



Commission Development Committee

Minutes from January 4, 2024

This was a virtual meeting as allowed by Ch. 2 of the Acts of 2023, extending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20 until March 31, 2025.

The meeting was held via Zoom and was recorded.
Chair Doug McNally called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

I. Roll call:

Present:

Pedro Pachano, Great Barrington

Malcolm Fick, Great Barrington (non-voting Commission Chair)

Buck Donovan, Lee

Kyle Hanlon, North Adams

Doug McNally, Windsor, Committee Chair

Absent: Sarah Hudson

BRPC Staff: Tom Matuszko, Laura Brennan

II. Introductions were not needed.

III. Approval of Minutes from November 16, 2023

Kyle Hanlon moved to approve the November 16, 2023, minutes; Buck Donovan seconded. Notes were drafted on last year's letterhead, that was corrected. A roll call vote approved it: Doug McNally, Kyle Hanlon, and Buck Donovan. Abstained: Pedro Pachano

IV. 2-year terms for Officers and Committee appointments

Tom started a discussion at the last meeting about changing Officers' and Committee membership appointments to a two-year term for efficiency's sake. No concerns or objections were raised. A two-thirds vote at a full Commission meeting is required to change the bylaws and the proposed changes must be sent to Delegates and Alternates one week prior to the meeting.

Kyle Hanlon made a motion to recommend these proposed bylaw changes at the full Commission meeting, on behalf of the Commission Development Committee. Seconded by Pedro Pachano. Approved by Doug, Pedro, Kyle, and Buck.

V. Networking/Educational Opportunities (5th Thursdays, etc.)

Part of the role of this committee is to provide guidance about networking and educational opportunities.

Doug proposed Economic Development as a theme for the year, using the presentation on the statewide plan as a start and future meetings to “dig deeper” into related topics, such as child care/early learning opportunities. Malcolm noted that housing and transportation are additional topics related to economic development.

The Healy Administration is introducing a lot of initiatives. Those might be good topics for 5th Thursday events. Perhaps a cheaper version than an expensive restaurant dinner, such as a buffet, could be organized.

BRPC staff has advocated for an overall state development plan that connects numerous plans such as rail, climate, farmland, forest, economic development, broadband, and housing. Such a statewide plan has not been developed.

Pedro suggested “the benefit of shared services” or “regionalism” as a topic. Doug noted that Lee and Lenox, and Adams Cheshire and North Adams shot down sharing educational services. Tom said there is a lot of push back on regionalization and suggested successful case studies as the best way to talk about it. Doug suggested discussing the topic indirectly by looking at challenges faced by municipalities, state initiatives, and how to best address and implement them. Tri-Town Health is a working example.

It was agreed to ask at the next Commission meeting if people are interested in attending in-person events.

There are four 5th Thursdays in 2024; only two viable: Feb 29 and May 30.

VI. Outreach and Recruitment

How do we get people engaged and interested? And how do we make sure communities are aware of the work BRPC does?

Per suggestion of Commission members, the Annual Report was mailed to each municipality. Doug suggested an op ed to the Berkshire Eagle on a regular basis highlighting BRPC’s work.

In the past, BRPC had a staff community-liaison program, with a staff member assigned to each community. It could be revived especially as outreach to the communities BRPC is not engaged with.

Tom wants to identify specific community needs so BRPC may be on the lookout for funding, such as a salt shed. This may be a way to introduce BRPC’s services.

It was agreed to reformat meeting emails with the agenda topics in the body

of the email: major topics and this is the business we need you there for *then* the agenda.

It was suggested that Commission members reach out to members who are not participating by phone. Doug volunteered; especially to contact the other "tiny towns." It was agreed to review who is not participating and maybe make assignments for calls at the next meeting.

If two-year terms are approved; the Nominating Subcommittee will have less to do. It was mentioned that the terms could be staggered.

VII. Next meeting

March 7, 2024, 5:00 pm, following the Executive Committee meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

Kyle motioned to adjourn, Pedro seconded. All agreed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:59 pm.