

**MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
JULY 28, 2015 MINUTES**

1. INTRODUCTIONS

V. Andreliunas called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All present were introduced.

2. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 23, 2015 MEETING MINUTES

J. Telepciak moved that the minutes of June 23, 2015 be approved as printed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

L. Shifrin read the June 2015 cash schedule. Balance after last warrant \$108,123.57; Total receipts this month \$64,708.01; Total cash on hand before this warrant \$172,831.58; Less: amount of this warrant \$185,520.01: Balance after this warrant \$81,576.91.

J. Telepciak moved to accept the June 2015 cash schedules as read subject to audit and to be placed on file. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

4. ORIENTATION FOR NEW AND ALL OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

G. Eaton welcomed all new members to the MRPC and explained the role of the MRPC and the responsibilities of the members.

5. VACANT COMMITTEE MEMBER AT LARGE SEAT

G. Eaton explained that last month MRPC held an election of officers. There is a Committee Member at large seat still open if anyone is interested in serving.

6. PEER TO PEER TRAINING AND DISCUSSION

G. Eaton gave an overview of the following:

- DHCD Program & Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Training Session Re: Community Compact And MassWorks Grant Program
- Planning Board Operations
- Community, Economic and Housing Matters

B. Harris explained the process for communities to get their road projects funded and indicated he would send further information to the members.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

7.1 Adoption of revised 2015 Affirmative Action Plan

L. Parmenter explained that at last month's MRPC Meeting we distributed and explained changes to MRPC's 2015 Affirmative Action Plan. The document was also emailed to all members. This year's

plan includes revisions in accordance with federal regulations.

Substantial revisions include:

- A section on the implementation of a Voluntary Self Identification form for all applicants for positions at the MRPC and for employees. (race, gender, disability, disabled veteran, veteran)
- Adding disabled and veteran groups to the plan to be sure those groups are included in our distribution list for third party contracts and job postings.
- Adding a workforce analysis for veterans and individuals disabilities.

P. Caron moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission adopt the revised MRPC 2015 Affirmative Action Plan as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

7.2 Approval of FY2015 Budget

G. Eaton explained that at the June 23, MRPC Meeting members discussed approval of the FY2015 budget. After much discussion, G. Corbosiero moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission authorize its Director to utilize monies from budget line items that have a surplus to zero out those budget line items that are in the negative and to require the Director present a final budget after June 30, 2015. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

He presented a handout and explained the FY2015 Budget final adjustments as per the vote of the MRPC at last month's meeting.

M. Pineo moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby adopts the final FY15 budget adjustments, including those changes as directed by the Commissioners at the June 23rd MRPC Meeting, and as presented in the handout. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

7.3 FY16 Budget Update

G. Eaton presented a handout with an update of the FY16 Budget. He indicated that four new contracts were added to the revenue portion of the Budget. He will provide another update in the late Summer or early Fall.

7.4 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Staff Hiring

J. Hume explained that a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$940,389 was awarded to the towns of Shirley and Lancaster. MRPC will be engaged by Shirley for grant administrative services. Therefore, MRPC needs to hire at least two employees to manage the CDBG and other programs. MRPC will also procure for a housing rehabilitation specialist consultant.

P. Caron moved that that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the Executive Director's request to advertise for and hire:

- 1) A full-time Community Development Manager at a starting salary not to exceed Grade 6, Step 1, \$59,965.
- 2) A part-time CDBG Administrative Assistant at a starting salary not to exceed \$18.05 per hour (Grade 1, Step 3 \$35,196) and;
- 3) Procurement of a Housing Rehabilitation Specialist as a consultant for the CDBG Program.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

7.5 Executive Director Announcements

J. Hume explained that at the April MRPC Meeting, a resolution was passed to advertise and hire an Entry Level Regional Planner for the Comprehensive Planning Department. Staff advertised and conducted interviews. Noam Goldstein of Amherst, MA was hired and he will start on August 10, 2015.

8. STATUS REPORTS

8.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

8.1.1 MEC, Inc. - Receivership Projects

- ***107 Stevens Street***

In July MEC, Inc. received a check for its entire investment for this property from the bank of record. MEC will seek termination of this receivership in Housing Court on August 5th.

- ***112 Harvard Avenue***

MEC took legal ownership of this property on July 1st of this year. This property is now on the market for sale.

- ***41 Lewis Street***

Financing is being pursued to renovate this home.

- ***119 Everett Avenue***

The bank of record has expressed an interest in paying off the receiver's lien. MEC is awaiting the bank's final decision if it will or will not pay off the receiver's lien.

