



Rockingham Planning Commission

ATTACHMENT 7

156 Water Street, Exeter NH 03833
PH: 603-778-0885 • FX: 603-778-9183
email@rpc-nh.org • www.rpc-nh.org

MINUTES ROCKINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION September 20, 2007

Seacoast Science Center
Odiorne State Park, Rye, NH

Commissioners Present: T. Tocci, Chairman; R. McDermott (Hampton Falls); T. Moore, M. Senter (Plaistow); B. Gregg (Portsmouth); F. Griffin, L. Ingram (Exeter); B. Brown (Rye); M. Friedman (Hampton); B. Landman (North Hampton); G. Coppelman, K. Weyler (Kingston); C. Chimera (So. Hampton); B. Goodrich (Stratham); J. Whitney (Kensington); A. Khan (Seabrook); L. Maloney, A. Stoller (Windham); J. Payzant (New Castle); B. McLean, P. Bearse (Fremont)

Guests: B. Kravitz (Seabrook Planning Board); Jim Chase, Seacoast Science Center

Staff: C. Sinnott (Executive Director); A. Pettengill (Business Manager)

6:00 – 7:00 Seacoast Science Center Tour & Refreshments

- I. **Welcome:** Chairman Tocci convened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. and introductions were made. He thanked the Science Center for their hospitality and introduced Jim Chase, Assistant Director, Seacoast Science Center. Chase welcomed everyone to the new Gregg Interactive Learning Lab and provided background about how the center is funded and the goals of the center. He explained the new technology behind the educational programs at the Learning Center, how the facility works as a remote and interactive learning facility, how it has been used to date and plans for the future.
- II. **GRANIT Update:** Tocci introduced Fay Rubin, Project Director at Complex Systems Research Center, UNH

Rubin explained she was asked to give a demonstration of the GRANIT Data Mapper, review the land use mapping project, and provide a preview of a land use modeling effort. She began by explaining that GRANIT (Geographic Referenced Analysis Information Transfer) is the central GIS Data Clearinghouse in New Hampshire, housed at the University of New Hampshire and has existed as such for about 20 years. Their core activity is data development, standards development, spatial data analysis and training and support. She demonstrated the "GRANIT Data Mapper," which is a new web based tool offering public access to geospatial data archived in GRANIT. The development of the Data Mapper was funded by the NH GIS Conservation Collaborative and by the NH Charitable Foundation. The purpose is to make the basic maps and GIS data sets commonly used in town level planning easily available to municipal officials, especially local land use board members. Anyone interested in the website can go to <http://mapper.granit.unh.edu>. She also reviewed Complex System's current projects including the I-93 CTAP detailed land use mapping effort coordinated by RPC and GRANIT and showed the initial products of 2005 land use maps.

Rubin answered many questions from the audience regarding data layers and data sets, and future enhancements. New modules will be incorporated and graphing options will be refined. Rubin continued by explaining the CICEET and Land Use Projects in more detail.

III. Minutes of July 11, 2007

Weyler moved to approve the Minutes of July 11, 2007 as presented; Landman seconded. SO VOTED. Ingram and Gregg abstained.

IV. MPO Update

- a. GACIT Hearings: Sinnott noted that the first GACIT Hearings was held on Sep 19th in Brentwood; next will be Sept 26th in Portsmouth and Sept 27th in Salem. Councilor Hollingworth asked the RPC staff to respond to the Draft 10 Year Transportation Improvement Plan and Sinnott included the response with this meeting packet (Attachment 2B). Sinnott asked that Commissioners respond to the Draft and raise any objections or disagreements in policy with staff. He reviewed the RPC's comments regarding gas tax increase, funding of turnpike projects, and the availability of funds for smaller local and regional projects, and pertaining to several specific projects.

Sinnott informed Commissioners that at the first GACIT Hearing (in Kingston the night before) there was general discontent from Kingston TAC members and a letter from the Selectmen regarding the staff comments on the Route 125 Widening project in Kingston. Sinnott explained the staff's opinion: based on the necessity to cut most projects, either in scope of timeframe or both, the DOT's recommendation for 125 – to retain all the intersection upgrades but defer the two northern most widening segments – represented a reasonable approach and prioritized the components of the project appropriately. Coppelman, Weyler and Sinnott explained a compromise offered by Kingston officials – that one of the two deferred widening components be merged with the Roadstone intersection project and recommended the RPC's position change to reflect this compromise.

