



**APPROVED – MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Held at the NRPC Office
30 Temple Street, Suite 310, Nashua, NH
September 18th, 2019**

Members Present:

Susan Ruch, Amherst
Tamara Sorell, Brookline
James Battis, Hudson
Karin Elmer, Merrimack
Tim Tenhave, Merrimack
Janet Langdell, Milford
Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon
Tim Berry, Mont Vernon
Ed Weber, Nashua
Dave Hennessey, Pelham
Jim Kofalt, Wilton

Sarah Marchant, Nashua

Others Present:

William Rose, NH DOT
Tim White, NH DES
George Reagan, NHHFA
Michael Croteau, Town of Litchfield

Staff Present:

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director
Sara Siskavich, Assistant Director
John Goeman, Land Use Planner II
Matt Waitkins, Transportation Planner
Sabrina Pedersen, Community Relations
Coordinator
Gregg Lantos, MPO Coordinator

Welcome and Introductions:

Elmer opened the meeting at 7:04 pm with a round of introductions.

Privilege of the Floor:

No members of the public wished to speak.

Approval of the Minutes – June 19th, 2019

Elmer asked if there were any comments on the minutes of June 19th, 2019. Fimbel asked for his name to be added to the minutes. Sorell asked for a spelling change in her last name.

It was noted that that no one was identified as having made or seconded the motion to adopt the Public Involvement Process. It was agreed to table adoption of the minutes to review meeting notes.

Langdell motioned with a second from Ruch,

THAT the minutes of June 19th, 2019 be tabled to the December meeting.

The motion **carried** with no abstentions.

Presentation – George Reagan, Manager of Community Engagement, NH Housing Finance Authority: NHHFA Programs & Priorities

Reagan presented an overview of NHHFA's organization, funding and programs followed by an assessment of the overall state and regional housing market. He shared that Sarah Marchant, Director of Community Development in Nashua, serves on the NHHFA Board of Directors. Reagan discussed in detail NHHFA's involvement in housing including the Federal Housing Choice Voucher Program, multi-family housing development, homeownership, the rental cost survey, the economic development challenge, and the annual housing market reports.

Presentation slides can be accessed [here](https://www.nashuarpc.org/download_file/3170/) (URL https://www.nashuarpc.org/download_file/3170/).

Website: GoNewHampshireHousing.com

Presentation – John Goeman, Regional Planner III: Draft NRPC Regional Housing Needs Assessment

Goeman presented an overview of the draft NRPC Regional Housing Needs Assessment. Goeman discussed the state statutes, household demographics, housing characteristics and trends, housing market and affordability, and an analysis of workforce housing.

Presentation slides can be accessed [here](https://www.nashuarpc.org/download_file/3169/) (URL https://www.nashuarpc.org/download_file/3169/).

The floor opened to questions and discussion:

Concern was expressed that in some cases, income levels are not high enough for people to afford rental housing. Minkarah provided an important caveat that some of the communities, the sample size for rental housing is very small. In more rural communities, you might see a high percentage of households that are cost-burdened, but the actual number is relatively small.

Fimbel expressed concern about the appropriateness of workforce housing for some communities, especially for small towns like Mont Vernon or Lyndeborough with limited tax bases. Goeman agreed that no one approach is appropriate for all communities. Minkarah added that it is important to offer a wide variety of alternatives that are appropriate for each community.

Langdell commented that it is very important that we be very clear about the definitions and requirements in the RSA in terms of the language around 'workforce'.

Weber commented that Millennials would probably prefer to rent and not own a car.

Hennessey shared that single-family homes are beginning to rent out rooms as multi-family homes, raising the concern about how to gather accurate data.

Elmer commented about the challenge of attracting homebuyers to areas with no cell coverage.

Langdell noted that in past versions of this document, housing stock information by town was included in the report. Goeman will include. Single-family and multi-family, ADUs, age restrictions included. Elmer asked to separate housing that is approved but not constructed yet.

Tenhaven asked about the average monthly listings figure. Hennessey explained that the number of listings has decreased over the last 6 years. The driving factor may be a decreased turnover rate.

Weber commented on the benefits of public transportation. Minkarah added that NRPC is conducting a transit feasibility study and has current data for travel-to-work which could be added to the housing needs assessment. Hennessey added that Nashua does a survey for sellers and buyers. There is a question pertaining to how long it takes for commuters to travel to work.

Bylaws Amendment

Minkarah described three proposed changes to the bylaws. First, the Nashua Transit System (NTS) is proposed to be added as a member of the Commission to comply with federal requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) policy boards in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs). Second, there is unnecessary language in the Executive Committee section that is proposed to be removed. Third, the titles of officers should be changed to become gender-neutral. Minkarah noted that the Commission is also the MPO policy board.

