



Southern  
Worcester  
County  
Economic  
Development  
Organization

c/o Central Massachusetts Regional  
Planning Commission  
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**Southern Worcester County Economic Development Organization  
Remote Meeting via Zoom  
February 6, 2025  
Meeting Minutes**

**Present:**

**SWC EDO Members:**

- Elizabeth Cruz, LABO
- David George, Town of Holden
- Jeannie Hebert, BVCC
- Julie Holstrom, WBDC
- Brad Kadelski, Town of Brookfield
- Joseph Laydon, Town of Upton
- Mike Kane, WRCC - Alternate for Karen Pelletier
- Janet Pierce, CMRPC
- Jeff Turgeon, CMRPC

**Guests:**

**CMRPC Staff:**

- Trish Settles, CMRPC
- Kerrie Salwa, CMRPC
- Joe Sziabowski, CMRPC

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1. **Facilitated Roll Call:** Janet Pierce (JP) called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM.
  2. **Review Minutes of the December 5, 2024, SWC EDO Meeting:** Julie Holstrom (JH - WBDC) made a motion to approve the December 5, 2024, minutes. Joe Laydon (JL) seconded the motion. The motion passed with eight votes in favor. Elizabeth Cruz (EC) abstained.
  3. **Discuss Roles / Responsibilities and Meeting Schedules for the SWC EDO and the SWC EDO Advisory Council:**

Kerrie Salwa (KS) shared the SWC EDO's 2025 meeting dates: April 3, June 5, September 4, and November 6.

Joe Sziabowski (JS) recounted the SWC EDO's decision at the previous meeting to hold quarterly SWC EDO Advisory Council meetings. This means that the SWC EDO Advisory Council would meet nearly as many times a year as the SWC EDO, which meets bi-monthly. KS and JS discussed the matter before this meeting and came to the conclusion that it would be best to host only one annual meeting for the SWC EDO Advisory Council to attend.

JP stated that she liked the idea. She suggested that the meeting should be hosted around lunch. She asked if this worked for the SWC EDO.

Jeannie Hebert (JH - BVCC) replied that this works, as long as she has advanced notice.

JL concurred.

JP suggested a Worcester venue because this would be a centralized location for SWC EDO members. She asked that a doodle poll be sent out to assess members' availability.

4. **Committee Updates:** KS shared the following updates concerning SWC EDO committees:

- **Responsible Development / Brownfields Advisory Subcommittee:**

CMRPC applied last year for a Fiscal Year 2025 Environmental Protection Agency Assessment Coalition brownfields grant. CMRPC expects to hear back from the EPA in Spring 2025. However, this depends on the program's future viability.

CMRPC will be collaborating with Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the UConn Technical Assistance to Brownfields program, and MassDevelopment to host a brownfields conference in June 2025.

- **Marketing Central MA Subcommittee:**

CMRPC is partnering with Discover Central Massachusetts to apply to the Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation's (MOOR) Regional Outdoor Recreation Asset Inventory Grant Program.

CMRPC is also planning to host a Regional Town Meeting Dialogue that will cover how towns can best prepare for town meetings and manage the meetings themselves. The meeting will involve several speakers, including the Oxford Town Manager.

JH - WBDC asked if the MOOR Asset Inventory project will catalog events as well as places.

KS replied that it will only catalog places.

Trish Settles (TS) stated that the Asset Inventory project will mimic the "Berkshire Outside" asset inventory. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission developed the resource in collaboration with the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce. The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission is also applying to the MOOR program.

TS notified the SWC EDO about the Boston Outdoor Expo in March. CMRPC will be manning an exhibit table with Paul Jahnige from MOOR.

JH - BVCC said that Discover Central Mass. could provide promotional materials for CMRPC to use at the event.

Jeff Turgeon (JT) joined the meeting at 3:24 PM.

## 5. Project Review:

Kerrie Salwa (KS) reported the following updates:

- There are no Economic Development Administration projects in the pipeline right now.
- A prospective Department of the Interior project is not yet ready.

## 6. Partner Updates:

- Jeannie Hebert (President, Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce--BVCC): JH - BVCC shared the following BVCC events with the SWC EDO:
  - February 14, 2025: Love Your Legislator Event
  - March 15, 2025: Home and Community Expo
  - May 12, 2025: Annual Charity Golf Tournament
- Jeff Turgeon (Executive Director, MassHire Central Workforce Development Board): JT reported the following updates concerning the MassHire Central Workforce Development Board:
  - The Board was awarded an EPA Brownfields Job Training Grant that starts in May. The grant was recently paused but then un-paused.
  - The Board is operating a state-funded program for the regional migrant population. The program involves five different tracks: ESOL, warehousing & construction, healthcare, teacher assistants, and restaurant workers.

JH - BVCC advised JT to let her know if the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce could help connect any shelter residents to workforce development programs.

JH - WBDC reported that she had a phone call with the EPA recently, and they advised her to move forward with the expectation that awarded grant money would still be distributed.

- Joseph Laydon (Town Manager, Town of Upton): JL shared the following updates concerning the Town of Upton:
  - Upton previously received a HousingWorks grant from the State to fund the extension of water and sewer along Route 140. The project is anticipated to break ground in April or May. Upton's MBTA Communities district is located in the area of the infrastructure improvements. The town currently has interim compliance with the MBTA Communities Law.
  - Upton's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project along Route 140 is at the 70% design stage. The project will involve streetscape improvements and the reconstruction of the intersection in the center of town as a roundabout.

- Elizabeth Cruz (President, Latin American Business Organization--LABO): Elizabeth Cruz (EC) shared the following news from LABO:
  - Mid-February: Venture Accelerator classes (in English and Spanish)
  - March: Supplier Diversity training
  - April 12, 2025: The LABO 2025 Expo
- Mike Kane (Economic Development and Policy Associate--WRCC): Mike Kane (MK) shared the following updates concerning the WRCC:
  - February 11, 2025: Business and Government Forum on Brownfields
  - March: Healthcare Roundtable
  - March 6, 2025: Breakfast Club event with Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus.
  - The Massachusetts Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair recently spoke to the WRCC President's Council about the coming fiscal year's budget.
- David George (Town Planner, Town of Holden): David George (DG) shared the following updates concerning the Town of Holden:
  - Construction Projects:
    - Construction on Adams Rd.
    - Former ECC Building; Phase I Environmental Site Assessment
    - TIP project on Main St.
  - Sunnyside Motors, a car dealership in Holden, recently closed. The property is being marketed by a real estate firm.
- Julie Holstrom (Director of Projects, Worcester Business Development Corporation - WBDC): JH - WBDC reported the following updates concerning the WBDC's Greendale Revitalization Initiative:
  - Construction of the roadways on the site has been delayed due to complications concerning the FEMA floodplain.
  - JH - WBDC anticipates the infrastructure project to be out to bid by early Fall 2025, instead of Spring 2025.
  - The existing structures on the site are 80-85% demolished. A majority of the materials from the demolition are being moved off site by rail and thereafter recycled.
- Janet Pierce (Executive Director, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission): JP reported the following concerning CMRPC:
  - March 13, 2025: Quarterly meeting. The focus will be municipal buildings.
  - June 12, 2025: Annual Meeting.

7. **Review Meeting Dates/Locations and Other Important Dates:** KS stated that the next SWC EDO meeting will be on April 12 followed in June by the SWC EDO annual meeting with the Advisory Council.
8. **Other Announcements:** There were no other announcements.
9. **Adjourn:** JT made a motion to adjourn the meeting. JL seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with nine votes in favor.