- ***207 Adams Drive***

Financing is being pursued to renovate this home.

- ***1158 Main Street***

This property is subject to a local hearing concerning forgiveness of back taxes. The bank that owns the property wants to submit a bid at auction. MEC will hold a second auction in about two months.

- ***1768-70 Main Street***

This property is subject to a local hearing concerning forgiveness of back taxes. An abutter is interested in bidding on this property if there were no back taxes owed on the property. If Athol

and the MA Department of Revenue agree to forgive the back taxes, then MEC would hold a second auction.

8.1.2 MEC - Ashburnham Affordable Housing Project – 32 Whitney Drive

A punch list meeting was held with G. Eaton and Monty Tech staff on July 15th. MEC needs to hire a consultant to market and sell the property to a buyer meeting the 40B statute and accompanying regulations.

8.1.3 MEC - Ashburnham Affordable Housing Project – 10 Monroe Drive

Financing is being pursued to construct this new home in cooperation with Monty Tech and the developer beginning this August.

8.1.4 MEC – 30 Powers Mill Road

Financing being pursued to renovate and sell property this year.

8.1.5 Community Development Block Grants

The Federal fiscal Year 2015 (FFY15) Shirley-Lancaster CDBG proposal, prepared by Mr. John Hume and others in February 2015 was awarded on July 16, 2015.

8.1.6 Distressed Property Identification and Revitalization (DPIR) Grant Program

Staff continues its research and exchange of information with banks regarding REO Properties in the communities of Ashburnham, Fitchburg, Leominster, Winchendon and Athol. This project will continue through December 2015.

8.2 COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

8.2.1 Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA)

As part of this contract, MRPC provides assistance to communities seeking grant funds to improve economic vitality. MRPC staff assisted Shirley and Lancaster to prepare a regional FY15 Community Development Block Grant application for Housing Rehabilitation and Home Heating Fuel Assistance that was just recently funded in the amount of \$940,389 by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development on Wednesday, July 15th. Beneficiaries of these programs will be low and moderate income residents in Shirley and Lancaster.

8.2.2 Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Montachusett Region Brownfields Assessment Program

MRPC staff worked on and submitted a Work plan to EPA. According to EPA, the Work plan and Cooperative Agreement could be executed as early as October 1, 2015.

8.2.3 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Project

MRPC Staff received comments from Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) that have been addressed. The plan was resubmitted in the spring to MEMA.

8.2.4 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA)

MRPC staff is working on the following DLTA projects:

Fitchburg: Continuation of investigating/researching appropriate zoning changes around Wachusett Station and the new Great Wolf Lodge resort.

Winchendon: Master Plan Transportation Element.

Sterling: Review and update zoning bylaws to encourage the development and redevelopment of commercial property in a manner that reflects the interests and needs of the community.

Lancaster: Continuing to examine the creation of village zoning district(s).

Ashby: Update Housing Chapter of the 2004 Ashby Community Development Plan (E.O. 418 plan) and creation of a new Transportation Chapter as an update to the 2004 Ashby Community Development Plan.

Shirley: Update the 2010 Economic Development Element of the Master Plan and assist with the development and tabulation of a town wide survey for the Master Plan.

Royalston: Identification of potential areas that can support housing and economic development.

Lancaster: Assistance with creation of a Lancaster Trail & Bike Way Vision Plan.

Ashby: Preparing a Land Use Chapter, Future Land Use Plan and Consolidation of Economic Development Plan into the update of Ashby's 2004 Community Development Plan.

Winchendon: Research the potential of establishing a zoning district for the Central Street corridor.

Townsend: Assistance in reviewing applicable bylaws to see if more housing opportunities could be made available.

8.2.5 Shirley Master Plan Update

MRPC staff is now working with the town on the Housing Chapter and the Services and Facilities Chapter. A status report along with housing data was presented to the Shirley Board of Selectmen on July 13th.

8.3 GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

8.3.1 MRMapper & Mobile Apps

Significant upgrades were just completed to the *MRMapper* site in order to increase the speed of the services.

We are consistently adding data, applications and/or enhancing tools in *MRMapper* as the need arises so please check back frequently to see what's new. We are currently working on migrating all applications to JavaScript. This is a core change that will allow users to consume *MRMapper* content on most browsers and, most importantly, without plugins that currently restrict usage on mobile devices. This process will be ongoing for several months.

