



# Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## Franklin Regional Planning Board — *MINUTES*

Minutes	
Date:	Thursday, May 26, 2016
Time:	6:00 PM
Location:	JWO Transit Center, 12 Olive St., Greenfield, MA—1 <sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room
Duration:	1.5 hours
Facilitator:	Jerry Lund, Chair

**FRPB MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- Julia Blyth, Northfield Select Board
- Ted Cady, Warwick Planning Board
- Wayne Hachey, New Salem Select Board
- Tom Hutcheson, Conway Select Board
- Sam Lovejoy, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, Montague At-Large
- Jerry Lund, Chair, Leyden At-Large
- Patricia Marcus, Greenfield At-Large
- Tom Miner, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair, Shelburne At-Large
- Bill Morris, Erving at-Large
- Charlie Olchowski, Greenfield At-Large
- Maureen Pollock, Greenfield Planning Board
- Joan Rockwell, Colrain At-Large
- John Ryan, New Salem Select Board
- Joe Strzegowski, Conway Planning Board
- David Travers, Heath Select Board
- Gisela Walker, Charlemont Planning Board
- Kayce Warren, Ashfield Select Board
- Dena Willmore, Buckland Select Board

**GUESTS:** None

**FRCOG STAFF:**

- Peggy Sloan, Planning Director
- Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager
- Patricia A. Smith, Senior Land Use Planner

**1. Introductions: J. Lund, Chair - FRPB & FRPB Members**

J. Lund called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM and initiated introductions.

**2. Review and Approval of April 28, 2016 FRPB Minutes: J. Rockwell, Clerk - FRPB**

*T. Cady moved to approve the minutes of 4-28-16; G. Walker seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.*

### 3. Review & Vote on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2016 Annual Report: J. Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager - FRCOG

J. Atwood handed out copies of the 2016 CEDS Annual report. This is the first of four annual updates to the 2015 CEDS Plan. This report includes the most recent data, SWOT changes, updates on Action Items, and Performance Measures. J. Atwood explained that this is an economic development roadmap for the region and maintains the region's eligibility for certain EDA grant programs. The CEDS Committee and EDD Governing Board both approved the Annual Report on May 24, 2016. The report is due to the EDA by June 1. At the last FRPB meeting, they reviewed an earlier draft. The revisions since that draft include better incorporation of the Franklin County Regional Plan for Sustainable Development and related documents and strengthened visibility of last mile broadband access as a critical infrastructure need. The Report references the National Broadband Plan and includes a map of wireline broadband availability. The National Broadband Plan provides a national context for the struggle to provide broadband access, calling it "*the great infrastructure challenge of the early 21st century.*"

Other updates include economic condition data and an updated list of key industries & clusters which now includes *Green Economy – Construction*. After the *Major Employers* table the Report notes recent major closure/layoffs such as of Rodney Hunt Company in Orange. Major employers are private industries, but the "Class of Worker" table on p. 11 identifies government sector and the number/percentage of people employed. The current revision incorporated SWOT comments and the following updates to Action Items:

- Governor's new leadership team for the Last Mile Broadband Project
- Clarified that the Brownfields RLF & Subgrant program contract has been closed out, but Program Income for clean-up projects is still available for a clean-up project
- Description of "Complete Streets" (p. 43)
- UMASS report called *Forging Ahead: Towards an Arts Center in North Quabbin* (p.44) that also addresses the loss of Rodney Hunt, but also notes the presence of its large foundries which are now available for potential use as an Arts Center focused on large-scale sculptures
- GSFABA's Connecting Commerce & Community asset mapping identifying local artists and with the Art Garden, the Hilltown Arts: Thriving Community Happenings (HATCH) (p.54)
- EDA i6 Challenge opportunity (p.56) looks at clusters and how to develop businesses to the next level of commercialization.
- Work with PVPC, FCCDC, and Valley Venture Mentors to support entrepreneur growth.

The revised version also includes the following updates to the Evaluation section:

- the FCCDC lending 57 jobs and \$1.1 m in private investment, and a private developer's investment to create an addiction treatment facility at the Lunt Silversmith site is estimated to be \$5 million.

G. Walker commented on her concern for the Complete Streets accommodations for bicyclists on Route 2 in Charlemont. The widening of the road to include bike lanes may impact nearby buildings.

***Tom Hutcheson moved to approve the 2016 CEDS Annual Report. John Ryan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.***

**4. Update on Passenger Rail & Presentation on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2017-2021: P. Sloan, Planning Director – FRCOG, filling in for M. Mullaney, Transportation & GIS Program Manager II - FRCOG**

M. Mullaney was unable to attend due to illness and P. Sloan provided a report in her absence.

**Passenger Rail Update**

Ridership on Vermonter service remains strong and Amtrak has just eliminated the ban on bikes. A reservation is required to bring a bike. The permanent platform will cost \$7 million and there is no funding available so the current platform will remain indefinitely.

