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MINUTES
STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

July 18, 2014
Community Center Conference Room #1
Strafford Regional Planning Commission
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12
Rochester, NH

Members Present: Chairman Brian Tapscott, Somersworth; Vice Chair Victoria Parmele, Northwood; Secretary/Treasurer Tom Crosby, Madbury ;Bill Connor, Somersworth; Sandra Keans, Rochester; Bob Jaffin, Rochester; Kenn Ortmann, Rochester; Alternate Wayne Burton, Durham

Staff Present: Cynthia Copeland, Executive Director; Shayna Sylvia, Communications & Outreach Specialist

Members Absent: Alternate Ed Jansen, Rollinsford

Chairman B. Tapscott welcomed everyone. The meeting began at 9:00 AM.

1. **Welcome/Introductions**

Introductions were made around the room.

Chairman B. Tapscott introduced the next agenda item.

2. **Action Items**

a. **Approval of Minutes of June 20, 2014**

A spelling error was noted in the minutes and will be corrected. T. Crosby **MOVED** to approve the minutes with this edit. B. Connor **SECONDED** the motion. All were in **FAVOR**.

b. July Monthly Minor Revisions

C. Copeland shared the July Monthly Minors affecting projects in the Strafford Region. For the purposes of discussion, K. Ortmann **MOVED** to endorse the Executive Director's decision to concur with the July Monthly Minors. T. Crosby **SECONDED** the motion (motion **APPROVED** following an amendment that occurred after further discussion). B. Connor asked if these minors needed to go before the policy committee, which they don't. B. Jaffin expressed concern with the frequent shifting of funds as reported in the monthly minors.

C. Copeland explained the projects listed and prior reasons why the funding has been shifted in regard to the regional projects. Some confusion lies in why funding is being moved back to a closed Fiscal Year. B. Jaffin requested more information on the projects from NHDOT. K. Ortmann shared that he is somewhat comfortable as the shift in funding is minimal, but would like more information as well. K. Ortmann **AMENDED** his motion to concur with a request that a letter be sent signed by the Chair. K. Ortmann **MOVED** to endorse the Executive Director's decision to concur with the July Monthly Minors. T. Crosby **SECONDED** the motion, which **PASSED** unanimously. It was decided that the Chair, B. Tapscott, would sign a letter to NHDOT explaining the Committee's request for more information on subsequent projects and particularly why funds are shifting. T. Crosby shared that he would like to know where the added funds are coming from. Further discussion ensued.

c. Draft June Financials

C. Copeland explained the DRAFT June Financials including unbudgeted expenditures such as the purchase of office equipment and furniture. She shared that the Fiscal Year was ended in a good place, and the necessary investments were made for future success. K. Ortmann asked about the dues amount paid and how each community was accounted for. K. Ortmann asked about approval of bad debt and the process for this. C. Copeland shared the process used to account for nonpayment of dues. C. Copeland shared that Melanson and Heath would soon be contacted to set up a time for the FY2014 Audit.

C. Copeland shared adjustments in the budget. She reviewed the contracts that are closing out this year and that a reserve has been set aside for end of contract work. T. Crosby asked about NHDOT and their ability to alter/shift funding. She shared that Metropolitan Planning (PL) funds are for MPOs only, and that these funds can't be taken away by NHDOT. In contrast she shared that state planning and research (SPR) funds can be taken away by NHDOT.

B. Connor asked about projects with and for non-dues paying communities. C. Copeland responded that such projects are minimal. K. Ortmann **MOVED** to accept the June Financial Report. B. Jaffin **SECONDED** the motion. All were in **FAVOR**.

d. Approval of Life Insurance Increase

B. Tapscott asked if the Life Insurance policy would have been reflected on the DRAFT June Financials. C. Copeland responded that it would not show up on there, and that she was still working with Health Trust to look into plans. She shared the current life insurance information and the potential options provided by Health Trust. S. Keans asked who determines salary and benefits packages. C. Copeland shared that it is currently an internal decision. A discussion ensued concerning life insurance policies and the budget, and the options moving forward. S. Keans shared her thoughts on life insurance and expressed interest in being involved in the process of looking at options for this benefit. K. Ortmann asked about the use of a point system to prioritize health and life insurance. The Committee agreed to give Cynthia support in exploring Life Insurance policies.

3. Discussion

a. Executive Director Goals Update

C. Copeland shared that she would send this out to the Committee at a later date.

b. SRPC Assessment Exercise Update

S. Sylvia shared that she was still waiting on responses from Committee Members. B. Jaffin asked if the Committee should still complete this assessment. V. Parmele asked S. Sylvia to send her a reminder email. B. Jaffin asked that this to be addressed at the September meeting as a deadline for completion. K. Ortmann requested reminder emails from S. Sylvia.

c. Statewide NADO Assessment of the Regional Planning Commissions

C. Copeland reviewed the Statewide NADO Assessment that was completed on behalf of the nine regional planning commissions. She shared the main themes that were identified as common to nine regional planning commissions. This also included general advice and procedures for how to proceed. K. Ortmann added that he wants to bring the issues addressed in this report to the NH Association of Regional Planning Commissions. B. Jaffin questioned the lack of any mention of Commissioner involvement in the regional planning commissions. B. Jaffin asked Commissioners if they were keeping track of the time they were participating in SRPC events. W. Burton reflected that the size of the area SRPC controls determines the extent to which you are recognized for work. C. Copeland shared that SRPC has three urbanized areas that it is tied to for federal funding purposes: the Boston Metro area, the Kittery-Portsmouth area, and the Rochester-Dover area. T. Crosby added that previously there was a council that worked with both Rockingham and Strafford planning areas. A discussion ensued concerning a group to be formed for planning and decision making with Southern Maine Planning Commission and Rockingham Planning Commission including the writing of a memorandum of how

these organizations could work together with federal funding. A discussion ensued about potential partnerships and meetings among Planning Commissions.

