

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

September 14, 2023 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attending Officers		Attending Sub Regional Delegates
Chairperson: Howard N. Drobner, Boylston		North: Otto Lies, Holden
Vice Chair: Robert Hassinger, Grafton		Southeast: Walter Baker, Sutton
Treasurer: Daniel Schur, Westborough		West: Jeffrey Howland, New Braintree
Asst. Treas.: C. Richard Williams, Rutland		Southwest: Andrew Coles, Auburn
Asst. Clerk: Barur Rajeshkumar, West Boylston		
CMRPC Delegates and Alternates		
Mary Bulso, Blackstone		Meg Schlesman, Douglas
Steven Chambers, Auburn		Taylor Stedman, Sturbridge
William Cole, Hardwick		William Trifone, Dudley
Michelle Conlin, Shrewsbury		Michael Wilkes, Northbridge
Marc Frieden, West Boylston		Pamela Williams, Millville
David George, Holden		John Eul, Oxford
Thomas Klebart, Webster		Bill King, North Brookfield
Sean Kowalczyk, East Brookfield		Maxwell Postma, Douglas
Conor McCormack, Worcester		
Ann Neuburg, Princeton		
Purna Rao, Shrewsbury		
Guests		
Sherry Patch		Brad Merkel
Jeannie Hebert		Karen Pelletier
Paull Dell'Aquila		
CMRPC Staff		
Janet Pierce	Sujatha Krishnan	Trish Settles
Matthew Deiulis	Kerrie Salwa	Sarah O'Brien
Ian McElwee		

1. Business Meeting:

Chairperson Howard Drobner called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. noting the presence of a quorum. Executive Director Janet Pierce conducted a roll call of CMRPC delegates and alternates.

- *Approval of Minutes:* Charles Richard Williams motioned to approve the minutes from the Quarterly Commission Meeting on June 8, 2023. Barur Rajeshkumar seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote, with twelve abstentions.
- *Chairperson's Welcome:* Chairperson Drobner welcomed the attendees and announced that Executive Director Janet Pierce's new contract was finalized and approved at the

August Personnel and Executive Committee Meetings, respectively. Moreover, he noted that the contract is for three (3) years with two (2), one (1) year extensions.

- Chairperson Drobner also announced the updated Personnel Policy, which had also been finalized and approved during the August Personnel and Executive Committee Meetings, respectively. He also noted that these changes would take effect in the next fiscal year.
- Chairperson Drobner closed their welcome by highlighting how much CMRPC has grown in the last eight (8) years since Ms. Pierce was hired as the Executive Director. Furthermore, he reminded the attendees to reach out to CMRPC for a full spectrum of grant assistance, community planning, transportation assessment and much more.

2. Welcome and New Business:

- Janet Pierce, CMRPC Executive Director, welcomed attendees to the virtual CMRPC September Quarterly Meeting. Janet thanked the committees that partook in the finalization and approval of both the Personnel Policy and her own contract. Moreover, she expressed gratitude to be able to continue to serve as the Executive Director of CMRPC, as well as to the community stakeholders attending the meeting for their years of support.
- Ms. Pierce invited the meeting's attendees to two (2) upcoming events. The first being an annual Division of Local Services (DLS) and MARPA meeting, which will be held on October 10th, from 9am – 12pm at Holy Cross College and will cover topics like climate action plans, livable communities, public health, rural empowerment resources and other federal funding opportunities- a notice will be distributed via email, social media and the CMRPC website. The second invitation was to the Citizen's Planner Training Collaborative, which will host a series of webinars- two of which CMRPC staff will be conducting- over a three-month period beginning in October and ending in December. Moreover, the webinars will cover adopting rules and regulations; creating masterplans; drafting zoning amendments; intro to subdivision control law; planning with community support; site plan reviews; roles and responsibilities of zoning boards; special permits and variances; use of design; review zoning exemptions; zoning with overlay districts; working with Chapter 40B; vested rights and nonconforming structures; writing reasonable and defensible decisions. As with the previous event, the webinars will be promoted via email, social media posts as well as the CMRPC website.

3. Presentations:

Ms. Pierce invited Kerrie Salwa, Manager of Economic Development from RCCP, to present the final draft of the 2023-2028 Southern Worcester County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Ms. Salwa and Planner Sarah O'Brien provided a summary of the CEDS; a report on the businesses and schools that are empowering the region; the community input that shaped the strategy and the direction it will bring the Central Massachusetts region. Following the presentation, with the assistance of Deputy Director Trish Settles, the two CMRPC staff members answered questions from the attendees and entertained ideas for where grant money can be sought for future iterations of the strategy, which should be updated in five years.

4. Approval of the Final Draft of the 2023-2028 Southern Worcester County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS): Following a request by Steve Chambers, a CMRPC

Delegate from Auburn, to adjust this items language to reflect it being just a draft and not a finalized and federally certified document, Robert Hassinger moved to approve the final draft of the 2023-2028 Southern Worcester County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs), seconded by Charles Richard Williams. **Motion Approved.**

5. Adjournment of Official Business Meeting:

Robert Hassinger made a motion to adjourn at 7:55 pm, Charles Richard Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed by roll call with two (2) no votes, and the business meeting adjourned. The presentations and discussions continued off record.

Respectfully submitted by Matthew DeJulis, CMRPC.