

BARRINGTON
BROOKFIELD
DOVER
DURHAM
FARMINGTON
LEE
MADBURY
MIDDLETON
MILTON



NEW DURHAM
NEWMARKET
NORTHWOOD
NOTTINGHAM
ROCHESTER
ROLLINSFORD
SOMERSWORTH
STRAFFORD
WAKEFIELD

Strafford Regional Planning Commission
January 24, 2008
Minutes

DRAFT

SRPC Commissioners Present: Anne Martin (Brookfield), Tom Clark (Dover), Frank Torr (Dover), Lou Vita (Middleton), Bruce Woodruff (Milton), Larry Brown (Milton), Kenn Ortmann (Rochester), Sandra Keans (Rochester) and Ed Jansen (Rollinsford)

SRPC Proxy Votes: Peter Stanhope (Durham), Mel Jenkins (Lee), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Scott Martin (Northwood), Gail Mills (Nottingham,) and Roger Berube (Somersworth)

SRPC Staff Present: Cynthia Copeland (Executive Director), Dale Abbott (Senior GIS/ Transportation Analyst), Dan Camara (GIS Intern), Myranda McGowan (Transportation Planner), Julie LaBranche (Senior Land Use Planner), Michelle Beauchamp (Assistant Planner) and Marilyn Barton (Administrative Assistant).

Meeting began at 7:05 p.m. and was brought to order by Chair E. Jansen.

1. Introductions

Introductions were made around the room and people gave their name and what town or agency they were representing.

2. Minutes of November 29, 2007 Meeting for Approval and Adoption

F. Torr made the motion to approve the November 29th 2007 minutes as written. S. Keans seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

3. NH Coastal program Technical Assistance Grant Hearing

C. Copeland stated since this was a public hearing, the hearing would need to be called into session. E. Jansen called the public hearing into session at 7:10 p.m. C. Copeland stated that the historic precedence for the Coastal Grant money set aside for the two regional planning commissions was \$50,000 to each commission in federal funds and matched with State, local or in-kind donations for a

total of \$100,000. She noted in addition there was an open competition for additional grants. C. Copeland stated since there was a cut back in the amount available to the regional planning commissions, the total amount they can apply for now is \$60,000 of which \$30,000 is federal Coastal funds.

C. Copeland pointed out the table that was previously mailed out in the packets. She stated she met the previous Friday with the Coastal Program staff, Ted Diers and Dave Murphy, to go through the draft projects. She noted they stated they would support the projects up to \$60,000. She also stated they said they may be able to find additional funds for projects, as they liked the ones proposed, and that several projects may be pilots for the entire State. She stated they were pleased with the projects proposed.

C. Copeland proceeded to go through the projects on the table and explain the scope of the work. C. Copeland stated the first project was GIS Data Layers and updating tax parcels for interested communities. She noted that currently Newmarket, Rollinsford and Madbury were getting tax parcels updated. She stated the project was for a total of \$8,500 of which \$4,250 was from Coastal funds and the rest from local funds. She stated the scope of the work included new subdivisions, lot line adjustments, annotations, road name changes and format and print maps.

C. Copeland stated the next project was updating the GRANIT Conservation lands database. She noted the last time this was done was in 2004, and additional funding has not been available. It was decided to use Coastal funds so that D. Abbott and D. Camara could update the database for all eighteen communities.

C. Copeland stated the next project was in the Town of Durham. She stated it was for shoreland compliance as there have been significant changes to the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act. She noted these changes would be discussed in more detail later on in the meeting. C. Copeland stated this grant round Durham had a pilot study for \$500 to set up the basic concept on how to do monitoring activities. She stated that on this next round we would be doing field tests of baseline documentation of CSPA monitoring activities. She also noted there would be discussions with the State regarding enforcement of these changes.

D. Abbott stated that the Town of Durham was concerned about trees being cut down and vegetation being removed. He stated the idea is to go out on a boat and take a photo of the shoreline and enter it into the GIS system. He stated this would allow it to be monitored year after year.

C. Copeland stated that the DES Shoreland staff wanted to work with us on this project, as it was one of high priority for them. She noted they were very interested on how this will be done and if there could be a working agreement between the State and the local community.

