

BARRINGTON  
BROOKFIELD  
DOVER  
DURHAM  
FARMINGTON  
LEE  
MADBURY  
MIDDLETON  
MILTON



NEW DURHAM  
NEWMARKET  
NORTHWOOD  
NOTTINGHAM  
ROCHESTER  
ROLLINSFORD  
SOMERSWORTH  
STRAFFORD  
WAKEFIELD

**Strafford Regional Planning Commission Q1 Meeting**  
Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Conference Rm. 1A  
Rochester, NH

September 26, 2019

**FINAL** Minutes

**SRPC Members Present:** Joe Boudreau (Rochester); Randy Orvis (Farmington); Bill Fisher (Farmington); Barb Holstein (Rochester); Evan McDougal (Wakefield); Victoria Parmele (Northwood); David Landry (Dover); Donald Hamann (Rochester); Stephanie Benedetti (Dover); Leslie Schwartz (Durham); Peter Nelson (Newmarket); Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth); Richard Michaud (Somersworth); Lindsey Williams (Dover); Lisa Henderson (Newmarket); Wes Merrit (Durham); Steve Diamond (Barrington)

**SRPC Staff Present:** Jen Czysz (executive director), Shayna Sylvia (communications and outreach planner), James Burdin (senior regional planner), Nancy O'Connor (program content coordinator), Kyle Pimental (Principal Regional Planner)

**1. Welcome/Introductions**

Chair Victoria Parmele welcomed everyone to the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

**2. Action Item(s)**

**a. Approval of Draft Minutes of June 27, 2019 Commission Meeting**

Donald Hamann **MOVED** to approve the minutes of June 27, 2019. Michael Bobinsky **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

**b. Approval of Executive Committee-recommended FY 2021 Dues Rates**

D. Hamann **MOVED** to approve the Executive Committee-recommended FY 2021 Dues Rates. D. Landry **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**. Peter Nelson asked if using population estimates was a common method of assessing dues. Other planning commissions also calculate their dues rates using population estimates, with some variation.

**c. Acceptance of the FY 2019 Annual Report and Commissioner's Handbook**

P. Nelson asked if more maps could be included in the next annual report. M. Bobinsky noted the consistency in report format and commended the amount of time staff put into the report. V. Parmele noted that the report is always evolving and is a good resource. J. Boudreau asked about distribution of the report. Shayna Sylvia responded that it goes to all Commissioners, each community SRPC works with, to our local and federal state senators, and our congressmen.

M. Bobinsky **MOVED** to accept the FY 2019 Annual Report and Commissioner's Handbook. D. Landry **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

**3. Presentation: Hazard Mitigation Assistance Community Outreach Program**  
**Presenter: Alexx Monastiero, State Hazard Mitigation Officer**

V. Parmele introduced the speaker, Alexx Monastiero, state hazard mitigation officer with NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM).

A. Monastiero explained that her presentation is part of an ongoing community outreach effort due to the amount of open federal emergency management agency (FEMA) programs and available funding. She referenced that community volunteers may be familiar with hazard mitigation programs through their involvement with their local hazard mitigation planning processes. A. Monastiero detailed statistics about hazard mitigation assistance dollars and how they are leveraged, explaining that there must be a state and local hazard mitigation plan in place for funding eligibility.

She reviewed the three primary programs including the hazard mitigation grant program (HMGP), pre-disaster mitigation (PDM), and flood mitigation assistance (FMA).

A. Monastiero reviewed strategies for individual homeowners applying for funding, and explained funding and cost sharing. She explained that the HMGP only becomes available through state specific disaster declaration, and that there are many eligible activities. She explained that in NH this funding is often used for culvert upgrades.

After a disaster declaration there is a 45-day period to accept letters of intent. These original requests would go through the Emergency Management Director in each municipality. Following this, FEMA then takes between 6 and 12 months to respond to funding requests, and then once okayed by FEMA, work would begin with NH HSEM to get a contract in place to review with Governor and Council.

