



MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)

MEETING MINUTES

**Doyle Center
464 Abbott Avenue
Leominster, MA 01453**

March 5, 2020

1. Open Meeting, Introductions and Announcements

G. Corbosiero called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All present introduced themselves.

2. Approval of February 6, 2020 MRPC Minutes

B. Yocum moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approve the February 6, 2020 MRPC Minutes as printed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

3. Cash Schedule – February 2020

This item was tabled until the April 2, 2020 MRPC Meeting due to an error.

4. Nominations to the Nominating Committee

The Chairman called for Nominations to the Nominating Committee. A. Pease nominated Maribel Cruz, Rick Ward, Paula Bertram and Barbara Yocum.

J. Telepciak moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission elect the Nominating Committee: Maribel Cruz, Rick Ward, Paula Bertram and Barbara Yocum. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

G. Eaton stated the Nominating Committee will meet in April.

5. Administrative Matters

5.1 Executive Director Review Process

G. Eaton indicated that he contacted other Regional Planning Agency Directors to request copies of their agency's performance evaluation form for Executive Director. An Executive Committee Meeting will be held next month regarding the performance evaluation.

5.2 Executive Director Report

In January, the Executive Director:

1. Prepared a draft cybersecurity survey for all municipalities concerning business continuity planning. This survey will be issued, collected and analyzed prior to the second meeting of the Cyber Security Working Group which will be held, tentatively, on April 9th at Noon at the MRPC. Confirmation of the day, date, time and meeting place will be issued to all parties in March.
2. Held multiple meetings with members of the Board of Directors of LaunchSpace, Inc. concerning MRPC's preparation of this makerspace organization's feasibility study which has been targeted for completion in March, after the submission of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the Town of Shirley.
3. Prepared a draft "Creative Placemaking" grant proposal for the Templeton Housing Authority (THA) with the agency's Executive Director and architect. The MRPC may be engaged by the THA to manage a public outreach component if this grant is awarded to the THA.

6. Status Reports

6.1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

MRMapper & MOBILE APPS (GENERAL)

One new public regional application has been added to the site- Census Opportunity Zones. Data and applications are continuously being updated throughout the year.

The traffic count data and application have also been updated.

We are in the process of adding 2019 USGS Color Ortho Imagery to all public, and paid internal, WebApps. This project is expected to be completed by early March.

COMMUNITY-RELATED

Lunenburg Conservation Lands Mapping – The Lunenburg Conservation Commission received the grant that it applied for to create and install maps at the intersections of the trails on its properties. Once the Conservation Commission reaches out to start the project, we will work on creating a series of "You Are Here" maps. This project will be ongoing for the next several months.

Ashburnham Street Map – We have updated the road data and are finalizing the trail data. We are working on finalizing the layout and inset placement. We still need to create a grid for the town and a list of roads with their starting and ending squares. The end product will be a street map with grid to be used by first responder personnel. It is expected that this project will be complete in March.

Shirley FY21 Parcel Updates – We are currently in the process of updating the Assessor data, maps and MRMapper sites for the Town of Shirley. This project is expected to be completed by early March.

Winchendon Zoning Map Updates – We are currently in the process of updating the Official Zoning map for the Town of Winchendon. This project is expected to be completed by early March.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING-RELATED

ADA Compliance Checklist Survey Creation – We've created four digital surveys that can be completed out in the field using tablets. They will be used by MRPC staff to inventory the features and amenities of public spaces to see if they are ADA compliant. We will train staff to use these digital surveys and we will continue to provide any technical assistance as needed until the project is complete.

DLTA

Shirley Windshield Surveys – We have created a mobile application to be used to collect windshield survey data in the Town as part of a CDBG application. Data is currently being collected and will be mail merged

into individual property docs to be included in the application. It is expected that this project will be complete in late February / early March.

Hubbardston Master Plan 2020 – We have done various data queries for MRPC planning staff so that they can write the Master Plan for Hubbardston. For example, we've looked into high crash locations in Hubbardston and the amount of crashes in the Montachusett Region by severity. We've created a map showing the traffic count locations and whether the count is conducted regularly or not or if it is a turning movement count. We've created a series of roadway maps showing federal-aid eligible roads by jurisdiction, roads by their classification, and pavement conditions on surveyed roads. We then merged 2016-2018 crash data to create a single dataset used in analysis by the MRPC Transportation Department. We also created buffers around every roadway intersection in Hubbardston and established the amount of crashes per intersection. We have started a crash map showing these high-crash intersections but we need to complete a crash corridor analysis before we continue. We will also continue to make any queries, maps, or edits as requested. Our portion of the project is expected to be completed in early March.

