deal with the subject of remote meetings and will range from not allowing them at all, to decreasing the number of members that need to be physically present, to allowing for 100% virtual meetings. It was asked what the rationale is regarding the number of members that need to be physically present. Cordell Johnston responded that some feel all members of a board need to be physically present to conduct business while others feel as long as there is a room for the public to attend meetings they can be held virtually with none of the members physically present. He noted the challenge is trying to come up with a compromise.

Cordell Johnston brought to the attention of those present the subject of several of the LSRs that might be of interest to the membership including:

- Prohibiting the use of funds for lobbying
- Repealing the Right-to-Know Law that was passed last year
- Building code for tiny houses
- Abolishing the Housing Appeals Board
- Zoning requirements for single family lot sizes
- Limiting parking spaces for occupied buildings
- Prohibiting individuals from serving on more than one board at a time
- Requirements for membership on land use boards
- ZBA and PB training requirements

James Vayo asked if there was any information on LSR 2832 that he heard was filed regarding municipal representation on regional planning commissions. Cordell Johnston noted that he was not aware of that particular LSR at this time.

B. NHARPC Representation on Legislative Partner Group

Chairman Buckley noted that we need to appoint someone to serve as the NHARPC representative to the legislative partner group since Tim Moore is no longer able to serve in that capacity. Becky Baldwin reported that Mike Klass, who is unable to attend today's meeting, informed her that the Office of Planning Development (OPD) intends to sponsor the meetings again during the 2022 legislative session beginning in January or February. Megan Butts asked what would be involved in being a representative to the legislative partner group. Chairman Buckley explained that the group consists of representatives from OPD, NHMA, NHPA, and NHARPC who meet on a regular basis to discuss proposed legislation during the session and report back to their respective groups anything that might be of potential interest. Cordell Johnston noted that the group typically meets on a monthly basis during the legislative session and last year meetings were held remotely. Peter Griffin asked if Tim Moore might be willing to volunteer his services in that capacity and Chairman Buckley responded that the individual should be a commissioner from one of the RPCs. Seeing no volunteers, Chairman Buckley requested that members

give thought as to who might be a good NHARPC representative to the legislative partner group and asked that this item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

VII. Other Matters

No other matters at this time.

VIII. Next Meeting

Chairman Buckley acknowledged that unless there was a need to meet sooner, we should schedule the next NHARPC meeting to take place early in the upcoming calendar year. January 19th and 20th were proposed as potential dates and staff will poll the membership to see what works best for the majority. Chairman Buckley suggested that the executive directors consider identifying the topic for the March/April edition of Town and City since the copy due date is February 2, 2022 and waiting for the next NHARPC meeting will not allow time to prepare it.

IX. Public Comment

No public comments at this time.

X. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin
On Behalf of NHARPC