She added that PDM and FMA are similar, the difference being they are nationally competitive. These funding programs are on an annual cycle. She elaborated that homeowners or private non-profits can apply through their community if their community is willing. However, FMA funding

can only be used for National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) insured properties. She shared that this funding source is underutilized in NH considering this requirement, and the lack of knowledge about the program. She reviewed the cycle for this funding program.

General eligibility requirements and timelines for each program was discussed, including a cost-benefit analysis. A. Monastiero explained that the benefit cost analysis (BCA) is usually the most difficult part of the application process because it requires data on historic damages and proof of these historic damages. This is something communities don't often have. She explained FEMA's process in reviewing the applications, including BCA, and their process.

K. Pimental stated that he would strongly encourage Commissioners to share information regarding the upcoming benefit cost analysis training with their community, so that interested staff can attend. He opined that it is very beneficial. A. Monastiero said that she would send out the invite for training when finalized.

P. Nelson asked if A. Monastiero's presentation could be shared online. It will be.

R. Orvis asked if all communities in the region have hazard mitigation plans. K. Pimental responded yes. M. Bobinsky shared his experiences working with HSEM on a project in Somersworth. A. Monastiero reminded Commissioners that her main objective in giving this presentation was to provide outreach to inform people about HSEM's programs.

D. Landry asked about communities having mitigation ideas ready. A. Monastiero said she could share a resource that FEMA put together, which provides mitigation ideas.

L. Williams asked about NH's low NFIP participation and how we can encourage more people to take advantage. Jennifer Gilbert is the State NFIP program manager, and so she would be a good resource. A. Monastiero explained that NFIP insurance is expensive, which is a deterrent. She added that there is a program called Community Rating System (CRS) which lowers the flood insurance premium for everyone in the community, but the community has to meet certain thresholds and apply for this to be applicable.

P. Nelson asked about the status of recent flood mapping. A. Monastiero responded that the maps are likely to be published by the end of the year. P. Nelson shared that he lives on a river and so has FEMA insurance. He added that he would like more access to relevant data.

K. Pimental said that all the coastal communities, except for Newmarket, have updated FEMA maps. The newer maps became effective in 2015 and used LIDAR data, while the remaining maps have an effective date of 2005 and are based off out of date topography data. Preliminary maps for the rest of the Salmon Falls – Piscataqua Rivers Watershed are complete; however, there are several factors being considered that are holding up progress for these maps to become effective, including the ability of the levee in Farmington to handle a 100-year event.

He added that new LIDAR and topographic data are much less granular. The new maps do not make use of new studies, but the modeling work is much better than in 2005 and prior. When the new maps are available, users will see significant changes in the flood plains.

S. Diamond asked about lack of technology. K. Pimental responded that we have LIDAR data in the region, but it hasn't been applied everywhere in the state or nation.

P. Nelson asked if SRPC could provide a service to help communities review their hazard mitigation plans to identify eligible FEMA funded projects. J. Czysz said the larger piece to consider is local priorities. A discussion ensued. J. Czysz noted that in regard to updating hazard mitigation plans, that there is a set process to notify communities with plans expiring of fund availability and prompting them to choose a consultant. If they chose SRPC, then SRPC administers the grant.

R. Orvis opined that road agents and public works should be in the field documenting hazard issues when they are relevant; identifying the data. This can then be used to plan for the future.

J. Czysz reiterated that Commissioners should share the funding opportunities and takeaways learned today with their municipal staff.

J. Burdin said that necessary hazard mitigation related projects should be considered at town meeting, in the town budget, or as part of their Capital Improvement Program (CIP), as many FEMA grants require matching funds. This should be planned several years out.

K. Pimental said that coming up with match is often a communities' biggest hurdle. He shared from experience that communities have been awarded funding before and not been able to match it, requiring them to give back the grant. He explained that projects need to be shovel ready.

V. Parmele asked about regionally funded projects to date. K. Pimental shared that many funded hazard mitigation projects in Barrington, Newmarket, and Somersworth were included in their respective hazard mitigation plans.