Mobile Apps are becoming increasingly popular. They are designed for two main purposes- (1) informing the public and (2) improving efficiency in data collection and field work. Public apps are created to allow the public to view data online in any browser and on any device. Data collection apps are custom designed by the MRPC to the users' field of work or area of interest.

Currently the MRPC is working on creating internal-only and public sites for the Town of Westminster and recently updated the Town of Shirley's internal-only site as well as created a public site.

8.3.2 Central Mass Evacuation Plan – Phase 2 & Evacuation Apps

Phase 2 of the project has been completed. Two successful Tabletop exercises were completed. Additionally mobile and desktop applications have been completed and training will also be completed soon.

8.3.3 RTP 2016 Mapping

Draft versions of maps to be included in the RTP 2016 project have been completed. Edits will be completed as necessary based on the feedback during the comment period.

8.3.4 MART Bus Route Shelter Maps

This project has been completed.

8.4 TRANSIT

8.4.1 Wachusett Commuter Rail Station and Layover Facility

The construction work on the Wachusett Commuter Rail Station in Fitchburg and on the MBTA's Commuter Rail Layover Facility at the Westminster Business Park is ongoing. There will be a delay for the substantial project completion to December of 2016 due to Pan Am's schedule. Pan Am will not be able to complete work on the tracks and signalization until 2016, with full completion scheduled for Early of 2017. The Development Road Extension is approximately 98% complete. Staff is working with the City of Fitchburg and Westminster to transfer the ownership of the property. Staff continues to work with Pan Am Railways and the City of Fitchburg to transfer 5th Mass Turnpike property to MART. Staff is also assisting MART and the Consultant in obtaining a temporary construction easement from the adjacent properties owners to construct the sidewalk on Authority Drive and continues to attend and assist at the monthly project coordination meeting with FTA, MBTA and the Engineers.

8.4.2 Ayer Parking Facility

FTA officials indicated that MART has to resolve the pedestrian access issues at the station before the project can move forward. MBTA and the property owner are negotiating to resolve the pedestrian access issues. The property transfer will enable access to the train station with a pedestrian walkway and a proposed driveway with a vehicular drop-off and turnaround. Mr. Kahale continues to assist MART, FTA, MBTA and the Town of Ayer to move forward with the construction of the proposed project of Ayer commuter rail surface parking lot for 200 parking spaces at the Ayer Rail Trail parking lot location at Park Street. As soon as

the property transfer for the pedestrian access takes place the process of the appraisal will start.

8.4.3 Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line Improvements

The project is currently funded at \$169 million with State and Federal Funds for the Small Starts Project and replacement of the Route 62 Bridge in Concord. In addition, MBTA allocated another \$42 million in ARRA Stimulus and EOHEED Funding to accomplish the double tracking and the improvements to Littleton Station, as well as another \$10 million for replacing CPF 43 interlocking in Lunenburg (CPF is Control Point for Freight that enable trains to move from one track to another) . Work on the project is continuing along the Fitchburg Line corridor and South Acton Station. The construction of Littleton Station was completed ahead of schedule; and the MBTA's commuter parking of 200 parking spaces is full to capacity daily. MAPC is conducting a parking needs assessment for the Littleton commuter rail station to determine its future parking needs. Also the double tracking work along the corridor has been completed.

8.4.4 MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line Suspension of Weekend Train Service

Beginning Saturday, April 25, through Sunday, November 22, 2015 weekend Fitchburg Line service will be suspended along the entire line due to the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line Improvement Project to allow work to be performed between North Station and Fitchburg. Busing will not be provided during weekend service interruptions. Customers are advised to seek alternate modes of transportation. Weekday service is not affected by the ongoing improvement work. Regular weekend service will be provided on Memorial Day weekend (May 23-24), Fourth of July weekend (July 4-5), Labor Day weekend (September 5-6), and Thanksgiving weekend (November 28-29).

8.4.5 Westminster Bus Route

Staff is assisting MART on a proposed Bus Route to serve Westminster residents to connect to Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC), the Commuter Rail Station and Gardner City Center.

8.4.6 MART Advisory Board

The next meeting of the MART Advisory Board will be held at 10:30 AM on Tuesday, August 11, 2015 at MART Water Street offices.

8.5 TRANSPORTATION

8.5.1 Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

The draft 2016 RTP has been out for a 30 day public comment period that concluded on July 22nd. After receiving extensive comments from MassDOT, it was decided to move endorsement back on the RTP to a follow up meeting to be scheduled between July 29 to 31. Staff has been engaged it addressing the comments provided and making appropriate revisions to the draft document. All draft documents are available on the MRPC website at www.mrpc.org.

