



FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES APPROVED July 8, 2021

This was a virtual meeting as allowed by Ch. 20 of the Acts of 2021 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20.

I. Opening

A. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM

Chair Kyle Hanlon stated that per the open meeting law, BRPC records all meetings. Others may record the meeting after informing the chair. Any documents presented must be provided to the chair at the meeting. Pittsfield TV was recording.

B. Roll Call

The following Commission members were present:

John Duval – Adams Alternate
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Mary McGurn – Egremont Alternate
Malcolm Fick – Great Barrington Alternate
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate
Pam Kueber – Lenox Delegate
James Lovejoy – Mt. Washington Alternate
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate
CJ Hoss – Pittsfield Alternate
Fred Schubert – Richmond Alternate
René Wood – Sheffield Alternate
Nancy Socha – Stockbridge Alternate
Sarah Hudson – Tyringham Alternate
Don Gagnon – Washington Delegate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
Roger Lawrence – Williamstown Delegate
Doug McNally – Windsor Delegate

Staff Present:

Thomas Matuszko – Executive Director
Marianne Sniezek – Office Manager
Kate Hill Tapia – Office Administrator

Others Present:

Brittany Polito – iBerkshire, Pittsfield Community Television,
Ken Smith - Sheffield Planning Board,

C. Approval of Minutes of May 20, 2021, Meeting

René Wood moved to approve the draft minutes of the May 20, 2021 meeting. Peter Traub seconded the motion. There were no comments or discussion. The minutes were approved with a roll call vote and three abstentions.

Yes:

John Duval – Adams Alternate
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Mary McGurn – Egremont Alternate
Malcolm Fick – Great Barrington Alternate
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate
Pam Kueber – Lenox Delegate
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate
Fred Schubert – Richmond Alternate
René Wood – Sheffield Alternate
Nancy Socha – Stockbridge Alternate
Sarah Hudson – Tyringham Alternate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
Doug McNally – Windsor Delegate

Abstained:

James Lovejoy – Mt. Washington Alternate
Don Gagnon – Washington Delegate
Roger Lawrence – Williamstown Delegate

II. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

III. Delegate & Alternate Issues

There were no Delegate or Alternate issues.

IV. Executive Committee Actions

There were no questions or comments on Executive Committee actions at the June 3, 2021 meeting.

V. Election of BRPC Officers for FY 2022

The following slate of BRPC Officers for FY22 were proposed by the Nominating Committee:

Chair: John Duval, Adams Alternate
Vice Chair: Malcolm Fick, Great Barrington Alternate
Clerk: Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield Delegate
Treasurer: Buck Donovan, Lee Delegate

There were no nominations from the floor.

Doug McNally motioned to accept the slate of officers as proposed. Fred Schubert seconded the motions. The motion passed with a roll call vote and one abstention.

Yes:

John Duval – Adams Alternate
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Mary McGurn – Egremont Alternate
Malcolm Fick – Great Barrington Alternate
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate
Pam Kueber – Lenox Delegate
James Lovejoy – Mt. Washington Alternate
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate
Fred Schubert – Richmond Alternate
René Wood – Sheffield Alternate
Sarah Hudson – Tyringham Alternate
Don Gagnon – Washington Delegate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
Doug McNally – Windsor Delegate

Abstained:

Roger Lawrence – Williamstown Delegate

John Duval thanked outgoing Chair Kyle Hanlon for his service and appreciated how he runs meetings. John introduced himself by sharing that he is in his 10th year on the Adams Select Board and is currently its Chair. John is also a member of Adams’s Town Meeting’s Executive Committee. He was on the Adams Cheshire School Committee for 17 years. John took over as Chair of this meeting.

VI. Endorsement of Committee Chairs and At-Large Executive Committee Member Appointment for FY 2022

As required by the BRPC bylaws, the newly elected BPRC Chair, John Duval, asked the Commission to approve the following FY22 Committee Chairs and At-Large Executive Committee members:

- Environmental Review Committee – Roger Bolton, Williamstown
- Commission Development Committee – Rene Wood, Sheffield
- Regional Issues Committee – CJ Hoss, Pittsfield
- Berkshire Brownfields Committee – Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield
- Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee – Kyle Hanlon, North Adams
- Kyle Hanlon, At-Large, North Adams
- Sam Haupt, At-Large, Peru (Knowledgeable about transportation issues)

Malcolm Fick motioned to accept the committee chairs and at-large Executive Committee members as proposed by the new Chair John Duval. Kyle Hanlon seconded. The motion passed with a roll call vote and two abstentions.

Yes:

John Duval – Adams Alternate
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Mary McGurn – Egremont Alternate
Malcolm Fick – Great Barrington Alternate
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate
Pam Kueber – Lenox Delegate
James Lovejoy – Mt. Washington Alternate
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate
Fred Schubert – Richmond Alternate
René Wood – Sheffield Alternate
Nancy Socha – Stockbridge Delegate
Sarah Hudson – Tyringham Alternate
Don Gagnon – Washington Delegate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
Doug McNally – Windsor Delegate

Abstained:

Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate
Roger Lawrence – Williamstown Delegate

VII. Ratification of Commission Representatives to Related Groups

As required by BRPC's Bylaws, the Commission was asked to ratify the following appointments of members to special or standing bodies not under the jurisdiction of BRPC:

- Westfield River Wild and Scenic Advisory Committee Representative: Marie Raftery (Stockbridge Non-Commission member)
- Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization Alternate: Sam Haupt, Peru

Kyle Hanlon motioned to ratify these appointments to special or standing bodies. Sheila Irvin seconded the motion. The motion passed with a roll call vote and one abstention.

