

BARRINGTON
BROOKFIELD
DOVER
DURHAM
FARMINGTON
LEE
MADBURY
MIDDLETON
MILTON



NEW DURHAM
NEWMARKET
NORTHWOOD
NOTTINGHAM
ROCHESTER
ROLLINSFORD
SOMERSWORTH
STRAFFORD
WAKEFIELD

Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) 2007 Third Quarter Meeting

**Strafford Regional Planning Commission Office
2 Ridge Street, Suite 4
Dover NH**

**Tuesday, January 30th 2007
Approved Minutes**

Present: Frank Torr (Dover), Peter Stanhope (Durham), Melvin Jenkins (Lee), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Larry Brown (Milton), Clay Mitchell (Newmarket), MaryLou Beaver (Rochester), Kenn Ortmann (Rochester), John Hinsman (Rollinsford), Ted Huckins (Strafford), Ed Jansen-tardy (Rollinsford), Jennifer Hunter (NHEP), Phil Trowbridge (NHEP), Cynthia Copeland (SRPC), Julie LaBranche (SRPC) and Michelle Beauchamp (SRPC).

Not Present: Ann Martin (Brookfield), Frank Frazier (Brookfield), Caren Rossi (Lee), Janet Wall (Madbury), Bruce Woodruff (Milton), Al Dixon (Newmarket), Scott Martin (Northwood), Gail Mills (Nottingham), Sandra Keans (Rochester), Tom Willis (Rochester), Francis Vincent (Somersworth), Roger Berube (Somersworth), George Maglaras (Strafford County), Rodney Cools (Wakefield) and Nancy Spencer-Smith (Wakefield).

Tom Crosby called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

1. Public Hearing: New Hampshire 2008 Coastal Program Grant Application.

Cynthia Copeland, SRPC Executive Director, noted that every January SRPC has a Coastal Grant public hearing. She presented the funding proposal to the Commissioners, which is being requested from the State program and communities. She noted that the process has changed slightly. Usually SRPC writes the grant as a competitive grant however this year, the program manager for the Coastal Program has changed the approval process. SRPC will seek preliminary approval of the projects prior to their submittal on February 12th 2007. SRPC matches federal funds with State or local or in-kind match funds on a 50:50 basis.

This year Ted Diers, the Coastal Program Manager, has informed SRPC that there are other requests on the monies due to program funding shortages and increases in labor and benefit

costs. He asked that SRPC put together a submittal that was in the range of \$35,000-\$40,000. At this point, SRPC's request from the Coastal Fund is within this range.

The projects are listed as follows:

Newmarket – The Town Planner requested tax map updates for the new subdivisions, which have been added. (Project Investment-\$5,000, Coastal Funds-\$2,500, Local Funds-\$2,500)

Newmarket - The Town Planner and SRPC will be writing the Water Resources Master Plan Chapter based on the current Town water studies. (Project Investment-\$12,000, Coastal Funds-\$6,000, SRPC Staff/In-kind \$6,000)

Durham-Shoreline Compliance Pilot Study to establish conceptual structure for baseline documentation for shoreline monitoring activities. (Project Investment-\$500, Coastal Funds \$250, SRPC Staff/In-Kind \$250)

Durham-The Town would like to update their build-out analysis with their current zoning. (Project Investment-\$1,350, Coastal Funds-\$675, Local Funds- \$675)

Madbury- The Town would like to add lot dimensions to their Tax Maps as required by the Department of Revenue Administration. (Project Investment-\$5,000, Coastal Funds-\$2,500, Local Funds- \$1,000, SRPC Staff/In-kind \$1,500)

Rollinsford-The Town would like to update their Tax Map. (Project Investment-\$500, Coastal Funds-\$250, SRPC Staff/In-kind \$250)

Coastal Communities-SRPC will be preparing standard map sets for the five coastal communities - Newmarket, Durham, Madbury Dover and Rollinsford. (Project Investment-\$1,300, Coastal Funds-\$650, SRPC Staff/In-kind \$650)

Cynthia Copeland noted that the other communities are being funded through the Targeted Block Grant we received from the Office of Energy & Planning.

