

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)  
THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2017  
7:00 PM**

**1. OPEN MEETING AND INTRODUCTIONS**

J. Telepciak called the meeting order at 7:00 p.m. All present were introduced.

**2. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 2, 2017 MEETING MINUTES**

T. Bratko moved to approve the February 2, 2017 minutes as printed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**3. RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA DISCUSSION**

G. Eaton distributed a packet regarding the Recreational Marijuana Legislation and gave an overview of the information.

M. Goldstein gave a synopsis of the Regulation and Taxation of the Marijuana Act. The Act indicates that MA Cannabis Control Commission has to be organized and ready to adopt regulations in March 2018. The regulations will hopefully fill in some of the questions not addressed in the legislation and clarify sections of the legislation that are vague. In July 2018 granting of licenses for recreational marijuana establishments has to be in place. Towns can regulate time, place and manner regarding recreational marijuana. He explained details of the Act and options for communities regarding zoning. He also described how communities can opt out as well as what communities can do now to prepare for the implementation of this law. As issues regarding this law develop he will update the MRPC.

Question and answer session took place.

**4. TREASURER'S REPORT**

**4.1 Approval of Cash Schedule**

G. Eaton read the February 1, 2017 – February 28, 2017 cash schedule. Balance after last cash schedule \$79,420.13; Total receipts this month \$144,896.72; Total cash on hand before this warrant \$224,316.85; Less: amount of this warrant \$183,061.75: Balance after this warrant \$41,255.10.

M. Fortin moved to accept the February 1, 2017 – February 28, 2017 cash schedule as read subject to audit and to be placed on file. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **5. NOMINATIONS TO THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

G. Eaton reported that as per the bylaws of the MRPC, in the month of March, the Chairman calls for Nominations to the Nominating Committee.

In April, the Nominating Committee is elected by the full Commission. The responsibility of the nominating Committee is to review the qualifications and availability of Regional Planning Commission delegates and shall recommend at the regular May meeting a slate of officers for the MRPC for the coming year. This slate of officers is voted upon in June.

Roger Hoyt and John Telepciak volunteered to serve on the Nominating Committee.

## **6. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

### **6.1 Resignation of Principal Planner, Planning and Development Department and Advertising and Hiring of Principal Planner**

G. Eaton informed the Commission that Shubee Sikka, Principal Planner of the Planning and Development Department resigned February 24, 2017. MRPC has placed a recruitment advertisement for replacement with the Sentinel and Enterprise, MA Municipal Association, MA American Planning Association, Mass Planners List Serve, Monster.com and through Twitter, Facebook and MRPC's website. Resumes are due to the MRPC by March 3, 2017.

T. Bratko moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission authorize its Executive Director to hire a Principal Planner for the Planning and Development Department at a salary ranging from Grade 5 Step 2 \$51,220 to Grade 5 Step 9 \$60,885 based on the qualifications of the candidate. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **6.2 Change in Date of April MRPC Meeting**

G. Eaton indicated that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) requires all regional planning agencies to submit their respective annual audits no later than March 31<sup>st</sup> each year. MRPC's Auditor, Roland Lambalot, CPA is finishing up this year's audit, but the document was not completed in time for the meeting of the Commissioners tonight. As this agency's audit is due on March 31<sup>st</sup> and the next meeting of the Commissioners is not scheduled to be held until April 6<sup>th</sup> the Executive Director respectfully requests that the April meeting be rescheduled to Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> or another date that is satisfactory to a majority of the Commissioners so that we may attain a quorum.

Please be advised that the Request for Proposals for Office Space was advertised on February 7<sup>th</sup>; proposals are due on Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. The Executive Director recommends that this meeting also be used to review the staff's report concerning all of the proposals submitted and the recommendation of the Executive Director as to the most advantageous proposal. A meeting of the Commissioners on or about the 23<sup>rd</sup> will provide a sufficient amount of time for the staff to complete the report.

M. Fortin moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hold its April meeting at 7:00 PM, Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> (at 1427R Water Street, Fitchburg) or on another date in mid-March for the annual audit presentation, report of the Office Space RFP and other regular business. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## 7. STATUS REPORTS

### 7.1 GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

#### **MRMAPPER & MOBILE APPS (GENERAL)**

No new information.

#### **COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING**

*Distressed Property Identification and Revitalization (DPIR) App* – MRPC is in the very beginning phase of creating MRMapper applications to aid communities in data collection. This project will be ongoing the next several months.

#### **COMMUNITY-RELATED**

*Athol Downtown Parking Map*– We have completed a map for review by the Town. Edits will be made upon community input. This project is expected to be completed in March.