D. Landry asked about the regional perspective and how towns can work together on this effort. J. Burdin opined that communities do look at outlying municipalities when writing their hazard mitigation plans. A discussion ensued concerning the regional perspective when completing hazard mitigation plans including ideas for sharing and pooling of resources.

M. Bobinsky shared that the BCA process is very tough. He shared an anecdotal example of how Somersworth had a difficult time when completing the BCA for a project along the Salmon falls.

## 4. Discussion

### a. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update

J. Burdin reviewed Strafford Economic Development District's (EDD) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) program, sharing that the first CEDS was adopted in 2011. In 2015, SRPC was designated as an EDD.

He explained that the 2011-2016 CEDS had subsequent updates in out years, but that updates weren't consistent due to gaps in funding and resources. He added that the Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant is now in place to cover the 2020 CEDS.

J. Burdin explained that the whole document is able to be updated/changed. He reviewed the outline for the CEDS, explaining Strafford EDD's goal to have a concise and efficient document. This is different from the original document which was very long. He explained that Strafford EDD wants this version of the CEDS to be a reference document for our communities that is revisited regularly.

J. Burdin reviewed data showing changes over the last ten years. He shared information on changes in unemployment rate and housing.

J. Burdin shared the vision from the last CEDS. He noted the portion that referred to engaging collaborative networks, and how Strafford EDD would like to create that space for collaboration.

V. Parmele noted that natural resources was left out of the vision. J. Burdin shared that this was covered in the themes section of the document, noting the ability for Strafford EDD to pick new themes for the new CEDS document. He added that June 2020 is the goal for document adoption.

J. Burdin reviewed the timeline and goal items related to the CEDS for fiscal year 2020. J. Burdin explained the outreach plan, sharing that Strafford EDD wants to work with communities to plan outreach.

V. Parmele asked about Northwood being in the EDD as they are in the Regional Economic Development Corporation (REDC) region. J. Burdin shared that we can include data for all our communities despite three being located in REDC's boundary.

A discussion ensued about the EDD boundaries and how to best incorporate projects from the planning region when the EDD region differs.

J. Burdin noted that having projects listed in the CEDS could help communities when applying for other funding sources.

Lisa Henderson suggested that an SRPC staffer represent the three communities on the REDC steering committee. J. Burdin shared that we have been to some meetings before, but now with EDA funding we should be able to attend these meetings more regularly.

J. Burdin shared that Strafford EDD wants to keep Commissioners involved in the process as they are the group who adopts the plan. He also explained plans to conduct one on one interviews.

M. Bobinsky referenced a story in Foster's Daily Democrat about retail and how it is being impacted, and the impact of technology and brick and mortar versus online, questioning what this means locally and regionally. The article also addressed the impact of climate and how it fits in to economic development plans. L. Henderson commented on the aging population and how this impacts the economy. P. Nelson commented on how energy planning could play in, offering examples such as large scale municipal solar projects, and an electrical vehicle charging network. R. Orvis noted the importance of ensuring money is spent within the region, mentioning the potential to capitalize on ATV trails. Steve Diamond posed a question about deal makers or breakers when it comes to developing lots in a town. A discussion ensued about commercial properties and housing being built in communities.

J. Boudreau noted empty storefronts, specifically in Rochester, and how it could be worthwhile to encourage young adults from UNH to starts their jobs there, like an entrepreneurial incubator. This is an ongoing project Rochester has listed in the Strafford EDD CEDS.

## **5. Commissioner's Roundtable**

P. Nelson shared that Newmarket installed its first electrical charging station at the library. He shared that the Town wants to work with Exeter to create a Route 108 EV charging corridor.

M. Bobinsky shared that the City of Somersworth would be showing a film that evening that is related to sustainability.

## **6. Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **7. Citizen's Forum**

There were no comments during the citizen's forum.

## **8. Adjournment**

M. Bobsinky **MOVED** to adjourn. D. Hamann **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shayna Sylvia  
Communications and Outreach Planner

Minutes approved on 12/5/19

By: Victoria M. Parmele  
Victoria Parmele  
SRPC Chair