



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Executive Committee —MINUTES

Date & Time:	Thursday, October 8, 2015/ 4:30 p.m.
Location:	<i>View at Intersection of Egypt and State Road (Rtes. 5 & 10), Whately, MA</i>
Date & Time:	Thursday October 8, 2015 / 5:00 p.m.
Location:	<i>Public Hearing at Whately Town Office Bldg, #4 Sandy Lane, Whately, MA</i>
Date & Time:	Thursday October 8, 2015 / Immediately following public hearing
Location:	<i>Executive Com. Meeting at Whately Town Office Bldg, #4 Sandy Lane, Whately, MA</i>
Facilitator:	Bill Perlman, Chair

Representatives present for Viewing, Hearing and Executive Committee Meeting:

- Bill Perlman, Regionally Elected
- Kevin Fox, Colrain
- Bill Martin, Greenfield
- Sam Lovejoy, Regional Planning Board

Guests:

- John O'Rourke, FRCOG Council Chair
- Mark Pruhenski, Whately Town Admin
- Bill Korza, Muffins Market (view only)
- Dale Mayforth, Comcast (view only)

Staff Members:

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Rebekah Boyd-Owens, Administrative Services Coordinator
- Bob Dean, Director of Regional Services

ROAD ACTION VIEW, HEARING, AND MEETING AGENDA:

1. View Welcome and introductions

Determining a quorum was present, Bill Perlman opened the road action view at 4:30 p.m. with introductions.

2. View for a petition for relocation of road at intersection of Egypt Road and State Road.

Mark Pruhenski, Whately Town Administrator, distributed documents from the town for committee perusal (see handouts listed below), explained the reason for the petition, and answered the questions of those in attendance. (Minutes are not kept for the record in the case of a road action view). Bill Perlman invited the attendees to the 5:00 hearing and closed the viewing at 4:39 p.m.

3. Public hearing for a petition for relocation of road at intersection of Egypt Road and State Road (Routes 5 & 10)

Bill Perlman opened the hearing at 5 p.m. Mark P. summarized the aerial view and plot plan handouts. Members discussed the current road layout and the proposed change to the intersection to improve visibility and turn radius, and to ensure the safe entrance and exit of vehicles, determined by the Whately selectboard to be deemed necessary for public convenience and necessity.

The current layout, members agreed, requires unsafe maneuvering of truck traffic when exiting and entering Egypt Road. Two trucking companies do business on the road and traffic is heavy. All felt the proposed plan for the town to purchase the small parcel of land adjacent to the intersection at assessed value in order to shift and straighten the road was a reasonable solution to the problem.

Sam L. asked about purchasing another tiny triangle of the adjacent land owned by Amherst Trucking in order to keep from creating a “double-turn” in the road and to make the intersection one of more distinct right angles, thus increasing the safety of drivers traveling the two roads. Mark P. said the town felt they could purchase that triangle without much trouble, but told the committee that the road superintendent didn’t think it was necessary. He told the committee that Whately had been working closely with MassDOT and that the agency felt the towns proposed plan was sufficient.

Bob D. told members that a special town meeting would be required to purchase the additional piece of land. Bill M. asked who would pay for the expense of the site plan. Mark said the selectboard was hoping for Chapter 90 money.

The committee decided to suspend the road action ruling until their November meeting when they could examine the engineering documents and while waiting to hear if the trucking company’s land could be purchased. The committee expressed no objections to the road action.

4. Review and adopt 9/17/15 Executive Committee minutes

Sam L. moved to adopt the minutes. Bill M. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Review draft pipeline intervenor status application

Linda explained that FRCOG is applying for official intervenor status which gives us the opportunity to make formal comments on FERC’s process. She distributed for the committee’s review the draft intervenor’s status application, written by staff, with Attorney Elephant’s comments and suggestions for change (see handout). Her primary suggestion is for the FRCOG to add more Franklin County flavor to the document.

Staff will be updating and adding to the application a route map of natural resources which will include photos with landscapes and local roads. We continue to refrain from making a pro-con statement about the pipeline, said Linda; however, we want to make sure FERC is aware of the impacts on Franklin County with an eye toward lessening or mitigating those impacts.

In considering the content of the application, Sam said that one always wants to educate the judicial party — in this case FERC — in any way they can. Intervenor status, he added, would grant us all kinds of access.

Kevin Fox wondered if FERC expects FRCOG to take a stance in the future. Linda said we are not required to take a stance, but FERC likes to know if you will. We will not take a stance until the EIS is completed, she said.

Kevin noted that the application reads as if we are anti-pipeline. Sam said we have to intervene for a reason; that’s what allows for point and counterpoint.

Bill M. asked about in our towns designated as Federal Environmental Justice Areas based on high poverty levels, and suggested FRCOG might include environmental justice maps and the federal definition for the designation in the application.

Bill P. said we are asking — indeed forcing — FERC to do its due diligence. We need this information to make a decision, he said. Kevin reiterated that it (the application) sounds as if we've already made a decision to oppose the pipeline proposal. He asked if it would make more sense to lay out our position as advocates for people in the County.

Linda said she'd bring these questions to Atty. Elefant and likely will come back to the Committee next month to discuss further.

6. Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

Broadband

MBI recently sent out a Request for Qualifications for companies to supply cable on behalf of partially served towns, with the hope of bringing all communities to 96% connectivity. Matrix has said they will cover parts of Montague and Royalston; Comcast said they could cover nine towns. MBI is asking questions, but will likely qualify both businesses. Questions remain as to how to get to Buckland's Apple Valley region connected, and other areas like that in other towns.

Bill M. noted that one way to connect unserved areas of Shelburne is to go through Greenfield, which provides an opportunity to connect more Greenfield houses.

Electrical Aggregation

Bill M. noted that Hampshire Regional Council of Governments is giving up on electrical aggregation. The Department of Public Utilities ruled against their plan to provide cheaper electricity to 35 towns (including a number of Franklin County towns) through a collective buying program.

Commuter Rail

Linda reported that at a recent meeting of the Knowledge Corridor Commuter Rail planners, a long discussion ensued regarding the need for the extended permanent platform. MassDOT has completed a commuter rail feasibility study. The next step is setting aside some MBTA trains to use for the project. Linda explained that another advocate is needed in Boston for this work. The feasibility study determined that the cost to retrofit the trains could be anywhere between 1 and 30 million, a figure which can't be refined until the train sets are set aside and stripped.

Bill P. moved to adjourn the meeting; Sam L. seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:09 p.m. Next meeting: November 12, 2015

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Letter from the Whately Planning Board approving the proposed change to the Egypt Road layout.
- Copy of an aerial photograph of the intersection of Egypt Road and Rtes. 5 & 10 with proposed change to Egypt Road marked.
- Copy of plot plan, book 60 page 29, showing the parcels of land and the Egypt Road.

- *Proposed FRCOG Executive Committee Road Action Protocol, dated 10.8.15*
- *FRCOG Highway Hearing #RA-2015-01: Town of Whatley Notice to View and Notice of Hearing*
- *Minutes from 9/17/15 meeting*
- *DRAFT Motion to Intervene of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.*