K. Ortmann asked the Chair if he could give the update on the NHARPC as he needed to leave the meeting early. He shared that the Annual Meeting for NHARPC went well, and that V. Parmele attended. An increase in the NHARPC budget may allow for more events in the future. He shared that events are planned for the NHMA Conference to share the culvert work done by the planning commissions, and information on broadband planning in the state.

K. Ortmann shared that NHARPC is currently deciding whether they need to go beyond just having a legislative consultant, and in addition educate people on what NHARPC does. K. Ortmann mentioned the NHARPC is considering going out to bid for services that would allow the organization to advocate for what they do in the form of education and outreach.

V. Parmele opined that the NHARPC meeting addressed issues that were presented in the NADO Assessment of the regional planning commissions. She found it surprising that the vote to put money in the NHARPC budget for education and for gathering commissioners together was not supported by all NHARPC members, although funding passed. V. Parmele elaborated that the education of non-members was not supported by the group in terms of funding.

K. Ortmann agreed that the educational piece needed to be addressed. The discussion that occurred was therefore beneficial. W. Burton asked if Nancy Johnson was a lobbyist; K. Ortmann responded that she was a legislative consultant and explained her role. B. Connor asked if there was an election of officers. K. Ortmann responded that there was. A discussion ensued about lobbyists and their role. K. Ortmann invited the Commissioners to attend the NHARPC meeting whenever available.

B. Tapscott introduced the next agenda item.

4. **Updates**

a. Executive Director's Report

C. Copeland shared that she had included a job description for the Executive Committee members as part of her Executive Directors Report. She reviewed the role of Executive Committee members. She added that this description should be added to the bylaws as an amendment to help everyone understand how the Executive Committee works with the overall organization as a corporate body. It would be an amendment, which would require a 2/3 vote at a Commission meeting. In the past a ballot has been sent out. It was suggested that the vote occur at the September Commission meeting. V. Parmele asked where the vision of the group falls in with this job description. C. Copeland shared that the current vision

statement is in the bylaws. V. Parmele asked what role the Executive Committee plays in encouraging a certain vision, and ensuring it is followed. A discussion ensued as to whether this role is included in the description of the Executive Committee member roles. C. Copeland responded that she would clarify the role of certain members such as the chair and bring it back to the Committee.

S. Sylvia shared the schedule for social media including Facebook, Twitter, the blog, Bits and Pieces, the monthly newsletter, and other news and event releases via Constant Contact. S. Kean expressed concern over the usefulness of certain social media. S. Sylvia explained that a large amount of time is not spent on these efforts. A discussion ensued. W. Burton asked if transportation over the Sullivan Bridge could be addressed in an upcoming Bits and Pieces. C. Copeland shared that we could add this information to the SRPC website.

C. Copeland shared that Senator Watters had dropped a US flag off for the office, and that Marilyn Barton will set up a ceremony when she gets back. B. Connor expressed interest in being involved in the planning of this ceremony.

C. Copeland explained the idea of establishing Strafford Regional Planning Commission as a 501(c)(3) and how this would be beneficial in conjunction with a potential designation as an Economic Development District. While SRPC can currently accept gifts and charitable donations, these donations are not tax deductible for businesses. W. Burton explained that donated funding can't be tied to certain acts of an organization. Potential benefits and disadvantages of applying to become a 501(c)(3) were discussed. B. Connor asked if other RPCs have completed this process. C. Copeland replied that North Country Council and Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission were 501(c)(3)s. C. Copeland listed a sample grant that could only be awarded to non-profits. B. Jaffin reiterated the importance of this. C. Copeland shared that the potential of becoming a non-profit has been explored before but is being brought up again. W. Burton suggested getting the latest financial information from North Country Council concerning their status as a 510(c)(3).

C. Copeland shared that she might be out for a couple weeks over the next several months.

b. Policy Subcommittee

The policy subcommittee has not met recently. It was decided that the insurance and Policy Handbook could be addressed at the next policy subcommittee meeting.

c. NH Rail Authority and New England Rail Coalition-B.Jaffin

B. Jaffin shared that the Coalition is moving forward with a proposal for an organizational structure that would require legislative action (seven members and an advisory board for a rail organization). NHDOT seems to favor the proposal,

which is moving forward. The capitol corridor is the primary focus. A discussion ensued about rail in the state, and beyond, and its effect. B. Connor shared that the videos from meetings posted from the NH Rail Authority and New England Rail Coalition have no sound. Further discussion ensued regarding the videos.

d. NHARPC Committee Update-Kenn Ortmann

The update occurred earlier in the meeting as K. Ortmann asked to be excused at 10am.

5. Other Business

C. Copeland shared that the interns would be attending a session in Durham to learn about changing traffic patterns and the boom of student housing in Durham. A similar session is being set up in Somersworth, and potentially Newmarket. A staff cookout was also held in July. B. Jaffin shared that there is some form of money for a Corridor Study for Milton Road. B. Connor suggested that information from the NH Rail Authority and New England Rail Coalition be easier to find. C. Copeland replied that we could put this on our website.

6. Adjourn


S. Keans **MOVED** to adjourn. T. Crosby **SECONDED** the motion. All were in **FAVOR**.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by,

Shayna Sylvia
Communications and Outreach Specialist

Minutes approved on August 15, 2014

By: 
Brian Tapscott, Chairman - SRPC Executive Committee