



UPPER VALLEY LAKE SUNAPEE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region – Broadband Planning Program

Broadband Stakeholders' Meeting – Minutes 12/5/2013

Staff Present: Rachel Ruppel and Adam Ricker

Members of the Public Present: Julia Griffin, Ted Jastrzembki, Bernie Folta.

The meeting began at 7:10 PM.

The meeting began with Rachel Ruppel reviewing the project timeline and where the project currently stands. The Plan is slated to be completed for our region by March 31st, at which time the plan will be submitted to the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning with the other eight regional planning commissions so that NH OEP can form a single statewide broadband plan. Rachel explained that the UVLSRPC plan will be going through the formal process for adoption by the commission which involves a public hearing and response period. The first hearing will take place at the UVLSRPC's April 23, 2013 Commissioners meeting.

The group discussed how regional stakeholders might weigh in on the final state plan and whether there will be any state-level advocacy for the plan. Rachel will consult with UNH and report back.

The group reviewed the Challenges and Opportunities chapter to identify any gaps and to review ideas from other regions that had not surfaced in our regional meetings (see attached list). One gap in knowledge was how many towns/cities have telecom committees or address broadband in their master plans. Rachel reported that she is not aware of any active telecom committees, and broadband in the master plan is typically found in towns with more recent updates, but not in older plans.

The stakeholders explained that the lack of leadership, someone to champion broadband expansion, at the state level is a large problem. The state needs the leadership in order to organize expansion initiatives and to stand for those initiatives that are already in place in many local areas. The stakeholders suggested case studies of other New England states' broadband authorities.

The group felt that the case study examples in the draft plan did a great job of displaying the possibilities and successes of broadband expansion and it was recommended that additional case studies be included, in particular WiValley, NCIC, and how a fiber connection has increased the capacity of the Claremont School District. Rachel suggested that a video might help to convey the message that our region wants and needs better broadband.

The group discussed legislation recently introduced by Sen. Ayotte to reform the Connect American Fund to bring more CAF money back to the State of New Hampshire; Rachel will find out more about this bill. The group also discussed that the plan needs to identify who can implement each strategy. This will be addressed at the next meeting in January.

Julia Griffin gave an update regarding NH FastRoads. She explained that the 6 month extension that FastRoads received ends at the end of 2013 and that the network will be ready to be "lit up" at that point. She shared that they already have over 800 homes in the last mile expansion areas that have signed up for service. Julia said that with FastRoads service in Keene, the city is ready to begin advertising themselves as a gigabit city. The group discussed the opportunity for Enfield and other communities on the FastRoads route to do similar marketing/positioning as "gigabit towns."

Ideas from around New Hampshire

State Level

Broadband info/resource clearing house

Better Public dataset on fiber deployment

Better public dataset on cell towers and coverage (Statewide LiDAR would improve coverage models)

Regional Level

Continue regional stakeholders' group

Broadband info/resource clearinghouse

Incorporate broadband into regional economic development plans (CEDs)

Local Level

Downtown Public Wi-Fi

Training/Resources for Cable Franchise Agreement negotiations – model CFA

Municipal Telecom committees

Broadband chapter in Master Plan

Audit of local regulations to ID barriers

Broadband in hazard mitigation/emergency response planning

-Redundancy – resilience

Study of Costs/benefits of broadband expansion

Broadband Availability part of property assessment

NH Telecom Advisory Board Critical Issues – June 2013 Report

1. Leadership
2. Streamline tower siting process
3. Remove barriers to State ROW access
4. ID new financial resources to support broadband initiatives
5. Evaluate feasibility of creating a broadband services fund
6. Improve utility pole access
7. Provide incentives for last mile deployment in unserved and underserved areas.