

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
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KYLE HANLON, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS
Executive Director

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

**Thursday September 28, 2017
At BRPC Office**

I. Call to Order

A. The meeting is called to order at 7:00 PM after the New Delegate and Alternate Orientation

Chair Kyle Hanlon reminded all per the open meeting law, BRPC records all meetings. Others may record the meeting after informing the chair. Any documents presented must be left with the chair at the meeting.

B. Introductions/Roll Call

The following Commission members are present:

Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Edward Holub – Dalton Alternate
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate
Pam Kueber – Lenox Delegate
Kenn Basler – Monterey Alternate
James Lovejoy – Mt. Washington Alternate
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate
CJ Hoss – Pittsfield Alternate
Roger Kohler – Sandisfield Alternate
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate
Marie Raftery – Stockbridge Delegate
Carole Owens – Stockbridge Alternate
Mark Curtin - Tyringham Delegate
Sarah Hudson – Tyringham Alternate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
John Garcia – Windsor Delegate
Timothy Crane – Windsor Alternate

Staff Present:

Nathaniel Karns – Executive Director
Thomas Matuszko – Assistant Director
Marianne Sniezek – Office Manager
Patricia Mullens - Community and Economic Development Program Manager

Others Present:

Kate Fletcher – Stockbridge
Caleb Mitchell - Citizen

Kyle welcomed new members to the Commission.

C. Approval of Minutes July 27, 2017 Regular Meeting

Rene Wood moved to approve; seconded by Sheila Irvin. Unanimously approved with 3 abstentions.

II. Comments from the Public – None

III. Delegate & Alternate Issues

Rene Wood thanked BRPC for holding the Recreational Marijuana Workshop in Lenox. Tom informed everyone of the link on BRPC's website to view the recording of the workshop along with other material: <http://berkshireplanning.org/initiatives/marijuana-legalization>

BRPC was also thanked for their assistance to Lee on developing their 40R Zoning.

Kyle announced committees are looking for volunteers. Kyle also urged members to bring up issues and any topics you or community would like BRPC to present at upcoming Commission meetings or any training topics at 5th Thursday events.

The following people volunteered for the following committees:

Commission Development Committee

Carole Owens (Stockbridge)

Kate Fletcher (Non-Commission member)

Environmental Review Committee

Edward Holub (Dalton)

Regional Issues Committee

Pam Kueber (Lenox)

Finance Committee

Rene Wood (Sheffield)

IV. Endorsement of Committee Chair and At-Large Executive Committee Member Appointments for FY 2018

Rene Wood moved to endorse the Committee Chair and At-Large Executive Committee Member Appointments for FY 2018; seconded by Marie Raftery. Unanimously approved.

Kyle thanked previous Chairs Rene Wood of the Commission Development Committee and Marie Raftery of the Regional Issues Committee for their work on these committees.

V. Final Approval of 2017 Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Incorporating Comments from the U.S. Economic Development Administration

The Economic Development Administration provided a small set of comments, non-substantive in nature, after reviewing the CEDS which the Commission approved in June. These need to be incorporated into the document and we have been requested that the Commission formally approve this incorporation.

Nat explained per EDA the additional information added was a cost instead of "to be determined" and funding sources to the CED's Strategy. None of the substance or projects in the CEDS was changed.

Nat asked for the Commission's approval of the added information to the supplemental material for October 2017 to October 2022 and to be submitted to EDA after the CEDS Committee approves.

Roger Bolton moved to endorse the Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy incorporating the additional information based on comments from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and receive approval from the CEDS Committee for submission to EDA; seconded by Jim Lovejoy. Unanimously approved.

VI. Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission

The Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission was created by legislation in 2015 and held its first meeting in June 2016. Over the past year, it has analyzed a lot of data to better understand the nature of “rural” communities in Massachusetts in order to start to build a work program for the future. The data was presented. The Commission’s feedback will inform Berkshire’s representative to the RPAC (Executive Director Nat Karns) as he continues to work with the other RPAC members over the coming year.

Nat stressed the following:

Problems to Access Jobs:

- Lack of public Transit Services - distance to get to a job is a real problem in rural communities.
- Underserved by Broadband
- Access to Career Centers
- Public Higher Education – Berkshire Community College and Massachusetts Liberal Arts College

To Create Jobs the following is needed:

- Suitable locations with infrastructure to support business development. Such as having water and sewer systems
- Technical assistance to help entrepreneurs to develop a business.
- Community Development Corporations: Southern CDC, Pittsfield PERC, Franklin CDC
- Massachusetts Small Business Development Network
- Leverage opportunities in the community to develop businesses that attract customers (as well as prospective employees and other entrepreneurs). Opportunities might include: Natural assets – scenic landscapes and villages, outdoor recreation: farm & food systems; housing affordability; quality of life – culture and environment.

After Nat’s presentation he asked members for their suggestions on what is needed to access jobs and to create jobs.

Rene suggested high school entrepreneur programs and technical centers to help fill open positions. Pam asked for a list of the jobs needed to be filled. Train people for those jobs. Nat suggested Heather Boulger from Berkshire Regional Employment Board could provide a list of jobs available.

Pam from Lenox suggested a template for towns on what communities need to do when businesses are looking at their community. Most communities do not have an Economic Development Department but we need new entrepreneurs. Small businesses are what are most likely to come to our communities. Rene commented we need one stop shopping.

Nat suggested at a Commission Meeting inviting Jonathan Butler from 1berkshires and Ellen Kennedy, the President at Berkshire Community College, to speak to members on what they are doing.

Tom explained BRPC has a Shared Economic Planner in a few of our communities. A BRPC staff person works with the towns on local economic development needs as the town defines it. Lanesborough is looking at the possibilities for the Berkshire Mall with BRPC’s assistance. Also, Great Barrington and Hinsdale are taking advantage of the shared Economic Planner.