*Fitchburg Parcel Enhancements*– The parcel data is complete and in MassGIS Level 3 compliance. A beta version of an internal MRMapper site is complete and being tested by the City.

*Royalston Parcel Enhancements*– No new information.

*Shirley Open Space & Master Plan*– Draft maps have been completed. Edits will be made upon community input. This project is expected to be completed in March.

*Templeton Master Plan*– This project is complete.

*Winchendon Slum & Blight*– We recently completed mapping and data analysis of Slum and Blight data collected from an MRMapper mobile application. Maps and data were included in a report/application submitted to DHCD to receive CDBG funding.

#### **TRANSPORTATION-RELATED**

*Storm water Apps* – This project is complete, but will be ongoing as necessary based on community input.

## 7.2 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### **FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA)**

MRPC continues to provide substantial assistance to the Towns of Lancaster, Shirley, Townsend and Winchendon to prepare FY17 Community Development Block Grant applications. Grants are due on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

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

A Montachusett Brownfields Group meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. at a location to be determined. It is anticipated that Environmental Site Nominations will be reviewed at this meeting for the Town of Royalston (The Raymond School) and the Town of Ashburnham (Ashburnham Department of Public Works Facility).

### **DISTRICT LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (DLTA)**

Applications were reviewed at the Commission Meeting last month. On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, applications were forwarded to MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for approval – MRPC expects to hear back from DHCD soon. Additionally, another DLTA Request for Service Delivery was distributed by MRPC on February 13<sup>th</sup> with an application due date of 3 pm on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **SHIRLEY MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

MRPC is working on the Implementation Element and continues to incorporate Planning Board comments into the draft document.

### **TEMPLETON MASTER PLAN**

A draft Templeton Master Plan has been completed and was presented to the public at a Public Forum held at the Narragansett Middle School Cafeteria on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Comments/edits were incorporated into the document and the Templeton Planning Board will vote to adopt the document in March.

### **SHIRLEY LANCASTER FY2015 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT**

#### *Housing Rehab Program*

CDBG staff are waiting for approval of the budget revision request. five projects are being started or are ongoing at this time. Once these five projects are completed the program will have met its goal of twenty units of housing.

#### *Fuel Assistance*

Upon approval of the budget revision the program will extend *emergency* assistance to Shirley and Lancaster residents and to current beneficiaries of the program. The CDM will work with the local CAC to identify potential beneficiaries.

### **WINCHENDON ASHBY FY2016 CDBG**

#### *Housing Rehab Program*

CDBG staff is receiving applications processed by CDBG staff in Winchendon and from Applicants in Ashby. Initial lead and housing inspections are being scheduled.

#### *Fuel Assistance*

Applications are being processed in both towns for this program.

#### **NEW CDBG APPLICATIONS**

Staff are working on four single community applications:

1. Winchendon - \$557,000 – Street repair and housing rehab and fuel assistance
2. Shirley - \$800,000 – Housing Rehab and fuel assistance
3. Townsend - \$800,000 – Housing Rehab and Fuel Assistance
4. Lancaster - \$800,000 – Housing Rehab, Architectural Barrier Removal

#### **MEC**

#### **ATTORNEY GENERAL (AG) RECEIVERSHIP PROGRAM, 40 B PROJECTS, AND 30 POWERS MILL RD., PHILLIPSTON AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS.**

- A meeting with Enterprise Bank is scheduled for March 1 to further the application process on loans to complete the repairs a 207 Adams St in Athol and 30 Powers Mill Rd. in Phillipston.
- The bank of record has paid the receiver's lien on 119 Everett. (\$55,929.69)
- Housing Court has approved MEC's title to 112 Harvard Ave. A motion will be made to terminate receivership and plans to sell property will move forward.

### **7.3 TRANSIT**

#### **WACHUSETT COMMUTER RAIL STATION AND LAYOVER FACILITY**

Staff continues to attend and assist at the by-weekly project coordination meeting with Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), and the engineers to complete the project punch list, MBTA anticipate a full completion of the project by June, 2017. Staff continues to work with Pan Am Southern Railways and the City of Fitchburg to transfer 5<sup>th</sup> Mass Turnpike property to MART. Also, working with the City of Fitchburg to construct a pedestrian sidewalk on Authority Drive and a pedestrian crossing on Princeton Road.

#### **AYER/SHIRLEY/DEVENS/FIXED BUS ROUTE**

No new information.