Coastal Watersheds- Innovative Land Use Guide Implementation of Comprehensive Water Resources, which includes: groundwater, floodplains, wetlands, stormwater and erosion and sedimentation control. (Project Investment-\$11,500, Coastal Funds-\$5,750, State Funds \$5,750)

Coastal Watersheds- SRPC will be working with Land Use Boards to implement the Conservation Plan for coastal watersheds. It would include working with the Conservation Commission and assistance in making changes to the regulations and ordinances. (Project Investment-\$14,000, Coastal Funds-\$7,000, State Funds \$5,000, SRPC Staff/In-Kind \$2,000)

Cocheco River Watershed-The Department of Environmental Services and the Cocheco River Watershed Coalition have asked SRPC to help prepare their designation papers for the river

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protection status. (Project Investment-\$10,000, Coastal Funds-\$5,000, Local Funds- \$2,500, SRPC Staff/In-kind \$2,500)

Dover-SRPC will be updating the database and web-based corridor depicting conservation lands. The information would include the location of trails, access points and use constraints. The Conservation Commissioners will be able to input the data and track the information they need for monitoring. (Project Investment-\$2,000, Coastal Funds-\$1,000, SRPC Staff/In-kind \$1,000)

Frank Torr made the motion to submit the Coastal Technical Assistance Grant as amended. Kenn Ortmann seconded. Kenn Ortmann noted that he would like to add the City of Rochester to the list for their Natural Resource Master Plan Chapter in the amount of \$5,000.

Cynthia Copeland noted that we should be looking upstream at the protection of water quality and water quantity. She added that we are expanding the definition and working with the State staff and the National staff in the Coastal Program on how to work in the upstream areas. Cynthia Copeland felt that Rochester would be eligible under the Coastal Watershed Conservation Plan Implementation since the data layers all contain the natural resources inventory.

Kenn Ortmann submitted an amendment to the motion to allow Rochester to participate and not to exceed \$5,000 in terms of the grant amount to be matched. Larry Brown seconded the amendment. All were in favor of the amendment and the motion passed.

Tom Crosby called for a vote on the original motion. *Proxy votes: Anne Martin (Brookfield), Frank Frazier (Brookfield), Bruce Woodruff (Milton), Gail Mills (Nottingham), Tom Willis (Rochester), Ed Jansen (Rollinsford), and Roger Berube (Somersworth).* All were in favor and the motion passed.

2. Minutes: Approval of the September 28th 2006 Commission Minutes.

Kenn Ortmann made the motion to approve the minutes of September 28th 2006 with the addition of Mary Lou Beaver's name added as being present for the meeting. Larry Brown seconded. *Proxy votes: Frank Frazier (Brookfield), Bruce Woodruff (Milton), Tom Willis (Rochester), and Ed Jansen (Rollinsford).* All were in favor, motion passed.

3. Guest Speakers: Jennifer Hunter, Director, and Phil Trowbridge, Coastal Scientist New Hampshire Estuaries Project (NHEP) at the University of New Hampshire **Presentation: 2006 State of New Hampshire Estuaries Report.**

Phil Trowbridge noted that the SRPC covers 60% of the coastal watershed. He noted that the State of the Estuaries Report is reproduced every three years. There are four main focus areas: water quality, shellfish, critical habitat & species, and land use & development.

One of the water quality indicators is nitrogen. Nitrogen is the limiting nutrient in an estuary. Concentrations of nitrogen in the Great Bay have increased by 59% over the past 25-years. Suspended solids have increased by 81% over the past 25 years. We have already seen a decrease in eelgrass which is a very sensitive indicator. It would cost between 150-250 million dollars to upgrade all the wastewater treatment. The report shows that the Great Bay has a total nitrogen load 1,097 tons per year, which works out to be 1.1 tons per year per square mile and 7 pounds per watershed resident per year. Waste Water Treatment plants contribute 34%, Tributaries contribute 49.3%, Non-Point Source direct discharge contributes 12.4%, the Atmosphere contributes 2.5% and the Groundwater contributes 1.8%.

