

## Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee

### Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 17<sup>th</sup> 2020 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission  
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Room 1A  
Rochester, NH

The meeting was called to order at 9:05am

#### 1. Attendance:

##### Committee Members

Barbara Holstein (Rochester), Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth), Richard Michaud (Somersworth), David Landry (Dover), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), David Landry (Dover), Bill Fisher (Farmington), Peter Nelson (Newmarket), Steve Diamond (Barrington), Michael Williams (COAST), Mark Avery (Madbury), Wayne Burton (Durham), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Gary Anderson (Nottingham)

##### Staff

Jennifer Czysz, Colin Lentz, Rachel Dewey, Stephanie Casella

#### 2. Staff Communications

C. Lentz notified members that there were maps from the Pathways to Play project for several communities (maps of recreation sites) and they could pick them up after the meeting. He added that the 2020 NH Planning and Landuse Regulation Handbooks had been delivered to the office and could be picked up to be taken to local planning offices.

C. Lentz reminded the committee that SRPC had been part of the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) between Kittery and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. The planning and assessment portion (lead by a consultant, Stantec) of the process was nearly complete and would result in a set of recommendations across a range of issues related to the future of the shipyard and the town.

S. Casella notified committee members that she and staff were planning for the 2020 data collection season. She recommended that municipalities submit requests for any supplemental traffic counts, sidewalk assessments, or local pavement condition assessments to her as soon as possible so they can coordinate all the data collection work.

R. Dewey noted that SRPC staff and Commissioners on the Executive Committee had recently received several deceptive “phishing” emails, so they had asked P. Nelson to give the committee tips on email and cyber-security. He provided several examples to watch out for with phishing emails to watch out for. He recommended that for any email, don’t automatically start clicking on attachments

or links; look through them carefully and pay attention to the sender's email address. SRPC staff provided examples of phishing emails the office had received and highlighted the features of the emails that alerted staff to their fraudulent nature. Some phishing emails can appear legitimate because the sender can look up specific information (such as the name of the executive director of the receiving organization) to make it seem like a legitimate email from that person. This can lead the receiver to click on links in the email that can lead to other websites, introduce viruses, or worse.

### 3. Action Item(s)

#### 3.1 Minutes from December 20<sup>th</sup> 2019

D. Landry made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

Seconded by T. Crosby

Vote: unanimous in favor

### 4. Discussion Items

#### 4.1 Regional Workshop on Transportation, Economic Development, and Housing – how will the workshop results inform our goal-setting for the Metro Plan?

C. Lentz explained that in January, SPRC had hosted a regional technical workshop on transportation, housing, and economic development to get input that would inform updates to the Metro Plan, the regional Housing Needs Assessment, and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. He noted that the workshop started by asking people what their wildest dream for the region was – it could be 15-minute frequency on all COAST routes, free public housing for low-income families, you name it. He recapped the workshop process that involved working in small groups to refine participants' wildest dreams to develop potential goals, strategies, and actions to make them reality. He provided an initial summary of the results of the individual workshop groups and said it would help staff move forward with updates to the regionals plans – especially for setting goals with additional committee input.

C. Lentz provided a set of overarching themes from the workshop that could inform an updated vision for the Metro Plan. He said he thought the Metro Plan vision was incomplete and out of date. He asked committee members if they thought the overarching themes were comprehensive enough to develop a vision. He said he would be happy to draft a vision for the committee's review.

P. Nelson noted two things that appeared to be missing from the workshop: overall revenue generation to achieve the improvements discussed; and energy. He said energy intersects directly with housing, transportation, and economic development. C. Lentz added that climate change was also missing from the workshop as an explicit discussion item.

V. Parmele said it was critical to pay attention to the different realities between rural and urban communities in terms of planning assumptions, density, town centers, and housing types. C. Lentz agreed and said there was diverse representation from urban and rural communities at the workshop, so those differences were discussed and considered.

G. Anderson suggested that visioning was a challenge for smaller rural communities. It may be difficult for individual residents to envision what their town could or might look like 5, 10, 20 years in the future. G. Anderson said "accessory dwelling units" (ADUs) were a good example. Many people are interested in building small, additional living spaces that are separate from their main living space (some are envisioned as detached "tiny homes"). These can be for additional renters, aging parents, or other reasons. Municipalities are unsure what this will do to local housing density,

values, etc. W. Burton said many members of the NH Senate are also members of their local selectboards. He noted they see the value of and demand for ADUs, but are unsure how to address them and treat them under existing laws since they're an emerging issue.

