

LAKES REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

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TAC Meeting Minutes: Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Ashland Fire Department, 9 Main Street, Ashland, NH

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Sheldon Morgan (Chair), Gilford
Dave Bowles, Tamworth
David Ford, Wolfeboro
David Kerr, Barnstead
Eli Badger, Ashland
George Tuthill, Alexandria
Jeff Haines, Center Harbor

Ken McWilliams, Alton
Rick Ball, Belmont
Robert Pollock, New Hampton
Steve Favorite, Bristol
Tink Taylor, Holderness

OTHERS PRESENT

Bill Watson, NHDOT
Daniel Callister, LRPC Regional Planner
Dave Toth, Ashland Alternate
Jan Collins, Hebron
Jeff Hayes, LRPC Executive Director
Joseph Luongo, Genesis
Mark Howard, Tuftonboro
Michael Capone, Bristol Alternate
Michael IZard, LRPC Principal Planner
Peter Norse, Gilford Alternate

Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 2:02PM by Chairman Morgan. The TAC considered the Minutes of June 3. M/S/Passed Favorite/Taylor, abstaining: Badger, Haines, Ford, Tuthill, Bowles

Joseph Luongo of Genesis Behavioral Health introduced himself as a new TAC representative. The program he over sees is three years old and provides rides to about 3,500 people mainly between Laconia and Plymouth.

Regional Updates:

Scenic Byways – Corridor Management Plan

The Corridor Management Plan (CMP) development continues. The Scenic Byway Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet September 24 in Meredith to review and endorse the draft that will then come to the TAC for adoption. M. IZard will send out a link to the draft. Hopefully TAC members can review draft in advance of September 24, but the next TAC meeting in October will be another opportunity for comments. LRPC staff met with byway community representatives individually to learn what they believe the byway means their community, how they can affect land use and signage, and any thoughts they had on recommendations going forward.

The Working Group is considering how to get the CMP into the hands of different organizations that have marketing skills and how to brand the byway as the unique experience. A leading plan recommendation is to develop a view maintenance plan for the scenic overlook on NH11 in Gilford. A recent news article in a local paper describes how the trees have obscured the view, last maintained in 2006. A question for consideration is, in the absence of funding, could local volunteers maintain this view with an established liability policy? An alternative might be a public/private partnership to construct an elevated viewing platform.

Regionally, the Adopt a Highway Program is coordinated by Bill Rollins, NHDOT District 3. An inventory of sponsor groups along the byway has been mapped totaling almost 40 miles. Although the information may not be perfect, it illustrates gaps that have no sponsors. This may be an opportunity for outreach to additional organizations and businesses.

WMUR – NH Chronical has been highlighting the state byways over the last couple years in 5 to 8 minute clips. The Lakes Tour has not yet been highlighted. WMUR contacts William Rose, DOT Byway Coordinator periodically to ask about other byways that are interested and ready to go. M. Izard has expressed interest to highlight the Lakes Tour. A focus of the clip for Lakes Tour might be environmental ethic, recreation, views, cultural experiences, connection between village centers, and bike/pedestrian opportunities.

Other recommendations in the draft CMP include getting stakeholders involved such as Chambers of Commerce, the Meredith Downtown Program, etc. Suggested groups are welcomed. Tamworth and Alton propose to redefine the byway for the benefit their communities; to include NH Route 28A in Alton. Tamworth proposes inclusion if the village center on the byway and spurs to the NH16 view of Mt. Chocorua (for which there is currently no defined pullover to view), and NH113 to Wonalancet, through Sandwich, returning to Holderness.

Newfound Area Pavement Re-Striping (*Jan Collins of Newfound Pathway Program*)

The Newfound Pathways Program worked with DOT to have a newly repaved portion of NH3A in Bridgewater and Hebron restriped with ten foot travel lanes. Before repaving there was no shoulder (painted stripes at the edge of pavement). With logging trucks using this 50 mph road, it was dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians; though the road is part of a state-designated bicycle path. The narrower lanes have worked well at calming traffic and making it safer for users. The shoulders are now typically two feet wide on both sides of the highway and the pavement drop-offs at the shoulder have been lessened.

Michael Capone has been having conversations with Bill Lambert, NHDOT about West Shore Road in Bristol. He has been working with others to advocate for the incorporation of pedestrian safety measures in highway projects. DOT has allocated some money for the development of a safety guide currently being worked on by a committee consisting of himself, DOT staff, engineers, Moultonborough, Meredith and Dartmouth representatives.

Ten Year Plan

The TAC reviewed the Lakes Region projects in the Draft Ten Year Plan 2017–2026 with the assistance of Bill Watson, NHDOT Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance. DOT has prepared a 45-page GACIT supplemental guide available on their website that provides information on the status of existing TYP projects. DOT has gone to great lengths to show that they have used the funding in the existing Ten Year Plan effectively and that projects are getting completed. There are more funds being proposed for the Lakes Region in the 2017 draft plan than in the 2015 plan. The Lakes Region’s top five projects were looked at carefully by the DOT to try to incorporate as many as possible. It’s important to point out that the draft TYP shows four of the TAC’s top five priority projects being included. The only exclusion (#3 Meredith) is because Meredith decided they didn’t want the project included as it was laid out. The inclusion of regional priorities is a reminder for TAC’s to know they influence in the process and that

their input is taken. A handout showing all categories of regional projects added to the 2017 draft TYP was discussed. Noted was the category labelled “Individual Projects” - projects on state primary and secondary highways where the TAC typically has influence; other categories have pots of funds that are specific, such as for bridges.

B. Watson outlined three documents of interest on the DOT’s TYP website; one of which explains how highway tiers and priorities play into pavement and bridge strategies. To establish more credibility, NHDOT needs to strive to become more financially constrained. At the end of the 2015 TYP we had about \$300 million over what was estimated for available revenue. In the draft TYP, we’re about \$130 million over, which includes an inflation rate of 3.2 percent, as well as an indirect rate for the department. A second premise is that NHDOT is going to deliver what we said we were going to deliver, when we said we were going to deliver it, and the budget that we said we would deliver it with. We should celebrate that projects are getting done.

The GACIT will host 16 public hearings statewide including a hearing on October 26 in Laconia (this is a LRPC commission meeting as well). TAC members are encouraged to take the time to read over the referenced information and participate at the hearings.

Ashland Transportation Improvements Overview

The town of Ashland has continued interest in improving safety and efficiency at the intersection of US3/NH 25, NH 132, Highland Street, and Pleasant Street. This intersection has been the focus of a recent traffic study and charrette. Proposed solutions included a roundabout and a simplified four-way intersection. After an overview provided by D. Toth; TAC members participated in a site walk from the fire station to the nearby intersection.

Other Business

The next TAC meeting will be October 7, 2015 - venue to be determined.

Motion to adjourn at 3:56

M/S/Passed Capone/Ford