Ken Basler commented we need to know what is available and what is the vision. We need small businesses. Jim Lovejoy commented we need resources and money.

Rene commented the state needs to fund economic development, BRPC needs to ask for funding. Possibly a pilot program and have BRPC take the lead. Possible District Technical Assistance (DLTA) as a funding source. Ken mentioned Community Compacts as a funding source.

VI. Community Compact

The Community Compact was one of the first initiatives of the Baker Administration and is entering its third year. The first round of Community Compacts has resulted in noticeable improvements in municipal practices across a range of activities. Thirty cities and towns in Berkshire County are eligible to enter into new Community Compacts this fall. Assistant Director Tom Matuszko presented information on the

updated program and the status of our cities and towns. Communities are limited to two commitments for the coming year and the program provides support across a wide range of options.

Tom explained we are in year three of the Community Compact program. There is \$2 million dollars available this year as well as state expertise. Jim Lovejoy pointed out IT and Financial Services are examples of state expertise assistance. Tom encouraged everyone to look at the long list of Best Practices. To apply there is an easy online application that must be sign by the Chief Elected Official or the Select Board Chair. The key is each community can sign up for only two Best Practices. Tom pointed out on page 6 the Housing and Economic Development Best Practices. Ken Basler stated every town should be doing this. It is a way for your community to focus on your issues. Communities all will be approved for state expertise and grant money. Communities can also band together for a regional application.

VII. Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Grants

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has just released a solicitation for applications to its Land Use Technical Assistance Program, with applications due October 23rd. We believe this is a great opportunity for our communities to address deficiencies and desires they have to modernize their land use regulations. Information about the program can be found at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/eea/land/fy-17-planning-assistance-rfr-iii>.

Tom explained this is a new grant program to looking at Zoning, Climate Vulnerability Assessments, Land Conservation and Climate Change.

You MUST SIGN UP for COMMUNITY COMPACTS to be more competitive for this grant application. Effectively the DUE DATE is October 20, 2017 because 4 paper copies must be received in Boston by October 23, 2017.

There is a 25% match requirement. DLTA can be match for planning or zoning.

The key to be more competitive is to do all three:

1. Community Compact
2. EEOA Land Use Planning
3. DLTA match

For a regional application letters of support would be needed. One possible regional application would be an Age Friendly housing options for seniors. If there is any interest please contact Tom at tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org.

VIII. Approval of Executive Committee Actions between July 27 and September 28, 2017

Rene Wood moved to approve the Executive Committee Actions between July 27 and September 28, 2017; seconded by Marie Raftery. Unanimously approved.

IX. Executive Director's Report

A. New Staff at BRPC

Nat announced the newest additions to BRPC's staff due to more work:

Three new planners have been hired

1. Peg McDonough – Age Friendly Berkshires
2. Justin Gilmore – Transportation
3. Chris Gruba – Land use planning and Zoning

New staff to be hired in October

1. William Sikula – planner for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other programs
2. BRPC will be making an offer for the Community Development Program Associate. The primary duties would be to work on housing rehab and with the homeowners. BRPC also will be starting two new CDBG programs in Becket and Monterey. Kenn Basler thanked Pat Mullins for her assistance with Monterey's CDBG program.

Other staff changes

Bill Compton is no longer with BRPC. There was a mutual agreement regarding Bill's departure. BRPC is actively recruiting and interviewing for an Economic Development Senior Planner.

- B. Passage of 40R Smart Growth Overlay District in Great Barrington**
- C. BRPC Regional Issues Committee – Short Term Rental Legislation**
- D. 2017 Moving Together Conference – September 28th, Boston Park Plaza Hotel**
- E. BRPC Annual Meeting – Thursday, October 19th, Pittsfield Country Club**
Kyle urged anyone who has not signed up yet should do so. Mr. Krens will be a dynamic speaker.
- F. Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Berkshire Workshops – Thursday, November 2nd and Thursday November 9th, BRPC**
- G. Municipal ADA Grant Program**
- H. DHCD Community Scale Housing Initiative**
- I. Massachusetts Clean Energy Center Programs for Municipalities**
- J. Congratulations to Sheffield and Washington on Division of Ecological Restoration Grants for Culvert Replacement Designs**
- K. Other**

Rene also thanked the Regional Issues Committee for their review of the Land Use Reform legislation.

Nat explained the Senate bill is the modernization of Massachusetts statues covering Master Planning and Zoning that has not been done since 1973. There are three versions that all need comments; Senate 81, House 2420 and the Real Estate Bill.

BRPC supports the concept of the first two bills and sent comments regarding S.81 An Act Promoting Housing and Sustainable Development. Below is the link to the letter posted on BRPC's website:

http://berkshireplanning.org/images/uploads/announcements/2017-09-25_S.81_Act_Promoting_Housing_and_Sustainable_Development_.pdf

X. Adjournment

Rene Wood made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Sheila Irvin. Unanimously approved. Adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Materials distributed or presented during this meeting:

Meeting Agenda
Draft Meeting Minutes
Approval of Executive Committee Actions Memo
Executive Director's Report
Endorsement of Committee Chair and At-Large Executive Committee Member Appointments
Rural Policy Advisory Commission General Law/Part 1/Title II/Chapter 23A/Section66 and power point
Massachusetts Rural Communities Map
Berkshire Community Compacts by Community and Best Practices
EOEEA Grant Announcement Planning Assistance
2017 Moving Together Conference
BRPC Annual Meeting
Municipal ADA Grant Program and Process and Deadlines
Massachusetts Clean Energy Center Programs for Municipalities and Clean Heating and Cooling for
Commercial and Industrial
CPTC Fall 2017 Workshops Flyer