C. Copeland stated the next project involved the entire Coastal Watersheds for GIS Data Layers and Planning Documents. She stated this project would include the creation of a new Culvert GIS data layer with GPS point, photo, design, materials and condition assessment. She stated that the DES River Program is just starting a pilot program this year on the Exeter River and would like to have a regional planning commission implementing similar components.

D. Abbott stated the model is a bit overwhelming as there is a lot of data and therefore it was decided to pilot with one community. He stated it was necessary to get out there and evaluate the stream flows of the river and start with culvert assessment. D. Abbott noted it was important to do these culvert assessments because with the recent floods, culverts became backed up and caused a lot of the effects of the flooding. He stated it was important to find out which culverts were at risk for this and generate a list.

T. Crosby asked if a community had been selected for this. D. Abbott stated that a community had not been selected yet.

C. Copeland stated there was a second part to this project. It was a pilot study to update the Hazard Mitigation Plans that previously used federal FEMA funds through the Bureau of Emergency Management. She noted the communities were into the five-year deadline to do these updates in order to be eligible for pre-disaster planning funds and other sources of funding through FEMA.

C. Copeland stated SRPC went online and looked at the program NOAA had for community vulnerability assessment. She stated the vulnerability assessment did what FEMA documents did and more. She stated there was training available through Coastal program funds. She stated we would possibly separate the Hazard Mitigation Planning into two functions. The first function would be to collect data from the major floods in 2006 and 2007. We don't want any more time to go by without collecting this data from the communities and getting it documented. She stated we could use the NOAA funds through the Coastal Program and collect the data using the new Community Vulnerability Assessment Tool. She stated this had more social and economic factors connected to it than the FEMA document. She stated that the goal was to continue to work with the Bureau of Emergency Management to get funding for the updating of the Hazard Mitigation Plans in the communities.

C. Copeland stated the last project area on the table was for the entire Coastal Watershed, working with Land Use Documents such as Master Plans, regulations and ordinances preparing a Review and Evaluation.

J. LaBranche stated this project was done for the Town of Madbury recently. It included the review of the Town's Master Plan, regulations and ordinances. She stated the documents were evaluated for relevancy, planning, recommendations and any typographical/formatting errors.

C. Copeland stated the second part of this project was the implementation activities for environmental chapters of the Innovative Land Use Guide. She noted this Guide was produced by DES, regional planning commissions and OEP and will be printed in July 2008. She stated the focus was on areas of stormwater, shoreland protection, flooding, steep slopes and groundwater.

C. Copeland stated the third part of this project was implementation activities for the Conservation Plan for Coastal Watersheds. She stated this included preservation efforts, including stewardship activities, and conservation subdivision for focus areas. She stated that GIS would provide mapping and analysis to the communities so they could revise or adopt new conservation subdivisions for the conservation subdivision areas and wildlife habitat protection. She stated that the final part of this project was to conceptualize the establishment of a mitigation bank function with a regional land trust in the area.

C. Copeland stated that Ted Diers would have projects reviewed at regional offices in Boston to get them approved. She noted he was pleased with our initiative. C. Copeland asked if there were any questions.

C. Copeland noted there was a major policy change last year. She stated the Coastal Grant funding by federal statute is available to communities that are within tidal influence zone. She noted we have five communities in our region that are within tidal influence: Newmarket, Durham, Dover, Madbury and Rollinsford. C. Copeland stated we have been working to increase understanding of the importance of the uplands through coastal watersheds and what happens upstream. She stated in the past year and with the current grant, we are able to expand into what is called Zone B, which are the upland areas. She noted the Coastal program is pleased with the current activities, and they want to continue. She stated that we actually have the ability to work with the communities that are outside of the tidal influence for the first time.

There were no other questions. E. Jansen called the public hearing to a close at 7:25 p.m. F. Torr made the motion to approve the Coastal Grant application and S. Keans seconded that motion. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

4. Regional Impact Committee Membership

C. Copeland asked for volunteers to replace Nancy Spencer-Smith who has moved out of the state. T. Clark volunteered. C. Copeland noted that Tom Fargo had called to tell her there was a pending application for a bulk water processing plant in Dover on the Dover/Madbury line.

5. Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act

J. LaBranche spoke about the significant amendments to the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act and stated those changes are effective April 1, 2008. She reviewed the documents and information that was in the agenda packet, which was distributed at the meeting. She noted at the bottom of the first page was where most the documents could be viewed or downloaded. She stated the information could help land use boards or residents and suggested putting it on the municipalities' websites.

