



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

JOHN DUVAL, Chair
MALCOLM FICK, Vice-Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Clerk
BUCK DONOVAN, Treasurer
THOMAS MATUSZKO, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

DRAFT FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES **November 17, 2022**

This was a hybrid meeting as allowed by Ch. 107 of the Acts of 2022, extending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20, until March 31, 2023.
Some participants were at BRPC offices, and others connected via Zoom.

I. Opening

A. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm.

Vice Chair Malcolm Fick 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.

B. Roll Call

The following Commission members were present:

Mike Mach – Adams Delegate
John Duval – Adams Alternate 7:03
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Caleb Darby – Dalton Delegate
Mary McGurn – Egremont Delegate
Malcolm Fick – Great Barrington Alternate
Richard Roussin – Hinsdale Delegate
Barb Davis-Hassan – Lanesborough Delegate
Mark Smith – Lenox Alternate
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate 7:04
Mark Anthony – Otis Delegate
Sari Hoy – Sheffield Delegate
Nancy Socha – Stockbridge Delegate
Christine Rasmussen – Stockbridge Alternate
Amanda Hamilton – Tyringham Delegate
Sarah Hudson – Tyringham Alternate
Don Gagnon – Washington, Delegate
Kent Lew – Washington, Alternate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
Doug McNally – Windsor Delegate

Staff Present:

Thomas Matuszko – Executive Director
Marianne Sniezek – Administration Program Manager
Kate Hill Tapia – Office Administrator
Laura Brennan – Economic Development Program Manager
Mark Maloy – GIS, Data & IT Program Manager

Karen Pelto – Recovery Grant Specialist
Wylie Goodman – Senior Economic Planner

Others Present:

Brittany Polito, iBerkshire; Pittsfield Community Television (late)

C. Approval of Minutes of July 14, 2022, Meeting

Roger Bolton moved to approve July 14, 2022, draft meeting minutes.

Amanda Hamilton seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with a roll call vote.

Yes:

Mary McGurn – Egremont Delegate
Barb Davis-Hassan – Lanesborough Delegate
Sari Hoy – Sheffield Delegate
Amanda Hamilton – Tyringham Delegate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
Doug McNally – Windsor Delegate

Abstained:

Mike Mach – Adams Delegate
Caleb Darby – Dalton Delegate
Malcolm Fick – Great Barrington Alternate
Richard Roussin – Hinsdale Delegate
Mark Smith – Lenox Alternate
Mark Anthony - Otis Delegate
Nancy Socha – Stockbridge Delegate
Don Gagnon – Washington Delegate

II. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

III. Delegate & Alternate Issues

Special Municipal Employee (SME) Status – Barb Davis-Hassan followed up on this topic she brought up at the Executive Committee. She found a general bylaw sample with SME direction.

IV. Executive Committee Actions

There were no questions about the Executive Committee's actions from the July, September, October, and November 2022 meetings.

V. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) draft was distributed and presented for approval. It must be submitted to the Economic Development Administration. More information is at [Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\) - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission \(berkshireplanning.org\)](https://www.berkshireplanning.org/).

The presentation is posted on the [website](#) under Agenda & Minutes, meeting presentations. BRPC staff thanked Kyle Hanlon for chairing the CEDS committee and leading the many meetings it took to develop the document. Kyle thanked Laura Brennan and Wylie Goodman for their "mountain of work" and a great-looking document.

Barb Davis-Hassan made a motion to approve the CEDS as presented, seconded by Roger Bolton, and approved by a roll call vote:

Mike Mach – Adams Alternate
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Caleb Darby – Dalton Delegate
Mary McGurn – Egremont Delegate
Malcolm Fick – Great Barrington Alternate
Richard Roussin – Hinsdale Delegate
Barb Davis-Hassan – Lanesborough Delegate
Mark Smith – Lenox Alternate
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate
Mark Anthony – Otis Delegate
Sari Hoy – Sheffield Delegate
Nancy Socha – Stockbridge Delegate
Amanda Hamilton – Tyringham Delegate
Don Gagnon – Washington, Delegate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
Doug McNally – Windsor Delegate

VI. Survey Results – Recent Movers and Second Homeowners

Results from these 2022 surveys were presented: [Survey-of-Recent-Movers-Results-220825.pdf \(berkshireplanning.org\)](#) and [Survey-of-Second-Homeowners-Results-220825.pdf \(berkshireplanning.org\)](#). The summary presentation may be found on the [website](#).

VII. Berkshire Funding Focus

Recovery Grant Specialist Karen Pelto described the [Berkshire Funding Focus](#) (BFF) initiative, clarifying that it is not a grant writing service. BFF was established to support Berkshire County entities to identify and pursue federal and state funds for pandemic-related recovery and organizational and sector capacity building for the long term. BRPC serves as the fiscal host and as one of the partners.

VIII. Priorities for Berkshire County

The following opinions were shared about the county's most pressing issues to share with the new Administration and State Senator for the upcoming legislative session.

- Review (and reduce) regulations
 - home renovations

- make sure those affected by the regulations are "at the table"
- new residential construction (consistency between rural & urban)
- Chapter 90 formula
- Workforce development
- Housing
 - especially "workforce" housing
 - support for rural communities that don't meet requirements like access to public transportation
- Ensure sustainable agriculture and small businesses
- Incentives for sophisticated medical care (equipment & specialists)
- Reimbursement for school transportation
- Cost of open space for rural communities
- Funding for rural schools
- Funding for town center infrastructure (sewer & water)

IX. Executive Director's Report

A. 120 Day Notice Waiver Request

BRPC received a request to waive the 120 day notice requirement to allow the Department of Conservation and Recreation to possibly acquire an interest in approximately one hundred and ninety-one +/- acres of land in the Town of Cheshire. The property is currently used for forestry and recreation. The proposed use for the property is as protected open space for conservation and recreation as an addition to the Mount Greylock State Reservation.

B. District Local Technical Assistance Solicitation

BRPC has not received the DLTA contract for the 2023 calendar year; however, solicitations to municipalities will be sent in the next several weeks, so BRPC staff are ready to work on approved projects.

C. Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program

The Massachusetts Broadband Initiative (MBI) opened the [Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program application](#). Municipalities (individually or as a region) can apply via a simple online application. MBI hosted a [webinar with the MMA](#) on 11/15. The goal of the Program is to enable municipalities, or other local bodies of government, to engage in planning activities related to digital equity and bridging the digital divide. These activities will result in strategic documents to identify communities' needs, interests, and key assets and provide a framework to guide future municipal decision-making and potential investments and activities to increase access and usage of the internet for those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. They will also prepare municipalities to submit grant proposals to existing or forthcoming state or federal programs to support digital equity activities. There are two options to pursue digital equity planning activities with the support of a pre-qualified planning consultant (such as BRPC): a short-term planning charrette or a longer-term Digital Equity Plan process. Municipalities can apply for digital equity planning support individually or jointly as "regions."

BRPC is a pre-qualified consultant to work with municipalities.

D. Other - none

X. Adjournment

Kyle Hanlon motioned to adjourn, seconded by Sarah Hudson, and approved by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.

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