Discussion followed regarding the State's General Fund and fines, fees, and gas tax. Landman suggested there be a process in place for municipalities to enter into agreement with the State DOT to move forward and take on projects on State roads with private and municipal funds during this funding crisis. Weyler stated his opinion that it be incumbent on the DOT to set some parameters regarding their project choice and use measurable criteria. Sinnott stated that they do have criteria and that included such factors as whether a road segment contained red-listed bridges, whether the project had logical segments for phasing. They also use recommendation from the RPCs as input. Any further comments about the RPC Comments should be emailed to Sinnott. Final comments will be sent to Commissioners before the October 10th meeting and Sinnott will ask for adoption by the full Board in October.

A brief discussion regarding email meeting notices and paper copies followed. It was suggested that a threshold of pages be established in order to keep printing costs down for Commissioners receiving emailed meeting packets. Major planning documents to be acted on by the Commission, for example, should be mailed. Anyone wishing to receive paper copies of the mailing and not already on the list should call the office.

- b. Request from Association of General Contractors re: transportation funding and project planning (Attachment 3)

Sinnott explained that the Associated General Contractors of NH have developed a policy statement regarding the need to address the demand-side of highway capacity through transit and land use coordination. They are asking that the RPC sign on to this policy statement. Ingram stated he felt uncomfortable supporting a private company that we have no control over. Chimera asked if this policy statement goes against the Commission Policies and Sinnott replied that in general it all agrees with RPC policies, however it does have some blanket statements that may conflict. Moore stated that he didn't want to give a blanket approval of support for a group of policies of another organization. General consensus was not to support this Policy Statement.

c. MPO Organizational Meetings

Tocci reminded Commissioners that we are officially the Rockingham MPO and there will be an organizational meeting for the TAC on September 25th and the Policy Committee on October 10th.

V. Targeted Block Grant Local Technical Assistance for FY 08

Tocci referred to Attachment 4 and reviewed the projects that were chosen. Sinnott noted that Stratham had also applied for a transportation master plan chapter using these funds, but staff was able to move that to a transportation funded program.

VI. Contract and Application Approvals

A. Brownfields Petroleum Grant application: Sinnott explained that the RPC was advised by the EPA to apply for a petroleum grant now, so that later in the process of defining Brownfields sites, we'll have the ability to access petroleum assessment funds for those sites with petroleum contamination. He explained that it is a way of reserving the general Brownfields assessment funds for site with more complex contamination. A formal vote of the Commission is not necessary; EPA wants assurance that the Commission is made aware that an application is being submitted. If successful, a formal vote will need to occur prior to the acceptance of funds, if the application.

B. UNH/NH Estuaries Project: Wellhead Protection Program-Exeter: Sinnott referred to Attachment 5. The wellhead protection program the recharge areas for municipal and community water supply wells and implement certain landowner education and best management practices in these the treat for contaminating the supplies. *Landman moved to approve the Exeter Wellhead Protection Program contract through NH Estuaries Program; Senter seconded. SO VOTED.*

VII. Update: Potential RPC Energy Planning Initiatives in local and regional level

Sinnott distributed an updated memo from E. Steltzer proposing agency activities and services to towns regarding energy issues and planning assistance. This is a refinement of the ideas discussed at the July meeting. At the local level: 1) Develop a model energy chapter; 2) wind energy assessment map; 3) green building ordinance; 4) wind energy ordinance; At the regional level: 1) staff member appointed to the NH Tidal Energy Commission; 2) applying for a NH Charitable Foundation Grant application to fund energy assistance programs for the region; 3) coastal hazards 'adaptation' planning and zoning strategies.

VIII. Other Business

A. Communications: Sinnott noted that Moore was appointed to the NH Rail Authority as the RPC representative - an update will follow at the October meeting. Sinnott distributed a handout explaining the Regional Environmental Planning Program Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques Guide. It addresses the need for guidance and technical assistance regarding Land Use Controls. Any communities interested in tackling an innovative zoning ordinance should contact staff. Senter stated that CART has celebrated its 10,000th rider and has been in operation for about a year. She thanked the RPC staff, especially Scott Bogle for his immense talents in coordinating and facilitating the organization of CART and support of the project. Tocci noted that Commissioners should take a look at a new building in Exeter next to the RPC office. It's a great example of mixed use design with both affordable and market price residential space with retail space at the street level. The RPC staff should be commended for supporting the project and providing guidance along the way.

- B. Executive Committee Report: Tocci noted that the Annual Meeting Committee was formed at the last Executive Committee meeting. Commissioner Orientation will be held in conjunction with the Executive Committee Meeting on October 24th at 6:00 p.m. at the RPC office.
- C. Legislative Forum Planning: Unutil has been contacted regarding hosting the meeting on November 14th.

Adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette L. Pettengill
Recording Secretary