

DRAFT MINUTES
SRPC Rail Working Group
April 2, 2015
4:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Staff Present: Shayna Sylvia, Communications and Outreach Specialist

Convener: Bob Jaffin, Rochester

Members: Rick Healey, Rochester Planning Board; Bill Connor, City of Somersworth; Kenyon Karl, Maine Sierra Club; Brian Tapscott, Somersworth City Council; Louis Barker, NHDOT Bureau of Rail and Transit; David Senecal, Ossipee Zoning Enforcement Officer

1. Welcome/Introductions

Bob Jaffin welcomed the group. He shared that the group would be working on the vision, mission, and goals at today's meeting. Introductions were made around the room.

2. Mission Statement

B. Jaffin explained that he put together a mission, vision, and goals for the group to review. He asked for the group to read over the statements and provide comments for the purpose of editing and restructuring these statements. The vision and mission were as follows:

VISION

To ensure that the Piscataqua region becomes an integral node in the global transportation system and provides its citizens with reliable and affordable trade, health, housing, and recreation access/opportunities.

MISSION

To facilitate interaction between the private and public sectors to ensure that a robust, resilient and sustainable Intermodal transportation infrastructure is expanded to support regional participation in the 21st century global supply chain. Further to focus on rail as the primary component of, and the backbone for, economic development for regional viability and expansion

B. Tapscott asked if using the greater Piscataqua region would limit the group's reach. B. Jaffin shared that the group's reach must have some sort of geographic boundaries as they would not want to supersede other entities such as NHDOT, NH Rail Transit Authority, the FRA, and the FTA. B. Jaffin shared that using the geography of the greater Piscataqua region is important as it incorporates coastal areas surrounding the more inland communities. B. Jaffin shared some products that we could ship via freight overseas. B. Jaffin asked the group if this captures what the members believe the group meets to accomplish.

B. Connor shared that he invited Carroll County Commissioner David Babson and the State of New Hampshire Representative Susan Ticehurst to attend the rail working group. Both individuals expressed interest in the Strafford Rail Working Group. B. Connor opined that it is important to involve these parties as there is a vital section of rail that needs to be repaired in the North County to ensure expansion of rail in and beyond our region. He shared that funding for rail studies put in Governor's Hassan's budget is not likely to be appropriated for that function. By connecting with state representatives and senators in the North County the Strafford Rail Working Group can advocate for expansion of rail in the region, and beyond. L. Barker shared that B. Connor's efforts to reach out to other stakeholders addressed next steps on the agenda.

The group continued to work on restructuring the vision statement. L. Barker shared that the vision should include the word multimodal, as rail will only succeed as part of a broader system. B. Jaffin reworked the statement to include the comments. B. Tapscott **MOVED** to accept the vision as amended. B. Connor **SECONDED** the motion. B. Jaffin asked if there was further discussion. K. Karl added that integrated bus service should be considered. B. Jaffin responded that this is important but may not need to be part of the vision statement. S. Sylvia noted that the vision should be reworded to include access to the services listed. L. Barker **ABSTAINED**. The motion **CARRIED**.

A discussion ensued about the individuals who have been present at the other meetings but who weren't in attendance at the current meeting. The group decided to focus on the goals and forgo a mission statement.

3. Overall Goals

The overall goals were drafted as follows:

TASKS/GOALS

1. To educate individuals and stakeholders on the benefits of and opportunities for rail in the greater Piscataqua region
2. To bring together the different stakeholders in the greater Piscataqua region and beyond to create a rail backbone (with improved local connectivity) that acts as an economic engine and reconnects the region and the State to the global maritime routes and the American Class 1 rail system.
3. To work with and support the New Hampshire Rail and Transit Authority.
4. To educate/work with State and Federal delegations.
5. To advise state agencies including, but not limited to, DOT, DRED and DES with regard to the need for, and nature of, transportation infrastructure improvement necessary to provide for the wellbeing of all our residents and all our businesses
6. To identify and, as appropriate, create teams to apply for, operations maintenance and research funding from public and private sources.