#### **AYER PARKING FACILITY**

On January 26, staff attended a meeting with Weston & Sampson and town officials regarding the Ayer Parking Facility project. Also, on February 7th, staff attended the Ayer Board of Selectmen meeting and assisted with a presentation of the Project Concept Schematic Design Options. Staff continues to assist Montachusett Area Regional Transit (MART) in working with Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), Division of

Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Town of Ayer and the engineer to move forward with the construction of the proposed project.

#### **HARVARD COMMUTER RAIL SHUTTLE**

Staff assisted the Town of Harvard with a survey of the town residents regarding a Commuter Rail Shuttle service to connect Town residents with the MBTA Commuter Rail Station in Littleton.

#### **IDENTIFICATION OF FIXED ROUTE BUS STOP LOCATIONS**

Staff continues to compile data for bus stop locations in MART service area. As part of this study data will be collected utilizing a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) unit equipped with ArcPad and GPS technology. The data will be used to identify and establish safe bus stops locations on the Fitchburg/Leominster, Gardner and G-Link fixed bus route transit services in the MART Region. Currently, the fixed route lines operate as a flag down system.

#### **LUNENBURG BUS ROUTE**

On February 16, staff attended a meeting with Town officials regarding an adjustment to Lunenburg Bus Route service recommended by a survey conducted by MART; which connects Lunenburg residents to Lunenburg Crossing/Shopping Center and to the Commuter Rail Station in Fitchburg. The New Schedule and the Bus Route has been completed.

#### **MART ADVISORY BOARD**

The next meeting of the MART Advisory Board will be held at 10:30 AM on Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at MART Water Street offices.

### **7.4 TRANSPORTATION**

#### **MONTACHUSETT FFY 2017-2021 TIP HIGHWAY ELEMENT AMENDMENT #3**

B. Harris informed the Commission that at the MPO meeting on January 25, 2017, the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) voted to release a Draft Amendment #3 to the FFY 2017 Highway Element of the 2017-2021 TIP for a 30-day public review and comment period. This Amendment #3 reflects changes to the FFY 2017 Highway Element as a result of the re-distribution of federal highway funds that allowed two of our proposed FFY 2017 projects to be advertised in FFY 2016. This resulted in our FFY 2017 program year being under our available federal target funding by approximately \$2.6 million. To offset this, the draft Amendment #3 proposed advancing one project from FFY 2019 to FFY 2017, project #607770 I Lunenburg Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 13 from Northfield Road to the Townsend T.L., and increasing the FFY 2017 funding share (while reducing an equivalent amount in the FFY 2018 share) for project #606124 Fitchburg/Leominster/Lunenburg Reconstruction of Summer Street and North Street by approximately \$1 million. The comment period began on Monday January 30<sup>th</sup> and closed on Tuesday February 28<sup>th</sup>. To date, the only comments received were letters of support from the town of Lunenburg and the Lunenburg DPW. The Montachusett Joint

Transportation Committee (MJTC) reviewed the draft Amendment #3 at its February 15<sup>th</sup> meeting and recommended that the MRPC and the MPO endorse the Amendment.

M. Fortin moved that the MRPC has reviewed the FFY 2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Highway Element Amendment #3 and based upon this review, the recommendation of the MJTC as well as a review of any comments received, authorizes its Chairman to endorse the FFY 2017 Highway Element TIP Amendment #3 at a MPO meeting scheduled for Wednesday March 15, 2017 at 1:00 PM at the MRPC offices. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**MONTACHUSETT MJTC MEETING SCHEDULE – 2017**

At the February 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, the MJTC voted to change the date of their regular meeting schedule from the third Wednesday of the month to the second Wednesday of the month. In addition, the meeting start time has been moved to 6:30 pm from 7:00 pm. These changes will go into effect with the next MJTC meeting on Wednesday March 8<sup>th</sup>. These changes were prompted by the recent decision of the MPO to set their meeting schedule to the third Wednesday of the month. By making this change, the MJTC will be able to review various issues, such as TIP drafts, amendments, etc., and make recommendations to the MPO before the MPO meets.

**MONTACHUSETT FFY 2018-2022 TIP DEVELOPMENT**

MRPC staff participated in the MassDOT organized “TIP Readiness Day” on February 16<sup>th</sup>. At this meeting, MassDOT departments, District Offices and RPAs meet to review the status of projects identified as possible candidates for the upcoming TIP. As such, several projects for FFY 2018 to FFY 2022 were discussed and their current status confirmed among all participants. MRPC staff will now compile this information along with recently received federal target estimates to develop scenarios for each fiscal year of the TIP. This will be reviewed by the MPO on March 15<sup>th</sup> and will then lead to a draft TIP document in April.

The MRPC also recently received federal funding target estimates for FFY 2018- 2022 from MassDOT. These targets are fairly comparable to those from the prior TIP with in most cases a slight increase. The Table below highlights the new target estimates.

