
Approved October 18, 2012

CMRPC Physical Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2012

Present: Chair Tim Wheeler, Otto Lies, Peter Krawczyk, and Al Lanni
Staff: Vera Kolas

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Minutes: *MOTION* was made by Mr. Krawczyk to approve the minutes of May 24, 2012. Seconded by Mr. Lies, the motion carried unanimously.

Review current DLTA projects

Ms. Kolas reviewed the status of the four active DLTA projects: Blackstone Valley Prioritization Project, Central 13 Prioritization Project, Regional Services, and the Boroughs Regional Park. Ms. Kolas provided a budget update, which shows that the projects are still within budget. Mr. Wheeler expressed some concern that we ensure that the available DLTA funds are expended by the end of the year. As there are still many areas of work left to complete, Ms. Kolas expressed confidence that the funds would all be spent. Ms. Kolas discussed the upcoming C-13 regional forum in Sturbridge and explained the regional screening process currently underway in the Blackstone Valley project. Mr. Lanni asked about Mass Audubon's role in the projects, and Ms. Kolas explained how helpful they have been in promoting the various local meetings, the regional forum, and their participation in the regional forums. Mr. Wheeler also asked if EOHEd will be providing a "state priorities" list of areas in the two prioritization projects as they did in the I-495 Compact project. Ms. Kolas said she would contact Victoria Maguire.

The committee expressed some concern that the Regional Services project budget may not be fully spent down by the end of the year, particularly as the vast majority of these funds are still available.

Review/discuss work of CDAP Program

Mr. Wheeler asked about the Brownfields program going forward, since the last grant was not approved. Ms. Kolas explained the potential strategy for another grant application, including the possibility of applying for Revolving Loan Funds.

Mr. Wheeler asked about CDBG, and Mr. Lies offered a recent newspaper article about PVPC talking about CDBG in North Brookfield. In the article, PVPC states that communities with a needs score of less than 29 were not funded in the most recent grant cycle, and that with a

needs score of 30, North Brookfield is “on the bubble”. The committee expressed concern that Commission should not encourage communities to pursue CDBG funds if they do not have a realistic chance of success. The Commission should focus on those communities in our region that have a score of 30 or greater. Ms. Kolia stated that PVPC would be contacting Larry to discuss a potential project in Oxford and Dudley. Mr. Wheeler stated that partnering with PVPC to get our CDBG program up and running again is a good idea and would allow staff to be mentored by those with more experience.

Mr. Wheeler asked about the arrangement the Commission has with communities seeking assistance with their MassWorks applications. Ms. Kolia stated that she would follow up with the Committee ASAP with the details.

Mr. Wheeler asked about the zoning bylaw review project in “the Brookfields”. Ms. Kolia replied that the group has not met in some time, but she and Janet Pierce are hoping to attend one of their regional Board of Selectmen’s meetings soon to get the details. Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Krawczyk both stated that this group of communities is a nice model of inter-municipal cooperation.

Ms. Kolia discussed the various aspects of the Rural Economic Development Plan project, including the strong but unsuccessful application to UMass for a studio project and the recently-filed Fallon Community Health Foundation grant application. The committee discussed using some of next year’s DLTA funds to match other funds to work on the project. This is an important piece of the regional economic development plan project, and to ensure it receives the buy-in and support from the communities and the “agriculture community”. Mr. Wheeler noted that it might be helpful to seek a meeting with the Farm Bureau as well, particularly in concert with the upcoming MA Food Policy Council meeting on September 7th in Union Hall.

The Committee briefly discussed the timing and strategy of community outreach for 2013 DLTA projects now that funding has been approved.

Announcements/Upcoming Meeting

MA Food Policy Council: September 7th, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Union Hall

Regionalization Toolkit Conference: September 10th, Holy Cross

C-13 Regional Forum: September 11th, Publick House, Sturbridge

CMRPC Quarterly Meeting: September 13th, Union Hall

Physical Development Committee Meeting: October 18th, 7pm

Other Business

The Committee made note of Mr. Lanni’s impressive and seemingly bionic brace on his left arm and expressed fascination at this latest example of state of the art medical technology. The Committee wished him a speedy recovery.

Adjournment

A Motion was made by Mr. Lanni, seconded by Mr. Lies, and all present voted in favour to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.

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