Four options for commuter rail have been identified and will be discussed at a large stakeholder meeting on May 27, 2016. The new New Haven to Springfield service should begin in 2018. FRCOG hopes to coordinate commuter service to coincide with this timetable.

Removal of old ties and debris is a concern of towns along the corridor and that is a Pan Am responsibility. This problem is top of the agenda for the May 27<sup>th</sup> rail stakeholder meeting.

The draft FRCOG Transportation Planning Staff 2017 Workplan is looking at the availability of passenger rail and how connections can be provided to local amenities to support tourism.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The TIP program is still being figured out and at this point only a few firm projects have been identified. The FRCOG will be coordinating with MassDOT to finalize the list of priorities and the timing. Current 2016 priorities include: Greenfield Road in Montague; Intersection improvements at Route 2/2A Erving; Colrain-Shelburne Road Intersection improvements in Shelburne. Projects beyond 2016 are subject to change depending on final figures. No bridges are yet included since the FRCOG has not received the State bridge list. M. Mullaney will be able to present a more complete TIP at the June FRPB meeting.

T. Hutcheson asked about the intersection at Routes 5/10 in Cheapside. Work on the project was started recently. D. Willmore asked for clarification of the year shown on the list. P. Sloan responded that it the year when the funding is programmed.

T. Hutcheson asked about the relationship of the county TIP and the State bridge list. P. Sloan explained that the State determines the most critical bridges to repair and costs are reflected in the Franklin County TIP. J. Lund pointed out that at more than one Town Meeting this spring, the issue of the problems being experienced in Charlemont with bridge closures is being discussed. There is concern about the current MassDOT bridge inspection program and how that might affect bridges in other towns. FRPB members requested information on how the bridge inspection program works and what is the role of the local highway department. P. Sloan will ask M. Mullaney to provide a summary of how the bridge inspection program works at the June FRPB meeting.

T. Cady said that typically a bridge has to be 20 feet long before it will be inspected by the State. Most local Highway Departments do not have information on whether a bridge is under state or local control. Recently, the Governor has shortened the distance of the span to 10 feet, which makes it difficult to distinguish between bridges and culverts. T. Cady noted that the State does not have sufficient staff to inspect bridges, so a town can hire an inspector to do the work.

P. Sloan noted that the FRCOG had done some bridge mapping for the 8-towns on the Regional Pipeline Advisory Committee.

**5. Update on FERC Relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility: T. Miner, Chair - CRSEC/ 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair - FRPB**

T. Miner said that there is nothing to report this month. Studies are still underway and they are waiting to review them.

**6. Update on the Proposed Kinder Morgan/TGP Pipeline Project & Discussion of Next Steps: P. Sloan, Planning Director - FRCOG**

P. Sloan reported that on May 23, 2016 the TGP formally withdrew its application from FERC after announcing they were suspending work on the NED project in April. There has been concern about what it meant to “suspend the pipeline.” TGP did not have sufficient demand for pipeline capacity (only 41%) and consequently the project was not economically feasible. The FRCOG plans to follow-up with a letter to federal legislators with recommendations about fixing the FERC process.

P. Sloan noted that the FRCOG sent a letter in early May asking that FERC deny or dismiss the NED project, a copy of which was provided to the committee. The letter pointed out the huge expense incurred by towns, regional planning agencies and others for a project which likely should not have had an Application submitted to the FERC given the lack of firm commitment for pipeline capacity. J. Lund noted that changes are very much needed to the Natural Gas Act to alter the FERC process.

J. Lund noted concern about the problems over-reliance on natural gas will cause in the future. P. Sloan noted that there is an Energy Bill pending at the State level and there are concerns about making sure that a pipeline construction tariff is not included. There are worries that the NED pipeline might come back if a tariff were approved as a tariff could improve the financial feasibility of the project. However, TGP would need to start the FERC process over.

P. Marcus noted that the Federal Power Act also needs to be amended to address issues with proposed hydropower projects.

J. Lund suggested a motion to recognize P. Sloan’s work on the pipeline project.

***T. Cady moved to recognize P. Sloan’s work on the NED Pipeline Project; Gisela seconded; The motion was unanimously approved.***

P. Sloan thanked T. Miner and T. Cady for all their hard work on the Regional Pipeline Advisory Committee as representatives for the FRPB. There was a round of applause for P. Sloan

**7. Other Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting/Upcoming Annual Elections/ Adjourn: J. Lund, Chair - FRPB**

P. Sloan reported that the Conference Room has been formally named after Bill Allen and FRPB members paused for a moment to think of Bill and his years of service.

There is yet another Zoning Reform Bill proposed, Senate (s. 2144). It is unusual in that the Bill was initiated by the Senate.

Next month is FRPB Annual Elections and P. Sloan hopes all can attend.

MBI staffing has been in flux, but Governor Baker has been addressing the issue and has appointed some new officials to work on it.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan A. Rockwell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joan Rockwell, FRPB Clerk