



Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

UVLSRPC Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday October 12, 2011
UVLSRPC Offices, Lebanon

Committee Present:

Katherine Connolly, Hanover
Larry LeClair, Lebanon
Kevin Lee, Springfield
Thain Allan, Grantham
Aaron Simpson, Sunapee
Steve Schneider, Enfield

Others:

Nate Miller, staff
Bernie Folta, Claremont

- The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.
- The minutes from August were discussed. A typographical error was noted in the motion to approve the HUD Regional Planning Grant application. **The minutes from August were approved as amended by motion of Kate/Kevin.**
- Aaron asked Nate to provide an update on the HUD Regional Planning Grant. Nate reported that a \$3.5 million (statewide) application was submitted on October 6th. If successful, UVLSRPC would receive approximately \$100,000 per year over the next three years to develop a Regional Plan. The UVLSRPC Regional Planning Committee would act as the Advisory Committee for the development of the Plan.
- Aaron asked for an update on the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. Nate reported that consultant Bruce Mayberry has completed an interim report, which is being reviewed by the Regional Planning Committee. A survey of employers has also been distributed. Aaron noted that the surveys are not targeting small employers and should be expanded in the future.
- Aaron asked about the status of current grant applications. Nate reported that a joint application for brownfield assessments is being written by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. The application includes UVLSRPC, Strafford RPC, and Central RPC. If successful, UVLSRPC would receive approximately \$30,000 to assist communities with brownfield assessments.

Nate continued, noting that staff is developing an application for USDA Rural Development funding to formalize the Household Hazardous Waste collection program. Aaron asked about the specifics of the grant application. Nate reported that, currently, the Commission offers four Household Hazardous Waste collections per year. While the collections are well-attended by residents of the host community, participation is low amongst residents of other communities. The USDA grant would formalize a program of satellite collections to expand the number of collection sites throughout the region, potentially through a partnership with three solid waste districts in Vermont. Depending on the final scope of work, the grant application could be up to \$100,000.

Kate moved that the Brownfield Assessment and USDA Rural Development grants be recommended to the full commission for approval. Thain seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

- Nate reported on the status of a number of projects. The Commission has received a contract for \$3,500 to partner with Vital Communities in developing an Energy Master Plan for the City of Lebanon. The current contract to provide circuit rider planner services to the Town of Enfield has been extended through March 31, 2012 for \$9,180.

Nate reported that the Commission is assisting the Town of Newport in drafting a Community Development Block Grant application to study the feasibility of developing a second grocery store in the community.

Nate reported that the Fluvial Geomorphology project with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services has been delayed due to federal administration. It is unclear when this project will begin. Similarly, the Lake Sunapee Scenic Byway Grant has been delayed due to NHDOT administration.

- Aaron asked for an update about Adam Ricker, the Commission's new Assistant Planner. Nate Miller reported that he is doing well. He will be taking over the regional traffic data collection program and working in a support role on a variety of other projects.
- Aaron asked about the status of planned programs and events. Nate Miller reported that the Connecticut River Scenic Byway Tour scheduled for October 6-7 was cancelled due to Tropical Storm Irene. The agenda is complete for the Fall Planning and Zoning Conference scheduled for October 29, 2011. UVLSRPC has received a \$1,000 grant from the New Hampshire Planners Association to help offset the cost of the conference. To date, 27 people have registered, although that number is expected to increase as the conference nears. Three Commissioners have volunteered to assist with registering participants at the conference, which is greatly appreciated.
- Nate reminded the Executive Committee members that they still need to appoint a Commissioner to the Upper Valley Housing Coalition Board of Directors.
- Nate reported that the NH Regional Planning Commission Executive Directors have been discussing the issue of indemnification for staff and commissioners. Aaron advised that a recent change in RSA 31:105 added Regional Planning Commissions to the statute. By a vote of the full Commission, staff and commissioners could be indemnified from legal damages resulting from Commission-related duties.

Kate suggested that commissioners are already indemnified by the communities they represent, and asked why this would be necessary. Aaron noted that many commissioners do not hold official positions with their community (as elected representatives or staff), and questioned whether those commissioners would be indemnified by their communities if a legal situation arose. Kate asked about the specifics of UVLSRPC's insurance policy and if there would be any additional insurance costs incurred as a result of indemnifying staff and commissioners.

Executive Committee members asked staff to research the specifics of the current insurance policy and whether additional costs may be incurred as a result of indemnification. The Executive Committee will continue discussion on this topic at their November meeting.

- Nate reported the Commission often receives requests for donations from partner organizations around the region. Most recently, a donation request came from the United Valley Interfaith Project, a group involved in expanding transit services and housing opportunities in the region. The Commission does not have a process in place to consider such requests, and staff is looking for guidance about how to respond when requests are received.

Kevin advised that providing a donation implies the Commission's support of the mission of the partner organization in question. In some cases, the mission of the partner organization may not mesh with the Commission's mission. Aaron noted his general concern about donating Commission funds, which are taxpayer funds. Thain concurred, noting that there are often unforeseen political ramifications to such donations.

Steve noted that there are often tangible and intangible benefits to such donations, citing the Chamber of Commerce as a membership organization that provides benefits to members. Kate advised that the Commission's primary responsibility is to the towns it serves, and for that reason, we should not consider providing donations to partner organizations.

Thain moved to direct staff to draft a policy reflecting that the Commission will not provide donations to partner organizations for discussion at the Executive Committee's November meeting. Larry seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

- Aaron highlighted a number of items for the full Commission meeting agenda, including introductions of new commissioners. George McCusker of Springfield, Joanna Whitcomb of Hanover, and a new commissioner from Orford have been appointed by their communities.

Nate advised that the Program Committee has suggested three presentations for upcoming Commission meetings, including overviews of the Lake Sunapee Greenway project, Lake Sunapee Protective Association initiatives, and the Regional Food Source Mapping project. **Following discussion, Executive Committee members recommended that Christine Walker present the Regional Food Source Mapping project at the full Commission meeting. The Executive Committee will revisit this topic and consider additional programs in the future.**

Thain advised that the audit report will likely be reviewed by the Finance Committee in November and presented to the full Commission in December.

- Nate advised that it may be necessary to add Yutian Zhang as a signatory to the Citizens Bank debit card account. **Kevin moved to recommend to the full commission that Yutian Zhang be added as a signatory to the Citizens Bank debit card account. Larry seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Nate reported that the commissioners who stepped down this year, including Freda Swan and Cheston Newbold, were very appreciative of the recognition plaques they received.

- **Kate moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 PM. Kevin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Minutes prepared by Nathan Miller