Yes:

John Duval – Adams Alternate
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Mary McGurn – Egremont Alternate
Malcolm Fick – Great Barrington Alternate
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate
Pam Kueber – Lenox Delegate
James Lovejoy – Mt. Washington Alternate
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate
Fred Schubert – Richmond Alternate
René Wood – Sheffield Alternate
Nancy Socha – Stockbridge Delegate
Sarah Hudson – Tyringham Alternate

Don Gagnon – Washington Delegate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
Doug McNally – Windsor Delegate

Abstained:

Roger Lawrence – Williamstown Delegate

VIII. Authorization for Executive Committee to Act on Behalf of the Commission

Commission members were asked to authorize the Executive Committee to act in the name of and on behalf of the Commission. This is required annually by the BRPC bylaws. The vote needs to be in writing. The form sent in the meeting packet has a typo of FY21. A new FY22 form will be sent via email. Members may insert their vote into an email and/or return the voting form to officeassistant@berkshireplanning.org

VII. Recruitment to BRPC Committees

The Executive Director reviewed BRPC’s standing and special committees’ roles and gave examples of their accomplishments. Delegates and Alternates were encouraged to join committees that interest them. Lead staff members will confirm continuation of existing members and recruit new ones. Committee descriptions and membership is in meeting materials and on website.

VIII. Kusik Award Nominations

Commission members were asked to submit nominations for the Kusik Award that recognizes projects, groups, or individuals who have made outstanding contributions to planning in Berkshire County. The deadline is Thursday August 26th. The nomination form is in meeting materials and will be posted under News & Announcements on BRPC website.

IX. Full Commission Meetings

Recently adopted legislation allows public bodies to continue to meet remotely until April 1, 2022, as well as in person. Chair John Duval reported that the Executive Committee has decided to continue virtual meetings given the distance of the members. Commission members were asked to share their thoughts on meeting in person or remotely.

Sarah Hudson commented that something is lost by not meeting together, especially the sharing before and after meetings and the opportunity to network with people. However, she agreed a hybrid format is best to ensure more participation and access. There was general agreement from Commission members that the option to meet in person is best but hybrid is the best of both worlds. It was noted that for hybrid meetings Chairs need assistance to manage people coming into the meeting. It was also noted that Zoom meetings might be joined by telephone only so internet access is not required.

BRPC has begun to use the Owl device to give Zoom participants a better visual and oral experience. There are some lighting and delay issues to be worked out. Egremont is using the Owl successfully. Tom clarified that BRPC meetings do not use Chat. If a meeting's remote link were lost, the meeting would need to stop. The issue of "bombing" was discussed. BRPC uses a waiting room and admits clear names and local phone numbers. BRPC can ask for affiliation before admitting.

IX. Review of the BRPC Website

Tom gave a tour of the BRPC website to show the resources and information shown there and to get feedback on how BRPC may improve it to serve communities' needs.

X. Other

XI. Executive Director's Report

A. State Ethics Form

The State Ethics Commission requires that BRPC annually provide a copy of the Conflict of Interest Law and receive signed copies of an acknowledgement of receipt of said law from all Delegates, Alternates and Commission Committee members. Attached is a copy of the Summary of the Law, with the Acknowledgement of Receipt at the end. Please email the completed Acknowledgement of Receipt Form to officeassistant@berkshireplanning.org or by mail to BRPC. Where the form says "name of municipal dept" please enter Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Alternatively, you may send an e-mail acknowledging receipt of the summary of the Conflict of Interest Law to officeassistant@berkshireplanning.org.

B. Office Update

As of June 15, 2021, the BRPC office is open to the public. Staff is working in the office, according to the recently adopted telework policy, a minimum of 2 days per week. Anyone who is unvaccinated, including staff or visitors, must wear a face covering at all times until further notice. Those who are vaccinated do not have to wear a face covering. The main door to the building will remain locked at all times. There is an entry system at the door to the street. Staff have a key fob to open the door. Presently visitors must call the office to be admitted but a touchpad is being installed to ring to BRPC office where staff can buzz people in.

C. District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Funding

FY 22 funding for the District Local Technical Assistance Funding (DLTA) program is still mired in the legislative process. Similar to previous years, it was included in the House budget, but not included in the Senate Ways and Means budget. Hence, if it is to be approved this year it will need to be included by the Conference Committee. The state budget process is still in

the hands of the Conference Committee. BRPC does not know where DLTA funding stands.

D. US Census Differential Privacy Policy Update

At the last meeting, Susan Strate, the Senior Program Manager, Population Estimates Program at the Donahue Institute gave a presentation about the US Census Differential Privacy Policy, which proposes to distort census counts in some instances to protect privacy. Tom received a very brief update from Susan indicating that the process seems to be much improved with the intentional distortions much smaller.

E. Other

XII. Adjournment

Kyle Hanlon made a motion to adjourn; seconded by James Sullivan. Unanimously approved. Adjourned at 7:13 PM.

Materials distributed or presented during this meeting:

Meeting Agenda
Draft Meeting Minutes May 20, 2021
Executive Committee Actions Memo for June 2021
Authorization for Executive Committee to Act on Behalf of the Commission
BRPC Committee Descriptions
Kusik Award Nomination Form
Charles Kusik Background & Award Recipients
Summary of Conflict of Interest Law & acknowledgement of receipt
Executive Director's Report