

# STRAFFORD

Regional Planning Commission

## SRPC Commission Meeting Minutes February 23, 2023 3:45-5:30 p.m.

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair David Landry called the meeting to order and stated due to the snowstorm, the meeting was being held via Zoom with no in person attendance. He asked for introductions:

**Members attending on Zoom:** Mary Woodward, Lee; Herb Ueda, Rollinsford; Mark Richardson, Somersworth; Michael Bobinsky, Somersworth; Bill Fisher, Farmington; Joe Boudreau, Rochester; Don Hamann, Rochester; Charlene Andersen, Nottingham; Peter Nelson, Newmarket; Barbara Holstein, Rochester; Wayne Burton, Durham; Karen Golab, Milton; John Nute, Milton; Lisa Henderson, Newmarket; Lindsey Williams, Dover; Sophie Robison, Dover

**Staff attending on Zoom:** Rachel Dewey, Mark Davie, Stephen Geis, Natalie Gemma. Courtney Grugnale, Megan Taylor-Fetter

### 2. Action Items

#### Approval of the December 1, 2022 Draft Minutes

D. Hamann motioned to approve seconded by M. Bobinsky. A roll call vote was taken: All votes in favor and one abstention by Mary Woodward.

### 3. Review of the Final Regional Housing Needs Assessment Presentation

Natalie Gemma presented a brief overview of the changes and additions to the assessment since it was presented in December 2022. N. Moles stated that the draft of the RHNA was released for public comment on February 13 and will close for public comment on March 14, 2023. The public hearing to review and solicit comments will be held March 17, 2023.

Changes and additions include:

- Incorporated Commissioner's comments and shaped conclusions/recommendations based on those comments;
- Added new policies/laws enacted since the last RHNA in 2015;
- Expanded on current housing gaps and projected housing needs;
- Incorporated landlord survey results;
- Expanded on local, regional, and state resources available to help support Fair Housing;
- Added "Persona" Profiles" featured throughout the document; and
- Incorporated additional information from the NH Housing Toolbox.

N. Moles stated that the state is conducting their own assessment and this has been a collaboration with the other regional planning commissions.

Members discussed topics such as in-fill development, parking requirements, cost and availability of childcare and future updates.

#### 4. Strategic Plan/Commissioner Roundtable Conversation

J. Czynsz created a Jam Board for members to input their thoughts and ideas on the following:

- What are the top priorities in your community?
- What new initiatives are you working on?
- What resources can SRPC provide to support your community's initiatives?
- How can we support you in your role as commissioners?

J. Czynsz asked the group to be open and honest in their responses.

L. Williams of Dover shared Dover City Council goals which include Waterfront development, community engagement, resiliency, and continuing accessible housing. D. Landry added energy efficiency, new use for landfill, improvements to the waste water treatment plant, use for the Riverside nursing home property,

W. Burton stated that the Conservation Law Foundation filed a petition to have all towns contribute towards the cleanup of Great Bay. In his opinion the state should help fund improvements to the intersection of Madbury and Route 4. The town is looking for a plan for the Mill Road Plaza.

B. Fisher stated that Farmington has several warrant articles coming up for vote that that will make it easier for people to use their own property and create more housing.

M. Woodward of Lee shared her concern with climate change and how it can affect migration; as this climate havoc continues, people are being displaced. M. Woodward said the town is focusing on resilience, energy projects, and community power. Finding a balance between the past and the future is creating tension. She stated that since Lee is a small town it is tough to be a competitive employer.

K. Golab stated that Milton is small, does not have much infrastructure or business. It is a struggle to attract businesses that will fit into the landscape. Many people do not want change. J. Nute added the Milton planning board has proposed establishing a business enterprise zone on the south end of town and is also proposing regulations on mobile home and trailers on properties.

Lisa Henderson of Newmarket said she is excited about the work with SRPC on age friendly. She said that the number of folks utilizing the food pantry doubled over a few months at the end of last year. Economic challenges remain.

Charlene Andersen of Nottingham stated that the town is inundated with an influx of people and construction so any help with planning is appreciated. There is also an increase of traffic on Route 4 so they are looking for ways to create safe travel along that route. Water resource planning is a top priority. The town would like information on grants that would support the planning in Nottingham.

D. Hamann stated that the Route 11 upgrades are on a five-year plan. Projects ongoing in Rochester include revitalization and development of the downtown. In the TIF district, changes have been made to allow housing on the back side of the commercial areas to help the housing crunch. Rochester is proud to be the first in the state to have a community outreach coordinator. The coordinator helps with crisis intervention, helps people that are homeless, and

addiction rehabilitation, The executive council approved a large expansion of a daycare, and the city is looking at starting a city sponsored daycare.

Joe Boudreau stated that revitalization will attract people and businesses. There is tension between housing and business; how do we approach this?

B. Holstein reported that Rochester is looking at solutions for water pollution and flood reduction; Rochester has started a mental health group which is a collation of nonprofits to address mental health and substance abuse.

H. Ueda reported that Rollinsford does not have paid professional planning staff.

M. Bobinsky reported that in Somersworth, finally after five years, the city is starting transportation improvements though CMAQ funding. There will be traffic signal upgrades, and ADA compliant ramp improvements. Through a TAP grant, Somersworth is addressing sidewalks downtown, upgraded crosswalks and a pathway between two schools. The city is looking at redevelopment of four public properties and is working through evaluations and planning for reuse. 3 of the properties received brownfields money with the assistance of SRPC. A major redevelopment on 108 is in the works; complete streets cannot happen soon enough. The city is working with private development. Several Public Works projects and a solar array at blackwater superfund site are in motion to make it happen. In regard to the great bay cleanup, Somersworth has been working with MAM and has made progress.

J. Czysz stated that there are three major planning areas with SRPC: transportation, economic development, and land use planning. She asked how SRPC can support your communities with these services.

Responses:

- coordination with other communities on the Great Bay cleanup.
- A step-by-step guide to set up and accommodate remote attendance at planning board meetings to promote better attendance and
- Water resource planning.
- Need for regional collaboration.
- Shared staffing
- Digital infrastructure
- Work together on aging priorities
- Brownfields collaboration
- International Heritage area-great way to bring the region together-to organize historic sites
- Sea level rise
- Business incubation
- Build Support from state for public transportation funding.
- Multi-model forms of transportation
- Highlight important bills that would benefit local communities.

J. Czysz asked for suggestions for commissioner support,

Responses:

- Orientation, training, continue with providing orientation for new commissioners.
- Peer learning,
- Strengthen commissioner's role as community conduits,

- Commissioners could go to community clubs to talk about their role as commissioners and the role of SRPC
- Job description for Commissioners and expectation statement
- Conduits-quarterly conversations with each community commissioners, staff, to connect.

J. Czysz thanked the group for their input and encouraged them to contact her with further input.

#### **Citizen's Forum**

There were no citizens present.

#### **5. Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

#### **6. Adjourn**

D. Hamann motioned to adjourn the meeting seconded by B. Fisher. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 P.M.