Dissolved oxygen rarely falls below State standards in the bays and harbors. In all the tidal rivers, for example: Lamprey River, Salmon Falls River, Oyster River, and Squamsquat River, there are consistent violations. There are two standards. One is a 75% saturation on a daily average. The second standard is instantaneous for 5 milligrams per liter, however it is a little harder to meet. The program uses the first standard.

One of the shellfish indicators is oysters. There has been a decline in oysters. In 1993 there was a 95% decline due to disease and siltation. Oysters need hard surfaces such as old oyster shells or rocks to set on. He added that it may be cost effective to do an oyster bed restoration, which could convert organic matter and nitrogen into oyster meat.

Great Bay has a healthy population of eelgrass. It is critical in terms of habitat for fish. Between 1996 and 2004 there was a 17% decline in eelgrass. Since 1996 there has been a 41% decline in biomass. As suspended solids increases in the water, there will be less transmission of light through the water and therefore the habitat for the eelgrass will shrink.

Impervious surfaces such as parking lots, roadways, roofs or built surfaces have impacted water quality. If there is higher than 10% impervious surfaces within the watersheds, you will see a decline in water quality. In 2005, the grand total for impervious surface in the watershed was at 8%, and not a good thing. In 1990 there was 20,000 (4.7%) impervious acres in the watershed and in 2005 there was 42,000 (8%) impervious acres. There has been a consistent growth over the last 15 years in impervious surface. On average the rate of growth is over 1,000 acres per year added within the watershed.

There has been sprawling growth from 1990 to 2005. During this time, the land consumption increased from .152 acres to .217 acres per person, which is a 30% increase. Over those 15 years, Rockingham County and Strafford County population grew 20% and the area of impervious surfaces grew by 72%. The larger towns are doing a good job in reducing the impervious surface per person, they seem to have reached build out and are building up. It was noted that there are tools for communities to reduce the amount of impact from development activities.

There is almost 55,000 acres of land in the watershed under some type of conservation protection, which represents 10.7% of the land area. From 2002-2005 there were about 12,000

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acres protected, which averages 4,000 acres per year. The New Hampshire Everlasting goal is 25% by the year 2025.

In summary, out of the twelve indicators, there were five positive indicators (dry weather bacteria, toxic contaminants in shellfish tissue, toxic contaminants in sediments, habitat restoration, and land conservation); three cautionary indicators (nitrogen in Great Bay, dissolved oxygen, and eelgrass); and four negative indicators (Oysters, clams, impervious surfaces and sprawling growth).

Jennifer Hunter noted that each community has received a copy of the State of the Estuaries Report along with information regarding protection of critical habitats, designated wetlands, buffer regulations, sprawl and stormwater management. She noted that each Town will also receive an impervious surface map.

Ed Jansen joined the meeting.

4. Progress Report: Buffer Protection & Buffer Mapping Project Jennifer Hunter, NHEP, and Julie LaBranche, SRPC Senior Land Use Planner.

Jennifer Hunter noted that NHEP has individual municipal buffer characterization maps of 2nd order and higher streams. Land use, impervious surface coverage, and transportation infrastructure, were analyzed to produce a categorical indicator representing the status of each stream.

Julie LaBranche noted that buffers are vegetated areas such as groundcover, shrubs and/or trees along a shoreline, wetland or stream. The primary function of a buffer is to physically protect and separate a lake, pond, wetland or stream from physical disturbance or potentially harmful indirect effects of urbanization. Buffers are the first line of defense against the impact of impervious surfaces, nutrients and erosion. Buffer vegetation traps water and sediment transported off the land surface. Buffers remove pollutants, maintain stream ecology, stabilize stream banks, protect wetlands, increase property values and provide recreational opportunities.

Buffer widths can be determined by: the resource to be protected; proposed or potential upslope land use; soils/slopes and vegetation within the proposed buffer; and the desired function of the buffer. Larger buffers are appropriate for the protection of a water supply source, sensitive/prime wetlands, wildlife, steep slopes and highly erodible soils.

