

# STRAFFORD

Regional Planning Commission

**Strafford Regional Planning Commission Meeting**  
Conference Room 1A, 150 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH  
(with Zoom hybrid participation)  
September 23, 2021,

## Meeting Minutes

### 1. Introductions

David Landry called the meeting to order at 3:54 PM. He stated that because there is not a quorum of communities physically present, as chair, per the existing by-laws, he can declare a quorum with a unanimous vote of those commissioners present. The Commissioners present voted unanimously in favor: Bill Fisher, Don Hamann, Rick Michaud, Mark Richardson, Barbara Holstein, Tom Crosby, Herb Ueda, Gary Anderson and Dave Landry.

D. Landry noted that the meeting is scheduled to end at 5:30 even though the agenda says 5:00PM.

**Commissioners Present:** Bill Fisher, Farmington; Donald Hamann, Rochester; Rick Michaud, Somersworth; Mark Richardson, Somersworth; Barbara Holstein, Rochester; Tom Crosby, Madbury; Gary Andersen, Nottingham; and David Landry, Dover.

**Commissioners attending by Zoom:** Peter Nelson, Newmarket; Evan McDougal, Wakefield; Mike Bobinsky, Somersworth; and Charlene Anderson, Nottingham.

**SRPC Staff Present:** Jennifer Czysz

**SRPC Staff attending by Zoom:** J. Czysz introduced Blair Haney as the new part-time regional planner working for Nottingham. Other staff attending: Megan Taylor-Fetter, Jackson Rand, Stephen Geist, Nancy O'Connor, Natalie Moles, Shayna Sylvia, Rachel Dewey, James Burdin and Zuzy Duffy.

### 2. Action Items

- a. D. Landry moved Action Item 'd' forward: **Adoption of the Amended SRPC Bylaws** so that Commissioners attending remotely would be allowed to vote during the meeting. S. Sylvia stated that the amendment contains minor language changes which fall within RSA 91-A and allow Commissioners attending a meeting remotely to vote as long as there is an in-person quorum.

D. Hamann motioned to accept the amendments to the Bylaws as presented, seconded by T. Crosby. B. Fisher, D. Hamann, R. Michaud, M. Richardson, B. Holsten, T. Crosby, H. Ueda, D. Landry all in favor. None opposed.

**b. Approval of Draft July 16, 2021 SRPC Commission Meeting Minutes**

D. Hamann motioned to accept the July 16, 2021 minutes as presented seconded by B. Fisher. A roll call vote was taken: B. Fisher, D. Hamann, R. Michaud, M. Richardson, Barbara Holsten, T. Crosby, H. Ueda, D. Landry, P. Nelson and E. McDougal all in favor. None opposed.

**c. Approval of Executive Committee recommended FY 2023 Dues Rates.**

D. Landry shared that the Executive Committee, when presented with three options for FY 2023 dues, came to the decision to keep the dues the same as FY 2022. The decision was based on multiple factors including Covid and the financial hardships that have occurred due to the pandemic, the cost to communities and the desire to keep communities fully engaged. In addition, it would not be appropriate to use the current CPI, which is at a high of 5%, when factoring dues rates.

D. Hamann motioned to approve the proposed FY 2023 dues rate and keep the rate the same as FY2022, seconded by T. Crosby. A roll call vote was taken: B. Fisher, D. Hamann, R. Michaud, M. Richardson, B. Holsten, T. Crosby, H. Ueda, D. Landry, P. Nelson and E. McDougal all in favor. None opposed

**d. Acceptance of the FY 2021 SRPC Annual Report and Commissioners Handbook.**

D. Landry introduced SRPC staff member Shayna Sylvia to outline the FY 2021 Annual Report, which contains an overview of SRPC projects, GIS and important work with partners. S. Sylvia explained the report's format, which is more concise than in previous years and is more measure-based. S. Sylvia highlighted digital initiatives taken throughout the year, mentioning the new website. Shayna explained that the report will be finalized once it received a few more testimonials; this was a suggestion from last year by the Commissioners. The report ends with the year-end budget reports.

