

LAKES REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

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MINUTES
LRPC COMMISSION MEETING
 Moultonborough Town Hall, Moultonborough, NH
 March 30, 2015

PRESIDING: Warren Hutchins
QUORUM: Present

CALL TO ORDER: 6:05 p.m.
COMMUNITIES PRESENT: 14

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Philip Wittmann (Alton)
Cheryl Cox (Ashland)
David Kerr (Barnstead)
John Morgenstern (Gilford)
Wayne Ogni (Gilmanton)
Mitch Manseau (Hebron)
Robert Snelling (Holderness)
Warren Hutchins (Laconia)
Hamilton McLean (Laconia)
William Bayard (Meredith)
Herb Vadney (Meredith)
Barbara Perry (Moultonborough)
Paul Punturieri (Moultonborough)
Wayne Crowley (Northfield)
Douglas Read (Northfield)
Ian Raymond (Sanbornton)
Stephen Wingate (Tuftonboro)
Roger Murray, III (Wolfeboro)

LRPC STAFF:

Mike Izard
Karin Landry, Recording Clerk

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES:

Parker Moore, NHHSEM
Joe Cormier, The Citizen
John Gotjen (Tamworth)
David Ford, Wolfeboro Public Works
Samuel Perry (Moultonborough)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Steve Favorite (Bristol)
John Ayer (Gilford)
Pat Farley (Tamworth)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair W. Hutchins called the meeting to order at approximately 6:05 p.m. and declared a quorum present to do business. Introductions were made by those in attendance.

2. Motion for Approval of the November 17, 2014 LRPC Commission Meeting Minutes.

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2014 LRPC Commission meeting was unanimously approved. *M/S/P Perry/Wingate.*

3. Local Hazard Mitigation Plans - Panel Discussion - *Why Every Community Should Have One?*

Chair W. Hutchins introduced panel members Parker Moore, NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NHHSEM), Hazard Mitigation Planner and David Ford, P.E., Wolfeboro Director of Public Works and Water & Sewer Utilities. Scheduled panel member Elizabeth Peck, NHHSEM State Hazard Mitigation Officer, was unable to attend.

P. Moore reviewed the overall goals of hazard mitigation, which reduces the need for preparedness and response by looking at what hazards face a community and what can be done to limit the effects of natural disasters. He reviewed the pre-disaster mitigation and the flood mitigation assistance programs that are funded annually through appropriations by the US Congress. In order to be eligible for the programs, there must be an approved statewide and community hazardous mitigation plan. A hazardous mitigation plan must

be in writing and is valid for a five year period. It can subsequently be updated by the community. Having a plan in place before a disaster occurs gives a community the opportunity for additional funding and mitigation techniques, and construction can be incorporated into the recovery process.

D. Ford shared ways that Wolfeboro's hazardous mitigation plan has been a good tool for planning purposes. It has been used when going before the Select Board or Budget Committee for infrastructure needs, the information contained in the plan can be used in grant applications to demonstrate that a problem exists, and the Town was able to pursue two major culvert expansions in conjunction with a road recovery project following a major flood event in 1987.

P. Moore reviewed the hazardous mitigation plan application process. It is recommended that communities take very large projects and break them down into small, standalone projects that can be discussed in hazardous mitigation plans and completed independently. He said it has been proven that for every \$1 spent on mitigation, there is about \$4 worth of savings from a loss.

A Question and comment period followed the presentation:

Will the disappearance of subsidies from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the National Flood Insurance Program impact the funds available to communities? The flood mitigation assistance program ties into the National Flood Insurance Program. In 2012, flood insurance reform combined repetitive flood claims and severe repetitive losses and put them within the flood mitigation assistance program, where there is still some subsidy depending on community qualifications. Questions regarding flood insurance premiums should be directed to Jennifer Gilbert at the NH Office of Energy and Planning (NHOEP).

