



Rockingham Planning Commission

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MEMO TO: RPC Commissioners
FROM: Executive Committee
Cliff Sinnott, Executive Director
DATE: November 4, 2004
SUBJECT: **Executive Committee Report**

The following summarizes items discussed and/or acted on at the last Executive Committee meeting, which was held on November 3rd, 2004.

Communications: Sinnott notified the Committee that Maura Carriel, Senior Planner, will be leaving the Commission in mid January to pursue a nursing career. She will begin an accelerated degree program offered at UNH. Maura had been pursuing part time course work during the past six months and has decided that it is a career change she would like to make. It is an exciting change for her, though a sad development for the RPC, as Maura is very highly regarded among the staff, her peers around the state and in her towns. Greenwood outlined plans for finding her replacement. We will hire a regional planner (mid-level) and focus our advertising on web-based resources: APA Jobmart, NNECAPA, OEP and NH Planner's Association. An optimistic schedule would have a replacement on-board in late December/early January. The goal is to have some time for overlap.

Financial Report: The Committee reviewed the financial report covering through August. B. Brown asked when the accounting for a month closes and whether the reports could be completed sooner. Pettengill explained that the accounting closes on the last day of the month, but that the allocation process (based on time sheets) takes about four weeks after the close to be completed. If time sheets are completed on time, financial reports prepared at the end of a month would normally include the previous month's information.

Budget Amendment #1 for FY 05: This item was tabled from the September meeting due to lack of time. Sinnott said that the amended funding (Table 1) and line item (Table 2) budgets had changed slightly since September. This amendment is an outgrowth of having received more information about the certainty/uncertainty of some funding sources (especially REPP and CDFA) and the intention of the Executive Committee to revisit salary adjustments – which were not incorporated into the original budget. The revised funding budget shows a net reduction in revenues of about \$12,000 or 1%, however, the line item budget has a \$22,370 increase in unobligated funds, due to cost savings in contracted services. The Executive Committee approved the Executive Director's recommendation that \$12,500 be taken from the unobligated line item and added to salary line item to fund a cost-of-living adjustment. This would be sufficient to pay for salary adjustments of about 2.9% if applied across the board. (The CPI for the Northeast US for 2003 was 2.8%; the annual average to-date in 2004 is 3.1%.) With this change budget amendment #1 was approved. (Copies of the full budget amendment will be available at the November Commission meeting for those who wish to have copies.)

Circuit Rider Program: Greenwood summarized the actions that staff intends to take to address the cost overruns experienced in the circuit rider program, as follows:

1. continue to encourage towns to adopt the 2 tier contract model, including suggested improvements to the contract language, to better account for variable plan review time outside the "core" hours of the circuit rider service;
2. provide a mid-year report to the circuit rider client summarizing (1) the hours and dollars expended to date; (2) to what degree those expenditures are over or under what is budgeted;

- (3) if over expended, what remedies are recommended to address the excess expenses (contract amendment; reduction of hours; night meeting time limits, etc.);
3. make use of the mid-year report as a reference in estimating the hours to be included in subsequent year's contract;
4. more frequent reporting back to staff planners on the status of expenditures on their individual circuit rider contracts.

Project Tracking: Sinnott distributed a prototype of a monthly project tracking report that will be used both internally as a project management tool and externally as reporting tool for the Executive Committee. It includes three main elements: staff assignments/and workload distribution; contract/ project schedule; and contract/ project revenues and expenditures. Stoller is concerned about the time required to complete the report compared to the expected benefit. Sinnott said it will take considerable time to complete each month, but that he believes that it is necessary to improve project management discipline and financial performance at the agency. It will help focus all staff on the timeliness of project completion. Sinnott said he will try to return next month with a completed report for one month, a time estimate for completing the report and options for automating or otherwise streamlining the process.

NEARC and NHARPC Reports: Sinnott and Stoller reported on the NH Assoc. of Regional Planning Commissions meeting held on October 14. Draft Planning Principles were approved for Commission review; a legislative agenda was begun, and options for improved marketing/outreach form Commission through the Association was discussed. The next meeting is November 18 at noon at the LGC. Landman reported on the New England Assoc. of Regional Council annual meeting held in Providence. Good sessions on housing, historic preservation/economic devel. and transportation were held. NEARC will incorporate as a non-profit entity to be able to accept grants; long-term goal is for NEARC to take the lead among other New England based organizations to establish a 'New England Compact' to jointly address chronic infrastructure deficiencies and interstate cooperation.

Other Business: A draft of the November Commission Meeting was reviewed; it was decided to postpone one proposed agenda item (regional housing chapter) to allow sufficient time for the others. Sinnott informed the Committee that staff is working on two grant proposals that will need Commission endorsement, one for the EPA Brownfield's program and one for the preparation of a Conservation Plan for the NH Coastal watershed (joint proposal with SRPC, Nature Conservancy and Forest Society).