Minkarah confirmed that the commission and MPO can serve as one entity and noted that is how the other MPOs also function. Rose agreed that both can serve as one entity. Langdell asked Minkarah about the MPO policy group being separated from the Commission. Minkarah said that it is possible, but that he had not contemplated creating a separate policy board at this point.

Minkarah discussed that there has been an oversight in that NTS is not recognized as an official member in the bylaws though it is referenced as a member in other places. Options were discussed about the impact of including NTS on the Commission.

Langdell commented that adding NTS gives Nashua one more vote. She asked whether NTS could fill one of the already existing seats for Nashua. Minkarah stated that he would have to confirm this with the City of Nashua.

Langdell commented on the possibility of changing the RSA relative to Regional Planning Commission membership. Specifically, she thinks that an employee of a community who does not reside in that community should be able to represent the community.

Tenhaven noted that a bylaws amendment requires a two-thirds vote to pass.

Battis motioned with a second from Fimbel,

THAT the NRPC bylaws be adopted with the proposed amendments.

The motion **failed**.

Minkarah commented that a decision about NTS membership does not have to be made at this meeting. Ruch and Tenhaven agreed that it would be best to speak about NTS membership at the next Commission meeting. Weber expressed concern about a two-thirds majority being at the next meeting for taking a look at this decision. Kofalt added that he is in favor of tabling the decision to a future meeting after NRPC has had a chance to discuss with NTS and the City of Nashua.

Battis motioned, with a second from Fimbel,

THAT the proposed amendments to the NRPC bylaws be tabled.

The motion **passed.**

Transportation Project Updates

There are two upcoming public hearings for the 2021 – 2030 Ten Year Plan. The first is on September 25th, 2019 at Nashua City Hall. The second is on September 26th, 2019 at Milford Town Hall. Both are at 6 p.m.

Applications for Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) are closed now. Milford submitted two project applications and Nashua submitted one as well. No ranking process will be needed since it appears that all eligible projects will be funded.

The current stages of the Nashua Transit feasibility study were discussed.

The MPO certification review will be happening on October 23rd to 24th.

Waitkins shared that the Locally Coordinated Plan is in the process of being updated. Federal law requires that projects selected under enhanced mobility (5310 program) need to be included in the plan. Weber asked if Lift and Uber will be engaged within the planning process. Langdell explained that the core of this plan happened prior to the existence of Uber and Lift. She also added that the cost of Uber and Lift is equal and even greater than a taxi ride. Hennessey agreed with Weber that Uber and Lift should be included in the plan as he suspects that these services are potentially impacting traffic congestion. Weber asked if NRPC has reached out to BAE and other companies if they are interested in being part of the shuttle service. Waitkins explained that BAE has an NTS shuttle to downtown Nashua, thus they would be included in this plan. Waitkins concluded that this program does fund Souhegan Valley Rides. He hopes that the plan will be completed by March 2020.

NRPC will be completing an air quality analysis and intersection countings for CMAQ.

General Updates

- The Regional Plan is in process and will be presented at a future meeting.
- NRPC received a brownfield grant for \$300,000, which will begin on October 1st and run for a 3-year period.
- NRPC received an EDA grant for \$42,181 to fund the Nashua Millyard Development Plan and Wilton Collaborative Workspace Feasibility Project.
- The next Household Hazardous Waste event will be October 5th at the Nashua Public Garage.

Commissioner's Roundtable

Brookline: there is a new organic juice store in town; the town will be celebrating its 250th anniversary parade.

Merrimack: there are several multi-family developments underway in Merrimack; the Flatley property started leasing with the aim of constructing a fifth building; Merrimack has developed a model to assist them in identifying areas to target for DES' ARM Fund for wetland management.

Milford: the annual Pumpkin Festival and Lamson Farm Day are upcoming community events; a solar plant may be coming if passed by the Planning Board.

Mont Vernon: Barry expressed gratitude for NRPC mapping that revealed that a new development was proposed to be built in a watershed protected area, thus reducing 92 units of housing to 42 units based on watershed protection requirements.

Nashua: Webber discussed new multi-family developments approved on East Hollis and Temple Streets but added that there is a need for a traffic study to be completed for the area. He discussed parking at the approved developments and noted that they include areas for Uber/Lyft pick-up and drop-off.

Pelham: Willow Street Bridge, pushed out to the end of Oct. There are two other bridges that will cause many transportation issues in the next few years.

Wilton: NH Chronicle will feature a local business, there is a great deal of discussion about a proposed asphalt plan – October 23rd is the next hearing on it. NRPC looks at issues of regional concern, mostly traffic and potentially others like water quality.

NHDES: the clean diesel program (DERA) will start accepting RFPs on October 1st.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Tenhave with a second from Weber. The meeting ended at 9:00 pm. The next Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 18th, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director: _____