At the conclusion of the presentation, D. Landry complimented S. Sylvia on the report and the SRPC staff on the amount of work completed in the past year.

M. Richardson spoke up to say that when you see the work put into this context it is amazing how much is accomplished in the year. The numbers speak for themselves, especially when you factor in the conditions caused by Covid. He thanked S. Sylvia and the SRPC staff for all that was achieved the past year.

J. Czysz replied to a comment which came in through Zoom and answered that yes, the report is available in the standard pdf format but will be available on the website in a more dynamic form. S. Sylvia added that the report is a snapshot of the year, and the website is a more interactive, timely resource.

D. Hamann motioned to accept the FY 2021 SRPC Annual Report and Commissioners Handbook as presented seconded by T. Crosby. A roll call vote was taken: B. Fisher, D.

Hamann, R. Michaud, M. Richardson, B. Holsten, T. Crosby, H. Ueda, D. Landry, P. Nelson and E. McDougal all in favor. None opposed.

### **3. Featured Presentation: SRPC Website Demonstration.**

Presenters: Shayna Sylvia, Rachel Dewey and Jackson Rand.

S. Sylvia, Communications and Outreach Planner, opened her presentation with the unveiling of the new SRPC logo. She demonstrated the various orientations of the logo which will be used depending on the representation. She described the thought process involved with the development of the logo.

S. Sylvia gave an overview of the new website starting with the homepage. She explained that the goal was to have a clean overview of the core planning areas with links on the side to components of the site. Also on the homepage is a calendar, notices and news and a featured project with links to information on other projects. Photos will be integrated throughout the website of various events, staff and projects.

S. Sylvia further explained that the website is broken into different components including projects, plans, services, and documents. S. Sylvia continued her overview of the new website which included integrated measures, committee membership information document searches and archives. At the conclusion of her presentation, S. Sylvia introduced Rachel Dewey, data analyst, as the next presenter

J. Czysz in response to a chat comment replied that the website would not contain commissioner or committee members contact information because it creates a potential security risk.

R. Dewey began her presentation by stating that the website was designed for users to find projects easily without having to know the classification of a contract. She further explained that projects can not only be found through the topic menu but also through the project portal. The high-level words in the menu are mostly verbs and not topic specific. Users can sort their search in multiple ways within the project portal similar to the meeting archive. R. Dewey further gave a detailed demonstration of how to navigate through the new website and gave a summation of the various pages including the document library, updated acronym list, community profiles, maps, projects and services. She explained the search functionality.

R. Dewey then welcomed Jackson Rand as the next presenter.

J. Rand introduced himself as the GIS Planner and gave an overview of the mapping resources on the new website. He explained that users can find anything GIS map related on the landing page under the measure tab/mapping and GIS. He outlined the multiple tabs including the Interactive Map Gallery which brings the user to the Arc Online page and gave a brief demonstration on how to use the page. He further outlined the remaining tabs and briefly described the numerous maps available to view. J. Rand pointed out where to find the map request form and GIS resources.

D. Landry opened the presentation to questions and answers. He added that he was looking forward to accessing the new website.

M. Richardson thanked staff for including the list of acronyms and stated that it is a valuable resource. Regarding maps, he asked if communities would have the ability to link their websites to the maps.

J. Czysz answered yes, it is just a matter of supplying a link from the SRPC website onto their website. She added they do not have to fill out a form to provide that link. The form is mainly for print materials and inquiries from private and nonprofit entities.

G. Anderson commented that the mapping site is a useful resource for communities.

P. Nelson gave kudos to staff for their hard work. He added that the improvements are significant and welcomed. He asked if in future there would be integrated data base access within the website and for example will users have the opportunity to see and comment on projects and minors online?

J Czysz answered that projects and minors are on the website, however, in terms of ability to comment, that is not feasible for the reason that it creates a potential 91-A violation and simultaneously staff resources are not available to moderate public comments.