To supplement buffer protection ordinances and programs, Master Plans should include resource protection strategies such as open space planning, conservation easements, low impact development, stormwater management, shoreline protection, buffer overlay zones, wellhead protection and aquifer districts.

5. Transportation Update: Seacoast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Cynthia Copeland, SRPC Executive Director

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Cynthia Copeland noted that the 45-day public comment period on the Draft Public Participation Plan of the Seacoast Metropolitan Planning Organization started January 25, 2007.

Cynthia noted that back in May at the SRPC annual meeting, the Commissioners voted to move ahead with the re-designation of the Seacoast MPO. In late August, Rockingham Planning Commission voted to go ahead with the re-designation. The Planning Commissions met with the Commission of NHDOT in December and a letter was sent to the Governor for approval. There will be a Memorandum of Understanding with Rockingham Planning Commission for the traffic model. This model is designed for the entire Seacoast and functions well.

SRPC works under the Unified Planning Work Program, which is a two-year contract with NHDOT that ends on June 30th 2007. The new draft application will need to be ready by April. There will be two fiscal years (2008 & 2009).

On February 1st, there is a Seacoast MPO TAC Meeting in Portsmouth City Hall at 9:00am. March 1st the UPWP contract template will be released to the Planning Commissions for the FY08-09 contract. March 26th, there will be a Transportation Summit with Community Services focus sponsored by ACT at the McConnell Center in Dover at 9:00am. April 1st the Project Solicitations for Ten Year Plan are due to NHDOT. April 5th The Seacoast MPO TAC will have a meeting. April 6th the UPWP draft contract is due to NHDOT. April 25th, the 45-day review period for Draft Public Participation Plan will close. April 26th the Seacoast MPO Policy will have a meeting. April 30th, the final UPWP contract will be sent to NHDOT. June 7th, the Seacoast MPO TAC will meet.

Since the City of Rochester has the largest population, it becomes the central city in the federal designation process with veto power. After the City of Rochester endorses the proposed re-designation, SRPC will make presentations to the remaining Boards of Selectmen/City Councils with at least 75% approval. Then the Governor would approve the re-designation and SRPC would prepare for the separation. The final step would be for SRPC to begin the organizational meetings of the re-designated MPO's.

Ten-Year Plan-Project Solicitation:

SRPC has begun the transportation solicitation proposals. The House and Senate Appropriations have agreed to fund new highway obligations for fiscal year 2007 at 39.1 billion, the amount guaranteed in SAFETEA-LU. Congress still needs to pass a fiscal year 2007 funding package and it appears that transportation will be funded at a higher level than last year. The growth in population for the seacoast is at 1.5% per year, but growth and traffic is at 2.6% per year. Growth capacity and connectivity is not keeping up with growth and travel demand due to land use policies and development patterns. NHDOT has been working on their Long Range Plan (LRP) for three years. It recommends using context sensitive solutions, going to the local communities and working with a broad diverse group of people to come up with solutions that

are incremental and make sense. The final report for the LRP is on the NHDOT's and the MPO's website.

SRPC will be going out to the communities, which have projects in the Ten Year Plan. The projects in the Ten Year Plan need to be examined to see if the project can be redefined to create incremental phased solutions. These are projects that could be done incrementally applying common sense solutions. Land use and transportation needs to be coordinated on the local level.

Cynthia Copeland noted that there are three positions for Transportation Planners available in the NH Region Planning Commissions. SRPC will be re-advertising the position of a Senior Transportation Planner on a national level.

Cynthia Copeland informed the Commission that the Town of Barrington has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for access management with the NHDOT and another town is soon to follow. SRPC has funding to work with communities for land use and transportation integration for access management.

6. Adjournment.

Kenn Ortmann made the motion to adjourn. Larry Brown seconded. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle Beauchamp
Planning Administrator

Cynthia Copeland
Executive Director

Approved on May 31st 2007

Alphonse Dixon
Executive Committee Chairman