TRANSPORTATION-RELATED

Trail Data Application – We are currently in the process of preparing a mobile application that will allow communities to update the existing Trail Inventory data in 'live' or 'offline' (disconnected) editing session. Outreach will begin in February and March. This work will be ongoing throughout the winter and spring.

2020 Census PSAP – We received confirmation that the Census Bureau approved all of our proposed changes to the census geographies (census tracts and block groups). We reached out to the communities that had changes in order to make them aware of the approval and to allow them to review the census geographies for 2020 data releases onward. We requested that they respond back to us by January 31st if there are any issues. There were no issues from the communities so this portion of the project has been completed.

UPWP – We have obtained and analyzed the most recent American Community Survey estimates to identify environmental justice populations, FTA Title VI communities, and FHWA Title VI communities. We have and will continue to aid in updating the report. We are currently working on identifying communities with and without community-specific work tasks. We will continue to provide data and analysis as requested and maps will also need to be created. This project is expected to be completed in May.

TRANSIT-RELATED

MART Athol/Orange Shuttle ADA Analysis – We ran a ¼-mile buffer around the current Athol/Orange shuttle route and created a list of Orange roadways within that buffer. We are currently working on creating a map of those roadways with the buffer and shuttle route and stops. This project is expected to be completed in March.

MART Stop Count – We were asked to redo the stop counts so that the outbound and inbound stop counts follow the same criteria as a previously completed report. We are also working on a separate set of counts that include the current stops and stops recommended in a previous report. This project is expected to be completed in March.

Shirley Station Potential Parking Easement – We have mapped out four potential parking easements that could be utilized by commuters at the Shirley MBTA station. We are currently working on creating a series of maps that show the outlines of the potential easements and the approximate dimensions of the easements. These maps will be utilized by transit staff in meetings and discussions with officials at MART and the MBTA about the procurement of the easements. This project is expected to be completed in early March.

6.2 Planning and Development

FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA)

As part of this contract, MRPC provides assistance to communities seeking grant funds to improve economic vitality. MRPC staff are working to assist the Town of Shirley to put together a Community Development Block Grant application for Housing Rehabilitation and Home Heating Fuel Assistance. Applications are due March 6, 2020.

FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA), MONTACHUSETT REGION BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

A Montachusett Brownfields Group (MBG) meeting was held at MRPC offices on Wednesday, February 12th at 1 p.m. for an update on work accomplished from MRPC's Environmental Professional (Beta Group, Inc.) on the following previously approved Site Nominations:

Athol (62 Canal Street) Phase I Environmental Site Assessment
Ayer (43 West Main Street) Phase I Environmental Site Assessment
Lunenburg (925 Massachusetts Avenue) Phase II Environmental Site Assessment
Winchendon (4 Summer Drive) Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS (EOEEA)

MRPC was awarded an FY20 Planning Assistance grant to fund Master Plan Chapters for the Town of Hubbardston. MRPC staff attended a Hubbardston Planning Board meeting on February 5th to discuss the scope of work and timeline. MRPC staff will present work done on the Transportation Element to the Planning Board on March 4th and discuss logistics concerning holding a Master Plan Public Forum.

DISTRICT LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (DLTA)

MRPC staff is initiating work on the following projects. Also, it should be noted that no proposals were received for the second round of DLTA applications prior to the due date of March 2nd, 2020. Therefore, a third Request for Service Delivery will take place over the next week.

1. **Hubbardston:** Land Use Master Plan Chapter.
2. **Ayer:** ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. Project to be matched with ADA Planning Grant from MA Office on Disability to the Town of Ayer.
3. **Townsend:** Amend zoning bylaws to provide more age restricted market rate housing opportunities in Town.
4. **Townsend:** Provide statistical data to confirm the feasibility of the Town adopting M.G.L. 43D – Expedited Local Permitting Program.
5. **Athol:** Millers River Greenway Planning Assistance.
6. **Athol:** Urban Renewal Planning Assistance (Phase 2).
7. **Westminster:** Open Space and Recreation Plan update assistance (maps and statistics generated from maps, and updating tables in Community Setting Section).
8. **Sterling:** Transportation Master Plan Chapter.

