



Rockingham Planning Commission

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MEMO TO: RPC Commissioners
FROM: Executive Committee
Cliff Sinnott, Executive Director
DATE: February 2, 2005
SUBJECT: **Executive Committee Report**

The following summarizes items discussed and/or acted on at the last Executive Committee meeting, which was held on Monday January 31, 2005.

Procedure for Meeting Follow-up: It was agreed that Executive Committee and Commission minutes would set out specific action items identified at a meeting so they can be more easily followed up.

Discussion of MPO/RPA Realignment: Landman introduced the topic saying he requested the on the agenda after learning from staff that the Portsmouth area is now a separately designated urbanized area from Dover-Rochester and therefore it is now possible to realign MPO boundaries to match the RPC boundaries. Landman further explained, and staff agreed, that the current structure of one MPO covering two planning commissions is often dysfunctional due to the lack of clear lines of authority between the MPO Policy Committee and RPC/SRPC Commissions and their staff. When the Executive Directors or their respective Commissions adopt policies that differ from MPO policies, problems arise. Staff summarized the pros, cons and steps required to accomplish redesignation. Stoller, Holden and Burke questioned the geographic and economic ties between the Portsmouth and Salem areas that are implied in making a single MPO. They are concerned that a combined area would be dealing with different transportation needs and issues. Sinnott said that to some extent, the same is true for the existing MPO areas, but that if redesignation went forward it would be advisable to maintain two separate TACs to focus on transportation system differences in the sub-areas. Staff sees four major advantages in the redesignation: less duplication, more efficiency and greater fairness in the application of staff and Commission resources; consistency in land use and transportation planning in the region; alignment of Policy Committee and Commission functions and their oversight of staff; creating a more understandable, accessible MPO structure from the standpoint of local communities and the State DOT. It was determined to continue this discussion at a subsequent meeting. In the meantime Sinnott will begin discussions the prospect with SRPC's Executive Director to gauge their reaction to the idea.

Financial Report: The Committee reviewed the financial report covering the months of November and December. At the 50% mark in the year, 40.3% of the operating budget has been expended, while 38.1% of anticipated revenues have been received. Sinnott noted that cash flow is very tight at the moment and is expected to remain so until dues begin to be received after Town Meeting time. It became necessary to access the Commission's line of credit at the end of January.

Project Tracking Report: Landman said he was pleased how the tracking report is developing; it shows the information necessary for the intended purpose. Brown asked that as part of verbal report, staff highlight projects that are falling behind in schedule or running ahead in expenses, along with any additional information about the circumstances. In addition it was suggested that an additional column be added to show 'percent complete' for the entire project for projects that span multiple fiscal years or phases. Stoller asked that staff continue to monitor the time required to produce the report.

Circuit Rider Program: Sinnott indicated that the mid-year status reports are being developed and sent out; early indications are that costs are staying more closely in line expenditures.

Planner Search: Sinnott reported that the selection is down to two candidate and that a offer would be made in the near future.

Legislative Update: Sinnott said that Sen. Martha Clark (Portsmouth) has submitted a CACR (Constitutional Amendment Resolution) that would amend Article 6A to remove gas tax spending restrictions on public transportation projects. She requested that the Commission support and testify in favor of the CACR. Sinnott did so, since this is an adopted policy of both MPOs. The NHARPC will meet on February 10th to consider Association support for the identified legislative priorities.

Contract Amendment: The Committee authorized the Executive Director to enter into a contract amendment for the NH Coastal Program Smart Growth project for a time-only extension to June 2005 and to modify the scope to include Master Plan assistance for Rye.