D. Landy asked if one specific person or multiple staff members will be in charge of updating the website?

S. Sylvia answered that a process will be integrated, and some staff members will have specific tasks while working together to keep the website updated.

J. Czysz added that this new website was entirely built-in house, the design was S. Sylvia's and R. Dewey built it. It is 100% ours and we have the ability to customize the entire website as needed.

Members of the Commission expressed their appreciation to the staff for a job well done.

#### **4. Economic Development Program Highlights**

D. Landry introduced SRPC staff members James Burdin, Natalie Moles who were joining in with J. Czysz on the presentation.

##### **a. Economic Development District Activities**

J. Burdin, introduced himself as the Senior Regional Planner working on Economic Development Projects. J. Burdin began his presentation with a description of the Seacoast Economic Development Stakeholders Group. He explained that this group that is comprised of local Economic Development Directors, Chamber of Commerce's, State Agency Representatives has been meeting every Tuesday at 9AM since the beginning of

the pandemic. The meetings are recorded and posted to SRPC's YouTube Channel. Communities who are currently not engaged in the group but who are interested should contact J. Burdin, N. Moles or Z. Duffy.

He shared information on projects the group is working on including pulling information together for a Build Back Better application to the US Economic Development Administration. If successful, this project will provide resources for the region where the hub focus is on blue economy, riverine and coastal offshore types of investment.

J. Burdin shared that another program in the works is SRPC's Brownfields program. There are a few new sites including the Somersworth National Guard. J. Burdin gave an overview of the phases and progress of that project.

J. Burdin introduced Natalie Moles as the next presenter. N. Moles stated she is the Economic Recovery Coordinator for SRPC. N. Moles gave an overview of the CARES Acts Initiatives and the ongoing services available for communities including the Technical Assistance Program for small business, BIGS email blast, (Businesses in Good Standing), and the Municipal Records Digitization Program.

J. Czysz joined in the presentation to discuss the latest project under the Economic Development program which is the Community Development Block Grant Administration and is a new service SRPC is offering. She explained that if a community has a project in mind, whether it is housing, public service, economic development, to please reach out to SRPC for information. An advantage to working with an RPC is that it is 'non-compete' under the CDFA rules which means if you look to contract with a regional planning commission as a grant writer or administrator, you do not have to go out to bid.

D. Landry opened the presentation up to questions or comments. He added that this presentation was exciting, creative, organized and highly relative to our communities. He added that staff should be proud of the demonstration and the work SRPC continues to do.

#### **b. SRPC Resiliency Committee Update**

Nancy O'Connor joined the presentation to give an overview of the Resiliency Subcommittee. She explained that the committee put out a survey to communities of several topics of high priority including emergency services, employment security, local economy, water access and access to medical care. The subcommittee, consisting of six commissioners, meets monthly and are strategizing for quarterly roundtables. Last month the committee held their first roundtable which focused on drought. The event was well received and productive. The next roundtable will be focused on storm water, flooding, and emergency services response.

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

D. Landry asked the Commission if there were any further comments.

B. Fisher explained that a family in Farmington donated 333 acres of prime land to conservation. The plan is to create trails, fishing access on the Cochecho River and be a family and community recreation area for Farmington and surrounding communities.

G. Anderson thanked the Economic Development team for the useful work accomplished and services offered.

M. Bobinsky gave an update of events in Somersworth including breaking ground on new fire station, an article in Fosters reporting that the City Council is endorsing the Exit Ten Feasibility Study, and lastly looking forward to progress on the future reuse of the national guard property.

## **6. Other Business**

There was no other business.

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

There were no comments from citizens.

## **8. Adjournment**

D. Landry asked for a motion to adjourn.

B. Fisher moved to adjourn seconded by T. Crosby. A roll call vote was taken: B. Fisher, D. Hamann, R. Michaud, M. Richardson, B. Holstein, T. Crosby, H. Ueda, D. Landry, P. Nelson and E. McDougal all in favor. None opposed