9. **Sterling:** Implementation of Housing Production Plan Action Items: A. Amend accessory apartment bylaw and incorporate accessory apartments into the Subsidized Housing Inventory, and; B. Explore adoption of affordable housing on non-complying lots.
10. **Petersham:** Community survey, facilitating public input at community meetings, and identifying any funding options concerning the Nichewaug Inn & Academy building.
11. **Harvard:** Build – Out Analysis Update and Fiscal Impact Analysis.
12. **Lunenburg:** ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (Phase 2). Phase 1 was completed using last round of DLTA.
13. **Lancaster:** Draft language for a new center-village zoning district or overlay district

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES (DOER)

MRPC received a Regional Energy Planning Assistance (REPA) grant award in the amount of \$59,065 in August and the contract has an effective date of 9/10/19, with an end date of 5/30/21. REPA grant award funds were used by MRPC for Green Communities Program Designation Application Submissions on November 22nd for Groton, Hubbardston and Templeton. All three communities have been designated Green Communities by the DOER as a result of MRPC's assistance with the Applications with a total amount of grant funds of \$428,680. One additional grant application is required of the designated communities in order to received their grant funds, which is due February 28th and MRPC staff is assisting those three communities.

REPA grant award funds were also used to assist Ashby, Athol, Fitchburg, Harvard, Lancaster, Shirley, Townsend, and Westminster to complete and submit Annual Reports due December 6, 2019. MRPC staff is assisting some of these communities with follow-up questions from DOER on the Annual Reports.

MRPC staff is also assisting Athol, Harvard, and Lunenburg under REPA to develop Competitive Grant Applications due March 27, 2020.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM IN SHIRLEY

FY17 CDBG PROGRAM

This grant has been extended through March 31, 2020. However, all Housing Rehabilitation program activities will be completed no later than March 5th so as to enable Shirley to be eligible to apply for additional dollars on March 6th. The Fuel Assistance program was concluded in later 2019.

FY20 CDBG PROPOSAL

This year's CDBG application is due on March 6th. At least five employees are involved with preparing a competitive grant application this year on Shirley's behalf.

MEC, INC.

There is no new information this month.

6.3 Transit

AYER DEPOT SQUARE PEDESTRIAN PLAZA

During the past month MRPC staff continues to assist MART and the Town of Ayer; and working with the Engineer (Weston & Sampson) to move forward the construction of The Depot Square Pedestrian Plaza located at the MBTA Station; the project will include Transit Vehicles turn around, Pedestrian Plaza, Restroom Facility, Pedestrian Access to the Station and Commuters Shelter.

6.4 Transportation

ADA PROW TRANSITION PLAN DEVELOPMENT FOR THREE COMMUNITIES

Stantec has completed draft ADA Public Right of Way Transition Plans for the communities of Lancaster, Lunenburg and Winchendon. All three Plans have been released for a public review and comment period. The public review and comment periods ended for the communities of Lunenburg and Lancaster and BOS public meetings were held on February 11th and 18th respectively. The Winchendon Plan public review and comment period has also ended and the BOS public meeting was held on February 24th.

FFY 2021-2025 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Development of the FFY 2021 to 2025 Montachusett TIP is continuing. Staff met with MassDOT as part of TIP Readiness Day to review and discuss the status of target eligible projects in the Region. Target figures were also provided. Funding levels are the same as the prior TIP for FFY 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. For FFY 2025, there is a slight decline in the target from FFY 2024 levels.

| | FFY 2020-2024 TIP Targets | FFY 2021-2025 TIP Targets |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| FFY 2020 | \$10,636,366 | - |
| FFY 2021 | \$10,851,652 | \$10,851,652 |
| FFY 2022 | \$11,072,618 | \$11,072,618 |
| FFY 2023 | \$11,314,453 | \$11,314,453 |
| FFY 2024 | \$11,462,749 | \$11,462,749 |
| FFY 2025 | - | \$11,195,149 |

Staff will now work to develop possible funding scenarios for each FFY based on the information and cost estimates provided during the Readiness Day meeting. All scenarios will be reviewed by the MJTC and MPO at their next meetings in order to move forward towards a draft TIP.

FFY 2021 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

Staff is continuing development of the Montachusett UPWP for the FFY 2021 program year that will begin on October 1, 2020. In response to a memo sent to member communities soliciting their ideas for potential UPWP tasks, staff reviewed requests from Hubbardston, Sterling, Fitchburg and Townsend. Based upon these requests as well as an equity review of prior tasks, the requests were prioritized by communities as follows:

UPWP Tasks

| |
|---|
| 1. Townsend – Walkability Study |
| 2. Sterling – Walkability Study |
| 3. Hubbardston – Pavement Management Assistance |
| 4. Fitchburg – Route 12 Corridor Study |

Additionally, the local requests included several intersection locations that will likely be incorporated into a task that staff is developing with WPI as part of a student's Senior Capstone project. These intersections are as follows:

Regionwide Study / WPI Study

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|---|
| 1. Townsend – Rt. 13/Rt. 119 Intersection Analysis |
| 2. Townsend – Route 119/Canal St/Elm St Intersection Analysis |
| 3. Hubbardston – Rt. 62/Rt. 68 Intersection Analysis |
| 4. Fitchburg Rt. 12/Rt. 31 Intersection Analysis |

Budgets information and more detailed task descriptions will be developed and reviewed at the next MJTC and MPO meetings.