D. Ford said that another benefit of the hazardous mitigation plan is to look at potential hazards and incorporate goals in budgets for items such as training, staffing and the right equipment. In the Town of Wolfeboro, the culvert inventory in the hazardous mitigation plan aided in locating plugs that needed to be released after a flooding event related to a beaver dam.

To what degree are the uncertainties of climate change being factored into the actual design of culverts? D. Ford said that the statistical data used to assess probability for a 100 or 500 year flood event are often based on only 30-50 years of statistical data, and he would like to see recent years incorporated into the existing data. P. Moore said that state and federal agencies are looking at trends in data, weather patterns, and rain fall to incorporate into plans. Overall, weather trends are getting worse. The NFIP is looking at updated maps of flood plans and structures that are repetitively damaged.

What was the cost of preparing a hazardous mitigation plan for Wolfeboro? D. Jeffers of LRPC assisted with the 2012 update of the plan. There must be compensation for a facilitator, if needed, but most of the work was done in house by the fire, police, and public works departments. The work done by LRPC is funded through a grant received from NHHSEM through FEMA. About 85% of the communities in New Hampshire have gone through the hazardous mitigation plan development process and about 14% of the communities have plans that are somewhere in the process of being updated.

Are roads in proximity to a water body that are potential contaminators of the water body identified in a hazard mitigation plan? Part of the requirements of the application process is that all potential hazards must be looked at.

Does a plan include measures to mitigate a disaster such as an overturned tanker that is contaminating the water supply? A mitigation plan includes a lot of public education. If a threat cannot be stopped, an attempt is made to mitigate effects so people are aware of it. The goal of mitigation planning is to tie into all the

planning mechanisms of a community and a hazardous mitigation plan might tie into an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) or vice versa.

Can pre-disaster mitigation funds be used for supplies and equipment such as traffic cones, bells and signs? The funds are intended for preparedness rather than response items.

A listing of communities with hazardous mitigation plans in the Lakes Region, including the status of the plans, is kept at the office of NHHSEM but not generally shared with the public.

4. Regional Transportation Update: State Ten Year Plan (TYP) Update; Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); and Lakes Region Tour Scenic Byway

TYP Update: M. Izard said that the TYP process is just beginning and local communities have been asked to identify priority concerns along state routes that can be brought to the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) for potential funding for improvements along those roadways. The information will be collected in the form of a Regional Transportation Plan. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will meet on April 1 to evaluate 18 projects located on state routes that have been identified by 10 different communities. The recommendations of the TAC will ultimately come before the Commission for adoption. NHDOT receives approximately \$150,000 in federal funding annually for the program. A significant portion of the funds are programmed for state aid bridge and highway, and some are used for debt service for bonds for improvements to I93. Local Regional Planning Commissions and communities are able to provide input on approximately \$20 million of the funds. It is hoped that approximately \$2 million will be available each year in 2025 and 2026 for priority projects that may be identified this year for inclusion in state TYP.

UPWP: Each community receives a block grant from the state for the purpose of maintaining state aid eligible roads. Of the 18 projects that have been identified in LRPC communities, 16 are federal aid eligible routes. Through the process of developing the transportation chapter of the Regional Plan, the mission statement of the Work Program was amended to reflect what can be done in terms of better understanding how the transportation network has an impact on water quality within the region. To that end, the draft UPWP proposal for the upcoming three years includes actions that will: identify culvert vulnerability; identify underground storm water systems, where they are located, and their effectiveness; identify the significant impact of unpaved roads on water quality, stream sedimentation, and aquatic life, and what communities are doing to minimize runoff that has an adverse impact on water quality. LRPC should be notified of program approval by the end of May at the latest.