A public meeting to present the draft document was held as part of the MJTC meeting on July 15, 2015 at MRPC offices.

8.5.2 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FFY 2016-2019

The draft FFY 2016-2019 TIP 30 day public comment period ended on Tuesday July 22nd. Staff received several support letters related to trail projects as well as comment letters from MassDOT and FHWA. The MJTC reviewed options to address a fiscal constraint issue in the FFY 2018 Highway Element at its meeting on July 15th. After discussion, the MJTC recommended Option 2 to the MPO for consideration.

8.5.3 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) 2015-2016

The draft UPWP that will cover the October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016 program year 30 day public comment period ended on Tuesday July 22nd. The UPWP is a budget and programming tool that outlines our work activities for the year. Some tasks remain constant from year to year such as the development of the TIP and UPWP as well as our Data Collection efforts. The budget for the UPWP is set at \$664,656 based on a "PL" allocation for FFY 2016 of \$585,871 and a FTA 5303 and Local allocation of \$78,785. Staff received comment letters from MassDOT and FHWA. The MJTC reviewed the draft UPWP and recommended that the MPO endorse the UPWP as presented.

8.5.4 New "3C" Transportation Planning Contract 2015-2019

MRPC submitted materials related to a new "3C" Transportation Planning contract to MassDOT at the end of June. Contracts were forwarded to MRPC in mid-July and have been signed by the Executive Director. The four year contract will be budgeted at approximately \$2.34 million and will run from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2019.

- **Next MPO Meeting –July 30, 2015 at 1:00 PM August 12, 2015**
- **Next MJTC Meeting – No August Meeting
September 16, 2015 at 7:00 PM**

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED AT THE MEETING:

July 28, 2015 Handout
June 23, 2015 Minutes
June Warrant and Cash Schedule
FY2016 Budget
FY2015 Budget
MRPC Draft Affirmative Action Plan
DHCD Program & Citizen Planner Training Collaborative
DHCD Zoning Resources
Community Compact And MassWorks Grant Program
Community Development Block Grant Award Listing

MRPC Meeting Attendance List

Alphabetically by Community

Name	M/A	Representing	Appointment Date	PRESENT	ABSENT
Johnson, Kyle	A	Ashburnham	7.2015		X
Hoyt, Roger	M	Ashburnham	7.2011	X	
Pease, Alan	M	Ashby	7.2001		X
Stacy, Wayne	A	Ashby	7.2005		X
Knapik, Garrett	M	Athol	7.2015	X	
Grosky, Mitch	A	Athol	5.2015		X
Callahan, Jeremy	M	Ayer	7.2015		X
Maher, David	A	Ayer	7.2014		X
Duffy, Phil	M	Clinton	12.2011		X
Lowitt, Peter	N/V	DREZ	7.2001		X
Caron, Paula	M	Fitchburg	7.2002	X	
Gross, Allen	M	Gardner	2.2005		X
Cormier, Joshua	A	Gardner	7.2015		X
Collette, Michelle	M	Groton	7.2015		X
Graham, Don	M	Harvard	7.2015		X
Wallace, Lucy	A	Harvard	7.2015		X
DiPinto, Mary Ann	M	Hubbardston	7.2015	X	
Sheipers, Anita	A	Hubbardston	7.2013		X
Christoph, Eugene	A	Lancaster	7.1992		X
Koivumaki, Victor	M	Lancaster	7.2000		X
Prokowitz, David	M	Lunenburg	7.2015	X	
Allen, Nancy	A	Petersham	7.2015		
Telepciak, John	A	Phillipston	10.201	X	
Andreluinas, Vyto	M	Royalston	2.1991	X	
Hardie, John	A	Royalston	7.2007		X
Widing, Sarah	M	Shirley	7.2015	X	
Pineo, Michael	M	Sterling	7.2014	X	
Kilcoyne, John	A	Sterling	7.2014		X
Carroll, Charles	A	Templeton	7.2011		X
Shifrin, Laura	A	Townsend	7.2010	X	
Fortin, Mike	M	Westminster	7.2015		X
Corbosiero, Guy	M	Winchendon	7.2011		X
Cyganiewicz, Austin	A	Winchendon	7.2015		X

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Eaton, Linda Parmenter, Bobbi Jo Johnson, George Kahale, Brad Harris, John Hume

GUESTS PRESENT: Mark Goldstein, MRPC Legal Counsel; Ashley Arseneau, Athol Resident