

DRAFT

RPC MPO Policy

Minutes

Brentwood Community Center
January 13, 2016

Members Present: Joan Whitney, Vice-Chair, Kensington; Glenn Coppelman and Peter Coffin, Kingston; Tim Moore, Plaistow; Barbara Kravitz and Fran McMahon, Hampton; Don Hawkins, Seabrook; Lucy Cushman, Stratham; Langdon Plumer, Exeter; Richard McDermott, Hampton Falls; Robert Clark, Atkinson; Michael McAndrew, New Castle; James Doggett, Newton; Phil Winslow, Rye; Don Marshall, Fremont; Rick Taintor and Rebecca Perkins, Portsmouth; Peter Merrill, Kensington; Chris Cross, Newington; Brian Deguzis, COAST; Steve Pesci, UNH; Mark Nelson, CART; and Bill Watson, NH DOT.

Others Present: Victoria Sheehan, NH DOT; Don Woodward, Exeter; Bob Landman, North Hampton; and Ann McAndrew, New Castle.

Staff Present: Cliff Sinnott, Dave Walker, Scott Bogle and Roxanne Rines.

7:0 p.m. Policy Meeting Opened

1. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves and stated what municipality they were from or the agency they represented.

2. Minutes from October 14, 2015, RPCMPO Policy Committee

Motion: **Doggett** made a motion to approve the minutes of October 14, 2015, as written. **Kravitz** seconded the motion. **Motion carried with abstentions.**

3. Meeting with Victoria Sheehan, Commissioner, NH DOT

A. Introduction to the RPC/MPO; Trends, Issues and Transportation Priorities in the Region

Sinnott welcomed new NH DOT Commissioner Victoria Sheehan and thanked her for attending the meeting. Staff gave a 3-part presentation. **Sinnott** reviewed how this MPO was established, reviewed some facts and characteristic of the region, the role of the Policy Committee and the work it performs.

Bogle reviewed the six major planning themes or issues that came out of the public input process from our recent Master Plan update which are driving much of our transportation planning focus.

Walker reviewed the region's Transportation Plans, project priorities and their status along with the regions short and long term priorities moving forward.

Winslow asked Walker to get confirmation about the Route 1B Bridge in Rye/New Castle desing as a fixed structure. **Walker** stated he would do that and get back to him.

B. Comments from Commissioners/MPO Members

Sinnott offered members a chance to tell Commissioner Sheehan about any transportation issues that they would like her to know about the region.

Committee members spoke about: the cost of the rehab of General Sullivan Bridge (too high); Greenland signalization at Pease (congestion, lack of capacity, coordination); maintenance of bridges; lack of transportation for the elderly; need to plan for self-driving cars (they will arrive faster than we think); recently passed gas tax was not adequate; there needs to be more private/public relationships; need for public transportation; signage along major arterials (no advertising billboards, use for traffic and weather conditions instead); drive inattention; better enforcement of cell phone usage (while driving); coordinating signal progression (with vehicle speed) along 125; review the policies for using business directional signs (blue and white signs); maintain a bike/ped connection over the Little Bay Bridges; lack of progress on the Route 108 Newmarket/Durham/Newfields bike lane/shoulder; increase in bike/ped railtrails and lack of apparent progress in the sale of the Hampton Branch; greater need for multi-modal transportation; challenges with the LPA process and the need to 'right-size' administrative regulation; sidewalk maintenance, complete streets adopted throughout the state; and climate change impacts to the transportation system.

C. Comments from Commissioner Sheehan

Sheehan thanked staff for their presentation and members for their comments. She stated the dialogue was very helpful. She gave a brief background of her career and commented on many of the concerns voiced by commissioners. She noted that with a truly fiscally constrained ten year plan, toghether with tighter adherence to project completion timelines by FHWA, managing projects will have much smaller margins for delay. The system will have less flex. **Sinnott** thanked Sheehan for attending the meeting and stated the RPC values its partnership with NHDOT and appreciates the progress made in considering region priorities in the Ten Year Plan process which has made the MPO process more meaningful to communities.

4. Ten Year Plan Update – Draft 2017-2026 Plan Adopted by GACIT, Summary of changes in final draft

Sinnott reviewed the changes made by GACIT and gave a summary of each. Discussion ensued. **Watson** explained the changes made to the plan process and reviewed them.

5. 2015-2018 TIP/STIP Amendment #2 Preview

Summary of Amendment/Schedule for Adoption/Special MPO Meeting February 10th

Walker stated there are a lengthy number of projects that are being changed. No action will be taken tonight, a brief Policy meeting will take place before the Commission meeting on February 10th for approval after a 15-day public notice. He gave a powerpoint presentation about the changes: four projects being removed; 7 new projects added; five projects changing in scope; ten projects are having their funding reduced; 12 statewide projects were removed due to inflation; and ten projects are having additional funding added and the plan is fiscally constrained.

6. Update on the Hampton Branch Acquisition and East Coast Greenway

Bogle gave a powerpoint presentation on the Hampton Branch and reviewed a project underway with the UNH Engineering Dept advisor Dr. Jennifer Jacobs and the Senior Capstone class. The students are assigned to develop engineering alternatives to the railroad bridges through the salt marsh. ksaltmarsh at UNH to the conceptual plan and the work done within the last six months. DOT is still working with Pan Am about acquiring a 9.7 mile stretch of the Hampton Branch line. The next meeting will be held Thursday, February 11th.

Clark asked about moving the trail out of the wetlands and then connecting back. **Bogle** stated discussion thus far have been about opening up the causeway for better water flow and creating a boardwalk. **Kravitz** commended Bogle for his work on this project.

7. Annual List of Obligated Projects – 2015

Walker gave a brief presentation explaining the program and reviewed what type of projects are included in the list.

8. Project and Program Updates

A handout was distributed.

9. Other Business; Public Comment

The Policy Committee welcomed new Commissioners Rebecca Perkins and Josh Denton from Portsmouth and Lucy Cushman from Stratham.

No public comment was received.

10. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne M. Rines
Recording Secretary