L. Barker opined that for *Goal #1* it is important to address the process of identifying individuals and stakeholders, and not just educating them. A discussion ensued concerning *Goal #1* and how identifying stakeholders should be an ongoing process. B. Connor addressed the geography of the greater Piscataqua region, opining that the group should be reaching farther north. B. Jaffin opined that this area is out of our area of reach. A discussion ensued about when to use the 'greater Piscataqua region', and when to use the 'greater Piscataqua region and beyond'. The opportunity to collaborate with communities to the north of the Piscataqua region was discussed. B. Jaffin opined that the Strafford Rail Working Group can't speak for as broad an area as B. Connor suggested. L. Barker added that the focus could be on current rail in the area including NH North Coast, PANAM, and the Amtrak Downeaster. *Goal #1* was adjusted to include the terms identify, recruit, and educate. A discussion ensued concerning the uses of the different rail companies in the region and opportunities for expansion.

L. Barker addressed *Goal #2* sharing that the 'greater Piscataqua region and beyond' addresses concerns of some of the group members. He shared that improvements to sections of rail north of Rochester will allow expanded rail for NH North Coast operations. B. Connor asked if a study had been conducted looking at the Conway branch of rail in the state. L. Barker shared that a study was done in 2004. He added that he would forward the study to the group.

B. Tapscott **MOVED** to accept *Goal #1* with the changes discussed. R. Healey **SECONDED** the motion. L. Barker and K. Karl **ABSTAINED**. The motion **CARRIED**

A small change was made to *Goal #2* to address rail as a foundation instead of backbone. B. Connor asked about the classification of an American Class 1 rail, which was changed to North American Rail System. B. Tapscott **MOVED** to accept *Goal #2* as amended. R. Healey **SECONDED** the motion. L. Barker and K. Karl **ABSTAINED**. The motion **CARRIED**. B. Connor made a comment on the statement. It was decided that this was addressed in a previous goal.

B. Jaffin opined that it is important to work with the NH Rail and Transit Authority as he addressed in *Goal #3*. L. Barker asked about the latest legislation for the NH Rail and Transit Authority. Both bills have gone to committee and address restructuring the group and allowing for public private partnerships. A discussion ensued concerning the goals of the NH Rail and Transit Authority. B. Tapscott **MOVED** to accept *Goal #3* as written. R. Healey **SECONDED** the motion. L. Barker and K. Karl **ABSTAINED**. The motion **CARRIED**

Goal #4 was changed to incorporate communication with state and federal delegations versus educating them. B. Tapscott **MOVED** to accept *Goal #4* as amended. R. Healey **SECONDED** the motion. L. Barker and K. Karl **ABSTAINED**. The motion **CARRIED**

L. Barker suggested adding NH OEP to the list of organizations to work with on *Goal #5*. *Goal #5* was changed to include communication with these entities versus an advisory role. The goal statement was also edited for wordiness. R. Healey **MOVED** to accept *Goal #5* as amended. B. Tapscott **SECONDED** the motion. L. Barker and K. Karl **ABSTAINED**. The motion **CARRIED**

L. Barker shared that a legal entity is required to receive grants. He suggested that the group's role could be to identify funding, and not necessarily to apply for. B. Jaffin opined that this group would not be a legal entity. A discussion ensued as to how to focus the idea in *Goal #6*. The statement was reworked. R. Healey **MOVED** to accept *Goal #6* as amended. B. Tapscott **SECONDED** the motion. L. Barker and K. Karl **ABSTAINED**. The motion **CARRIED**

4. Membership

- a. Geography
- b. Open membership
- c. By issue (sub-groups)

These items were tabled.

5. Group Structure

This item was tabled.

6. Next Steps

The group discussed dates and times for the next meeting. B. Tapscott **MOVED** to adjourn. R. Healey **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

The next meeting will be held on April 30, 2015 at 4:00 pm.