D. Landry mentioned that the housing questions like ADUs are tied to NH's aging population.

C. Lentz said he would write a draft vision statement to incorporate the regional issues.

P. Nelson said it would be important to highlight success stories in planning documents as examples of best practices.

## 5. Project Updates

### 5.1 Legislative outreach

C. Lentz said he wanted to meet with the legislative outreach sub-committee following the Policy meeting to discuss immediate and future opportunities to engage in the current legislative cycle. He said there were two immediate opportunities regarding transportation legislation. First, he had been invited to present to the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Commission (enabled by SB517) regarding the perspective of regional planning commissions on EV charging. Specifically, the meeting would be focusing on Level 2 charging implementation following the completion of a current statewide RFP on "direct-current fast chargers".

The second opportunity was to potentially give testimony on two House bills that proposed new or alternative transportation revenue generation approaches. Both bills were efforts to resolve decreased revenues due to increased fuel-efficiency of vehicles. C. Lentz explained that as vehicles have become more fuel-efficient, gas tax revenues have declined sharply and are inadequate to fund highway and bridge maintenance and improvements. This trend is consistent at the state and federal level. HB 1649 proposes a "road usage fee" to be assessed at annual vehicle registrations. The fee would be based on each vehicle's fuel efficiency (miles-per-gallon, MPG), with any vehicle getting 10MPG or lower having an additional \$10.00 at registration, increasing up to a fully electric vehicle adding \$125.00 to the registration fee. A separate bill, HB1650, also proposed a road usage fee based on the weight of vehicles and the total miles they drove each year (vehicle-miles-traveled, or VMT). The bill proposed an increase to weight-based fees in current state law (heavier vehicles do more damage to pavement), combined with each vehicles' annual VMT.

J. Czysz said there were a couple of bills related to housing she would be attending on behalf of SRPC (separate from transportation).

W. Burton asked if the RPCs would be coordinating to develop cohesive messages during the legislative engagement efforts. J. Czysz said the RPCs usually coordinate through the NH Association of Regional Planning Commissions, which focuses on a handful of legislative issues each cycle. Those issues are usually ones that would have a direct impact on the RPCs. She added that there is still a seat open for a Strafford RPC commissioner to represent the region on the NH Association of regional Planning Commissions board. J. Czysz emphasized that RPCs have to be careful about balancing advocacy vs. lobbying in their legislative/political engagement.

W. Burton said it was good for RPCs to be engaged in the legislative process to voice regional concerns but cautioned that there are still legislators who might be against RPC's efforts or even wish they didn't exist outright.

V. Parmele asked if Strafford RPC would be pursuing the issue of solid waste. J. Czysz said they were and solid waste/recycling was going to be the central topic at the upcoming Commission

meeting. B. Holstein noted that the NH Municipal Association was hosting a webinar on solid waste in the coming week.

C. Lentz explained that NHDOT would be engaging municipalities and RPCs regarding the Local Public Agency (LPA) process that is required for any transportation projects that use federal funds and are managed by the municipality. He explained that many communities have expressed concern that the LPA process and requirements are extremely laborious, result in increased administrative costs, and delay projects. NHDOT also has expressed concern that the delays in the LPA process make it difficult to execute projects in a timely manner. NHDOT will be reaching out to municipalities to discuss challenges and opportunities to improve the LPA process in the next couple of weeks. J. Czysz said NHDOT would be holding a meeting at their Concord office at 1:00pm on January 27<sup>th</sup>. NHDOT will be reaching out to individuals who are LPA-certified to attend the meeting. She added that there is an online survey NHDOT is circulating to get broader input as well.

**6. Other Business**

No other business was brought before the committee

7. **Citizen's Forum** – Citizens of the Strafford region are invited to speak on the subject matter of the meeting. Statements should be limited to three minutes.

**8. Adjournment**

M. Williams made a motion to adjourn  
Seconded by M. Bobinsky  
Vote: unanimous in favor

Meeting adjourned at 10:30am  
Minutes Approved by [Print Name] \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_