

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
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Meeting Minutes APPROVED
Commission Development Committee
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
January 19, 2017

Committee Member Attendees: Rene Wood, Chair, Sarah Hudson, Kyle Hanlon, CJ Hoss
Others: Tom Matuszko (BRPC Staff), Marianne Sniezek (BRPC Staff)

1. Minutes from November 17, 2016 - The minutes from the November 17, 2016 meeting were approved as presented.
2. 5th Thursday dinners – FY 2017
 - March 30, 2017 – It was reiterated that the topic would be Stormwater Management Best Practices. The speaker would be Rebecca Balke, from the consulting firm Comprehensive Environmental Inc. (CEI) and the location would be the Pittsfield County Club.
 - January 26, 2017 – Tom provided a brief update about the recreational marijuana workshop. He reported about 38 sign-ups to date. Attorney Ray Miyares is the speaker. A request was made to re-send the invitation to the Managers and Administrators. The presentation will be videotaped by CTSB. Tom reported that if there are interested participants a small working group would be convened to propose amendments to the legislation. There was discussion about moratoriums, especially the length of the moratoriums and when one should be voted on. Because of the uncertainty of amendments, it might be useful to hold another workshop one the amendments and regulations have been finalized – possibly at the November 30th, 5th Thursday.
 - June 29, 2017
 - Topic – Topics that were discussed (and some were discussed at previous meetings) were tiny houses, broadband (although that might be best discussed in a special session and not at a 5th Thursday), regulating large scale solar (including de-commissioning), reaping fiscal benefits of large scale solar, and historic tax credits. It was agreed that the topic should be large scale solar, including the basics of zoning (based on the template), contract points (fiscal benefits,) lessons learned, primer on the new MA solar law, funds for removal, and community solar programs.
 - Speaker – TBD - (J. McGrath from Pittsfield, might be able to recommend a consultant, K-P Law might also present)
 - Location – Mazzeo's is 1st choice, Pittsfield County Club is 2nd choice

Others in 2017 – November 30, 2017 (August 31, 2017 was previously removed as a date being too close to the holiday weekend, but it may be necessary to hold this event related to the recreational marijuana topic.)

Other topics added to or kept on the list includes keeping the tiny houses topic, especially in regards to the

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building code requirements. Another topic is cell towers, in response to changing technology. Another possible topic is changes to the zoning enabling act.

3. Training Topics for Commission Meetings

- March 16, 2017 – Changes to federal programs
- May 18, 2017 - The styro-foam / plastic bag ban and the health impacts and the experiences of towns that have done it. Jim McGrath or Gina Armstrong might be a good speaker. To be confirmed at the March meeting.

4. Other Items – The Annual meeting was discussed. The preferred location was the Pittsfield County Club. Jay Ash or Thomas Krens were mentioned as possible speakers. Tom will confer with Mike Case from the Selectboards Association to try to avoid a conflict of dates.

Another item that was discussed was the MAPD (Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors) Annual Conference on June 15 & 16 2017 at the Crowne Plaza. This should be announced at the next Commission meeting.

Report on implementation of Sustainable Berkshires items. It was suggested that a working group be set up to oversee the implementation of Sustainable Berkshires. If a group was set up, CJ agree to work on it.

It was also discussed that we address poor attendance at the Annual Meeting. It was suggested that there might be a correlation with attendance at Commission meeting. Maybe the format of the meeting needs to be changed. Maybe the location needs to be moved around in Berkshire County. A focused topic might help attendance. Tom will do some research on the previous Annual meetings – who was the speaker, what was the topic and what was the attendance.

5. Next Meeting – tentative date – March 16, 2017 – 5:45pm

6. Adjournment