



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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**Environmental Review Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 27, 2021
Via Zoom**

- I. Chair Bolton called the meeting to order at 2:08 pm and announced the meeting was being recorded.

Roll Call: Roger Bolton, Malcolm Fick, Mark Smith, Jack Hickey, Ed Holub, Kate Fletcher, Eleanor Tillinghast

Others present:

Alison Felix MAPC
Anne Herbst MAPC
Bill Veno Martha's Vineyard Commission MVC
Dan Doyle MVC
David Righter NMCOG
Guoqiang Li OCPC
Jen Hughes MVPC
Jesse Leddick MassWildlife
Jordan Velozo CCC
Mark R MAPC
Martha's Vineyard Commission
Martin Pillsbury MAPC
Melissa Provencher BRPC
Page Czepiga
Patty Gambarini - PVPC
Peggy Sloan – FRCOG
Tom Matuszko BRPC
Tori Kim Assistant Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Trish Settles CMRPC
Van Du MAPC

- II. MEPA Regulatory Review
- MEPA Presentation
 - *Tori Kim, Assistant Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs/MEPA Director*
 - Group Discussion

Chair Bolton introduced Ms. Tori Kim, Assistant Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs of the Commonwealth and head of the office that oversees reviews under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, known as the MEPA Office.

Ms. Kim summarized that in February, the MEPA Office put out broad concepts for their regulatory review and issued two interim protocols for public comment. One protocol was on climate change adaptation issues and the other was on environmental justice. Now that climate change legislation has passed, the MEPA Office is moving into an implementation phase of some of those statutory requirements. The MEPA Office is not looking at this review as a broad overhaul of regulations but looking at climate change, environmental justice and greenhouse gas mitigation to align with state policy and planning initiatives.

Ms. Kim introduced Assistant Director Page Czepiga and informed the group that she invited the Assistant Director of the Natural Heritage Program, Jesse Leddick since there was a comment related to the rare species threshold in the regulation.

A discussion ensued reviewing submitted comments and questions and taking new questions from the floor.

Ms. Tillinghast requested to hear from the staff and asked whether Ms. Provencher or Mr. Matuszko had anything to add or any questions. Ms. Provencher indicated that we had not touched on is the streamlining of the notice of project change procedure. A balance must be struck between project segmentation, a future need for a notice of project change, and the process being too far along to provide meaningful comments.

Ms. Kim indicated that this is a fairly complex topic and that there are a lot of different scenarios, which is why the MEPA Office is considering more flexibility.

Ms. Provencher asked for more information about the thinking behind the exception for EJ (Economic Justice) Communities remediation projects. Ms. Kim responded that it is in the current EJ policy; they have not given a lot of thought to it. The legislation is clear about the one mile or five mile radius.

Ms. Kim requested that BRPC share the attendee list with Page Czepiga.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 27, 2021 was moved to the end of the meeting to prioritize Ms. Kim's time.

Edward Holub moved to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2021 meeting. The motion was seconded by Malcolm F. The Committee voted to approve the minutes. The results of the roll call vote were as follows:

Yes:

Edward Holub
Roger Bolton
Malcolm Fick
Mark Smith
Jack Hickey

Abstain:
Kate Fletcher
Eleanor Tillinghast

IV. Other Business

The Becker Pond Dam removal comments are due June 25. Melissa is asking for a meeting.

Kate stated she still doesn't understand the MEPA process and how it connects with local Conservation Commissions and this committee. It was clarified that the BRPC Environmental Review Committee has faith in local boards (including Planning Boards) to do their due diligence and is in a support role to make sure nothing is missed and everyone is informed; this often includes inviting consultants. Meetings are open to the public.

V. Adjournment

Kate Fletcher moved to adjourn; Jack Hickey, seconded; Roll call yes votes: Edward Holub, Roger Bolton, Malcolm Fick, Kate Fletcher, Jack Hickey, Mark Smith, Eleanor Tillinghast.