



# BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

1 Fenn Street, Suite 201  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
T: (413) 442-1521 · F: (413) 442-1523  
TTY: 771 or (800) 439-2370  
berkshireplanning.org

The next meeting of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission  
**Regional Issues Committee**  
will be held via Zoom on:  
**Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.**

Virtual participation in this meeting is allowed by Ch. 20 of the Acts of 2021 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20.  
The meeting will be held via the Zoom using the information below.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84131763989?pwd=c3N6YVhEYTNOTIRPMGlwd3VjU1hLZz09>

Meeting ID: 841 3176 3989

Passcode: 541180

One tap mobile: +16465588656,,84131763989#,,,,\*541180# US (New York)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84131763989?pwd=c3N6YVhEYTNOTIRPMGlwd3VjU1hLZz09>

## **AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Meeting Minutes
3. State Owned Land Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Report
4. Municipal Infrastructure Report - Preview
5. Topics for Future Consideration
6. Next Committee Meeting Date – October 27, 2021
7. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 23B

### **Please Note:**

For information regarding postponements or cancellations on the day of a scheduled meeting, please call Berkshire Regional Planning Commission at (413) 442-1521, x5



## **MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL ISSUES COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, August 11, 2021

*Hybrid Zoom Virtual Meeting/In-Person Meeting*

### **I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:06pm by Kyle Hanlon. The meeting was recorded.

#### Committee Members Present

Kyle Hanlon, North Adams (Present via Zoom)

Chris Rembold, Great Barrington (Present via Zoom)

Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield (Present via Zoom)

Eleanor Tillinghast, Mount Washington (non-Commission member) (Present via Zoom)

#### Committee Members Absent

CJ Hoss, Chair, Pittsfield

Andrew Groff, Williamstown

#### BRPC Staff Present

Tom Matuszko, Executive Director

Laura Brennan, Economic Development Program Manager

Clete Kus, Transportation Program Manager

Alexander Valentini, Economic Development Researcher (Present via Zoom)

#### Other Attendees

Brittany Polito, iBerkshires.com (Present via Zoom)

### **II. Approval of April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Sheila I. moved to approve the minutes of the April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting. Chris R. seconded the motion.

#### Roll Call

Sheila I. – Abstain

Chris R. – Yes

Eleanor T. – Yes

Kyle H. – Yes

The motion to approve the minutes of the April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting passed.

### **III. Transportation Climate Initiative**

#### **a. Discussion**

Clete K. presented the comment letter. The comment letter addresses the three documents, which have been released for public comment, the Model Implementation Plan, the Draft Framework for Public Engagement, and the Draft Strategies for Regional Collaboration.

Regarding the project goals, BRPC believes that more emphasis should be placed on the

primary goal of the TCI-P – the reduction of transportation emissions – and is concerned that the program has grown to include goals that will have little impact on emissions.

BRPC has previously expressed that rural areas should be included in the definition of overburdened and underrepresented communities; this comment has yet to be addressed. Additionally, BRPC believes that the proposed Equity Advisory Body should include members with expertise on rural areas and suggests that members serve on a volunteer basis and are compensated only for their travel expenses such to maximize the funds applied towards emissions reductions projects.

BRPC believes that the development of a public engagement plan should be a priority and that jurisdictions should solicit input into the decision-making process from rural areas.

BRPC is concerned that the air quality monitoring used to determine TCI-P impacts may not detect emissions reductions and believes that TCI-P funds should not be used to expand the State's air quality monitoring network. Furthermore, the contents of the air quality annual reports meant to be published needs more specificity.

The jurisdictions previously committed to direct no less than 35% of proceeds from the auctioning of allowances towards overburdened and underserved communities. BRPC once again asks that rural areas are included in these communities. Additionally, BRPC asks for further clarification on the level of investment across municipalities. The plan also calls for the creation of high-paying jobs through the investment of proceeds.

BRPC asks that clarification is given regarding the cost and funding of the proposed Administrative Organization and expresses concern that funds used to furnish the Administrative Organization will not go towards emissions-reducing investments.

BRPC believes that members of the proposed Equity Advisory Board should have knowledge of the EPA's national ambient air quality monitoring program and that funding for air quality monitoring should be sought through this program.

BRPC expresses concern that the provisions geared towards generating high-quality jobs may divert funds away from emissions-reducing projects.

BRPC believes that jurisdictions should engage bus and truck manufacturers in order to ensure that sufficient zero-emission vehicles are available, otherwise the desired TCI-P objectives will not be reached.

BRPC believes that jurisdictions should engage regional planning agencies and metropolitan planning organizations in the development of electric vehicle charging corridors/stations.

BRPC is concerned by the decision to hire the Metropolitan Group, a social change agency, to facilitate engagement with overburdened and underserved communities and asks that clarification is given on the funds used to hire this organization.

BRPC asks that a name is provided for each TCI-P jurisdiction point of contact, and not just an email address.

Eleanor T. asked if the TCI-P is likely to move forward now that Rhode Island and Connecticut have not supported the program, and Massachusetts is the final remaining jurisdiction. Clete K. said that he thought it would continue under the current administration. Eleanor T. said that she had read an article in which the administration said they would not continue if Massachusetts were the sole jurisdiction. Clete K. said that he wasn't aware of this, but he believes it is still worthwhile submitting comments in case it is implemented.

Eleanor T. mentioned that Tufts University had published a study that claimed the increase in gas prices as a result of the program could be much higher than the increases published by the state and asked if this letter would be a good place to emphasize the impact of such increases on rural communities, which depend on private transportation and have insufficient public transportation. Clete K. said that such a comment could be included in this letter. Chris R. suggested that the cost impacts could be stressed in the part of the letter that asked for rural areas to be included in the definition of overburdened and underserved communities. Eleanor T. agreed. Tom M. suggested that much of the language could be taken from previously submitted comment letters that addressed these points.

#### **b. Approval of Comment Letter**

Eleanor T. said she did not need to see the letter again, but would like a copy. Kyle H. and Brittany P. also asked for copies.

Chris R. asked if the letter would be sent to EPA region 1. Clete K. said that they weren't current recipients, but he would add them if he thought it necessary.

Eleanor T. moved to adopt the letter as amended and approve staff to make changes without further approval. Kyle H. seconded the motion.

#### Roll Call

Chris R. – Yes

Kyle H. – Yes

Sheila I. – Yes

Eleanor T. – Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

#### **IV. Topics for Future Consideration**

Tom M. said that there is legislation that has been filed regarding the PILOT payment program, and he thinks it important for the Committee to weigh in given that there is a lot of publicly owned land in Berkshire County. The Committee agreed.

#### **V. Next Committee Meeting Date – September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021**

#### **VI. Adjournment**

Chris R. moved to adjourn the meeting. Kyle H. seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:42pm.