MONTACHUSETT MPO FFY 2020-2024 TIP AMENDMENT #2

The MJTC will review in more detail the results of a survey related to the current meeting start time of 6:30 pm. Twenty-four (24) individual responses to the survey were received from 20 current appointed MJTC members. Twelve (12) are community representatives and 8 represent either organization or ex-officio groups. Based upon the analysis, the overall majority, approximately 78%, preferred a new start time between 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Broken down further, the 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm time period was preferred by approximately 63% of the total respondents. Further discussion will occur at the March meeting and a start time change may be recommended. This time change may be adjusted further as its effectiveness is tested.

Next MJTC Meeting - March 11, 2020 at 6:30 PM at MRPC Offices

Next MPO Meeting – March 18, 2020 at 1:00 PM at MRPC Offices

7. New Business

Discussion occurred regarding Municipal Vulnerability Program.

8. Adjournment

| Meeting Attendance | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|--------------|------------------|---------|--------|
| Name | M/A | Representing | Appointment Date | PRESENT | ABSENT |
| Meissner, Rosemarie | A | Ashburnham | 3.2019 | | |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-------------|---------|---|---|
| Hoyt, Roger | M | Ashburnham | 7.2011 | X | |
| Pease, Alan | M | Ashby | 7.2001 | X | |
| Stacy, Wayne | A | Ashby | 7.2005 | | X |
| Truehart, Duane | M | Athol | 7.2016 | X | |
| Rebecca Bialecki | A | Athol | 7.2017 | | X |
| Vacant | M | Ayer | | | X |
| Vacant | A | Ayer | | | X |
| Duffy, Phil | M | Clinton | 12.2011 | | X |
| Vacant | A | Clinton | | | X |
| Lowitt, Peter | N/V | DREZ | 7.2001 | | X |
| Caron, Paula | M | Fitchburg | 7.2002 | | X |
| Vacant | A | Fitchburg | | | |
| Swartz, Robert | M | Gardner | 7.2019 | | X |
| Cruz, Maribel | A | Gardner | 8.2017 | X | |
| Burke, Russ | M | Groton | 7.2016 | | X |
| Vacant | A | Groton | | | X |
| Donahue, Stacia | M | Harvard | 7.2018 | X | |
| Vacant | A | Harvard | | | X |
| Vacant | M | Hubbardston | 7.2016 | | X |
| Stauder, Michael | A | Hubbardston | | | X |
| Christopher, Thomas | A | Lancaster | 7.2016 | | X |
| Williston, Russell | M | Lancaster | 11.2018 | | X |
| Carignan, Thomas | M | Leominster | 7.2019 | | X |
| Vacant | A | Leominster | | | X |
| Bertram, Paula | M | Lunenburg | 7.2019 | X | |
| Adams, Kathryn | A | Lunenburg | 7.2018 | | X |
| Vacant | M | Petersham | | | X |
| Allen, Nancy | A | Petersham | 7.2015 | | X |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------|--------|---|---|
| Vacant | M | Phillipston | | | X |
| Telepciak, John | A | Phillipston | 10.201 | X | |
| Natrowicz, Kyle | M | Royalston | 7.2015 | | X |
| Barclay, James | A | Royalston | 7.2017 | | X |
| Widing, Sarah | A | Shirley | 7.2015 | | X |
| Yocum, Barbara | M | Shirley | 8.2017 | X | |
| Page, Patty | M | Sterling | 7.2019 | | X |
| Maki, Dick | A | Sterling | 7.2014 | | X |
| Rich, Dennis | M | Templeton | 7.2017 | | X |
| Terenzini, Carter | A | Templeton | 9.2016 | | X |
| Shifrin, Laura | M | Townsend | 7.2018 | | X |
| King, Cindy | A | Townsend | 7.2016 | | X |
| Smith, Mike | M | Westminster | 7.2019 | | X |
| Vacant | A | Westminster | | | X |
| Corbosiero, Guy | M | Winchendon | 7.2011 | X | |
| Ward, Rick | A | Winchendon | 7.2019 | X | |

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Eaton, Brad Harris, Linda Parmenter

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

March 6, 2020 MRPC Handout

February 6 2020 MRPC Minutes

Cash Schedule –February 2020

Flyer - Culvert Replacement Grants

Flyer - MassDOT Public Hearing – Hubbardston

Flyer - Mass Global Warming Commission Meetings

Flyer – MassDOT Capital Investment Plan Public Meeting Schedule