J. LaBranche stated a state shoreland permit would be required for any construction, excavation and filling activities within the protected shoreland, which is 250 feet from the reference line. She stated the impervious surface area is limited to twenty percent. She reviewed other changes including prohibited uses such as establishment or expansion of storage yards, auto junkyards, solid waste and hazardous waste facilities; and the requirement to maintain fifty percent of the shoreland buffer in an undisturbed and natural state.

J. LaBranche stated another change was that all primary and accessory structures must be set back at least fifty feet from the reference line. She stated within fifty feet, a waterfront buffer must be maintained. She stated the tree coverage is managed with a 50 foot x 50 foot grid and points system. She noted this system was really quite simple as it went by the circumference of the tree and after adding up the circumference of all the trees in the grid, it has to total fifty points in each grid.

J. LaBranche stated these changes also require no natural ground cover shall be removed.

J. LaBranche stated these changes do three things: Maintain the forest canopy; restrict impervious surface area, and limits runoff. She stated it also encourages planting on the property and allows the buffer to generate naturally.

J. LaBranche stated there would be a presentation on these changes to the Shoreland Protection Act in Dover on February 7. She went gave an overview of the other materials in the packet and noted the article written by DES Commissioner, Thomas Burack.

J. LaBranche stated at the end of the packet was the details on the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act. She noted any changes or amendments are bolded and in italics. She stated the points system she spoke about earlier was on page 8.

J. LaBranche noted the City of Somersworth has gone forward and almost completed their final draft of their new Riparian Wetlands Buffers Ordinance that is modeled after the CSPA.

K. Ortmann asked even if someone meets all the thresholds, do they still have to get a permit from the State. J. LaBranche stated that was correct. K. Ortmann asked if there was anything prohibiting a local community from adopting stricter standards. J. LaBranche stated there was nothing to prohibit a community from adopting stricter standards; in fact the community is encouraged to do so.

K. Ortmann asked if the law took into consideration the different areas such as rural compared to more urban areas or if it was a one size fits all. She stated communities could actually file petitions for exemption for certain portions of their shoreland area that are applicable to CSPA if they meet certain requirements.

J. LaBranche noted there are many communities in the area that their Shoreland Protection Ordinances are not up to standard with the new requirements. She stated it was important to identify these communities and help them become aware of the deficiencies and help them be compliant.

K. Ortmann stated although this state law is based on good intentions, but if the implementation doesn't go smoothly, there could be a problem. He stated the State should get the administrative laws out soon.

E. Jansen asked if the effective date of these changes are when construction starts or when the project has been approved. He stated a project regarding the Salmon Falls River in Rollinsford that gets final approval by March 15. J. Labranche stated she would need to find out about that. K. Ortmann stated it's those types of things that need to be clarified.

T. Clark stated that according to how Dover understands it, the construction of the project would have to be started not just the approval. F. Torr stated the whole process is extremely slow.

J. LaBranche stated communities in Zone A are under the umbrella of Phase II to bear the burden to meet federal standards.

Anne Martin asked since Brookfield was the head of three watersheds and there was going to be significant changes to the Moose Mountain area regarding water, what as a town could they be doing. J.

LaBranche stated that SRPC could come to the Town and do a presentation to show them what they could do to be compliant with the changes to the Shoreline Protection Act. She stated other actions the Town could take would be steep slope ordinances, storm water ordinances, conservation subdivisions and increasing stream buffers.

C. Copeland noted that Tom Fargo has arranged to have DVD's available of Arlene Allen's presentation and these DVD's will also be available at municipal offices. She stated it was important to get this information out as it is confusing and the presentation would be helpful for officials and property owners.

6. Other business

C. Copeland stated that Strafford Regional Planning Commission has finished procuring and replacing the older computers and that flat screens were forthcoming. She also noted the SRPC was on target financially for the first half of the year and is where it should be financially at this time.

There was no other new business.

7. Adjournment

A. Martin made the motion to adjourn the SRPC Commissioners meeting at 7:55 p.m. B. Woodruff seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marilyn Barton
Administrative Assistant



Ed Jansen, Jr.
SRPC Chair