Scenic Byways: LRPC was awarded an approximate \$26,000 grant to establish a working group comprised of professional planners and volunteers from communities around the Lakes Region to develop a Corridor Management Plan that will help identify the leading characteristics of the Byway. Part of the program is identifying the intrinsic qualities of what a byway is all about, such as what we would like to share with those that visit or live in the area to promote economic development. The Plan will include stellar views along or in close proximity to the Byway, as well as historic, natural, cultural and recreational resources. It is hoped that the draft document will be completed by November. H. Vadney said that in many places the views from the Byway are obscured by overgrown trees, and he strongly supports making strategic cuts to bring back visibility. M. Izard said that part of the process is looking at the existing Byway and places where there might be better views. In order to be recognized by the state as a Scenic Byway, there must be a Corridor Management Plan and there must be an active advisory committee.

M. Izard said that the City of Laconia was recently awarded \$500-\$600,000 by the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for a project for on and off road improvements that provides connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists between the high school, hospital and downtown. At least a half dozen applicants in the Region competed for a limited amount of money that was available statewide. The total cost of the project is approximately \$1.2 million, with \$700,000 coming from the State.

M. Izard said that there will be an opportunity for Commissioners statewide to get together on May 21 when the NH Association of Regional Planning Commissions (NHARPC) hosts a meeting at the Opechee Inn and Spa in Laconia. The meeting will run from 2 - 8 p.m. and dinner will be served. The guest speaker is Tom Burack of NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES).

5. Roundtable

W. Hutchins said that the Laconia Planning Board just approved a 48,000 addition to one of the major manufacturing facilities in the City and the parking lot for the facility will be the first use of porous pavement in the City. The water will pass through the pavement and dissipate into the groundwater system. He will keep Commissioners apprised as the project moves forward.

P. Punturieri said that the Moultonborough Planning Board is exploring how people would like to see a two mile stretch of the Route 25 corridor developed over the next 10-15 years.

R. Murray said that the Town of Wolfeboro approved a public/private partnership to build a ski lodge at the Abenaki Ski Area by an 80% favorable vote. The Friends of the Abenaki previously raised \$350,000 to install snowmaking equipment. The Town's share is in the \$200,000 range.

H. McLean is working with the Laconia City Manager and Finance Director to undertake a benchmarking process that tracks energy consumption in public/private buildings over a period of years to determine if buildings are getting more or less energy efficient and to rate them to other buildings of similar character across the country. The goal is to identify areas where City buildings can be improved for efficiency and possibly bring a proposal to the City Council or Planning Department to find sources of funding to upgrade those buildings. In the process, it will demonstrate to commercial property owners in the City that energy efficiency is becoming very popular and is a cost effective investment. New legislation at the State level will allow local communities to create a special district to allow commercial property owners to borrow 100% of the money they need to make energy efficiency improvements, to be paid over a 30 year period with a special exception on property taxes.

R. Snelling said that Holderness will lease excess property to a service provider that will install a solar farm on the property with the permission of the Town. The farm will cover all of the Town's in network uses. The property is less than one acre in size.

P. Punturieri said that NH Electric Co-Op (NHEC) is putting in a 12 acre solar array in Moultonborough and it is hoped to be online by fall. Terry Lemay, project engineer for NHEC, will be willing to share data and information for communities that are interested in exploring solar arrays.

W. Hutchins said that Laconia just passed an ordinance on alternative treatment centers for medical marijuana that designates where, within the zoning structure, facilities could be based. The model is available for other communities to reference.

H. Vadney cautioned that some of the catch basins that are sold for porous pavement lots require a lot of maintenance and are extremely ineffective when maintenance is not performed. The University of NH (UNH) Civil Engineering Department has a test three-acre parking lot west of campus that models different kinds of treatment. He highly recommends a four to five hour course in storm water management that is offered by UNH two to three times a year, and said that it is particularly helpful to new Select Board members.

In light of the topic of hazardous mitigation, J. Cotton said that seismic activity in the Lakes Region can be followed on the US Geological Survey website or the Boston College Weston Observatory website.

6. Other Business

W. Hutchins said that the Annual Meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 29 at the Chase House in Meredith and the program will be focused on climate change in New Hampshire.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. was unanimously approved. *M/S/P Bayard/Wingate.*