<b>Funding Category</b>	<b>FFY 2018</b>	<b>FFY 2019</b>	<b>FFY 2020</b>	<b>FFY 2021</b>	<b>FFY 2022</b>
Non-CMAQ/HSIP/TAP	\$7,936,424	\$8,326,193	\$8,246,812	\$8,482,279	\$8,611,161
HSIP	\$445,960	\$445,960	\$445,960	\$445,960	\$445,960
CMAQ	\$1,114,900	\$1,114,900	\$1,114,900	\$1,114,900	\$1,114,900
TAP	\$86,238	\$86,238	\$86,238	\$86,238	\$86,238
<b>Total Federal Aid</b>	<b>\$9,583,522</b>	<b>\$9,973,291</b>	<b>\$9,893,910</b>	<b>\$10,129,377</b>	<b>\$10,258,259</b>

**MONTACHUSETT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP) – AMENDMENT #1**

B. Harris reported that At the MPO meeting on January 25, 2017, the Montachusett MPO reviewed and voted to release for a 45-day public review and comment period an Amendment #1 to the Montachusett Public Participation Plan (PPP). The PPP outlines the process for public involvement in, specifically, the Regional Transportation Plans (RTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and as well as any other major transportation study undertaken by the MMPO. The PPP outlines the process that the MMPO uses to reach out to persons identified under the regulations/laws of Title VI, Environmental Justice (EJ), Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and as well any other traditionally underrepresented population.

As part of the PPP, key documents and amendments are released for 30-day public review and comment periods. In order to maintain a more consistent MPO meeting schedule, the proposed PPP Amendment #1 will change the public comment period to 21 days from the current 30 days. This would allow for meeting dates to remain relevant and avoid the shifting of dates in order to accommodate the 30-day periods. The comment period began on Monday January 30<sup>th</sup> and will close on Wednesday march 15<sup>th</sup>. No comments have been received to date. The Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC) reviewed the draft Amendment #1 at its February 15<sup>th</sup> meeting and recommended that the MRPC and the MPO endorse the PPP Amendment #1.

M. Fortin moved that the MRPC has reviewed the Montachusett Public Participation Plan (PPP) Amendment #1 and based upon this review, the recommendation of the MJTC as well as a review of any comments received, authorizes its Chairman to endorse the PPP Amendment #1 at a MPO meeting scheduled for Wednesday March 15, 2017 at 1:00 PM at the MRPC offices. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Next MPO Meeting – March 15, 2017 at 1:00 PM**

**Next MJTC Meeting – March 8, 2017 at 6:30 PM**

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

There being in further business the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

### DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING

MRPC Handout, March 2, 2017

Meeting Minutes February 2, 2017

Recreational Marijuana Presentation Correspondence

Cash Schedule - February 1, 2017 – February 28, 2017

2017 Public Participation Plan Amendment #1

CPTC Annual Conference Brochure – March 18, 2017

Federal Fiscal Year 2017 Highway Amendment

MA Freight Plan Meeting Flyer

Interested Parties Memo – Draft Transportation Improvement Program and Public Participation Program Amendment



2017 MRPC, MJTC, MPO Meeting Calendar

Meeting Attendance					
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
Truehart, Duane	M	Athol	7.2016	X	
Dodge, Alan	A	Athol	7.2016		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
Graves, Scott	A	Gardner	7.2015		X
Burke, Russ	M	Groton	7.2016		X
Graham, Don	M	Harvard	7.2015		X
Bratko, Thomas	M	Hubbardston	7.2016	X	
Stauder, Michael	A	Hubbardston	7.2016		X
Christopher, Thomas	M	Lancaster	7.2016		X
Piazza, Noreen	A	Lancaster	7.2016	X	
Prokowieiw, David	M	Lunenburg	7.2015		X
Allen, Nancy	A	Petersham	7.2015		X
Telepciak, John	A	Phillipston	10.201	X	
Natrowicz, Kyle	M	Royalston	7.2015		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
Terenzini, Carter	A	Templeton	9.2016		X
King, Cindy	A	Townsend	7.2016		X
Fortin, Mike	M	Westminster	7.2015	X	
Corbosiero, Guy	M	Winchendon	7.2011		X
Cyganiewicz, Austin	A	Winchendon	7.2015		X

**STAFF PRESENT:** Brad Harris, Jason Stanton, George Kahale, Glenn Eaton, George Kahale

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Mark Goldstein, MRPC Legal Counsel, Peter Jasinski, Sentinel and Enterprise; Claire Freda, Leominster, Heather Budrewicz, Ashburnham.