



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Franklin Regional Planning Board— *MINUTES- DRAFT*

Date & Time:	Thursday, April 28, 2016 / 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Location:	JW Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street Greenfield, MA – First Floor Conference Room
Facilitator:	Jerry Lund, Chair

FRPB MEMBERS

Joan Rockwell, Clerk – Colrain At-Large; **Thomas Hutcheson**, Conway Select Board; **Joe Strzegowski**, Conway Planning Board; **John Baronas**, Deerfield Planning Board; **William Bembury**, Erving Select Board; **Mike Schaffer**, Erving Planning Board; **John Ward**, Gill Select Board; **Patty Marcus**, Greenfield At-Large; **David Travers**, Heath Select Board; **Jerry Lund**, Chair - Leyden At-Large; **Sam Lovejoy**, 1st Vice Chair- Montague At-Large; **Wayne Hachey**, New Salem At-Large; **John Ryan**, New Salem Select Board; **Jim Basford**, Orange At-Large; **Jeanie Schermesser**, Erving - At Large; **Chuck Washer**, Shelburne Select Board; **Tom Miner**, 2nd Vice Chair – Shelburne At-Large; **Tom Herrick**, Sunderland; **Ted Cady**, Warwick Planning Board; and **Nan Riebschlaeger**, Wendell Planning Board

FRCOG STAFF

Rebekah Boyd, Admin. Services Coordinator; **Jessica Atwood**, Economic Dev. Program Manager

PRESENTERS/GUESTS

Rebecca Sherer, Senior Project Manager, Tighe & Bond; **Lisa Spear & Richie Davis**, Recorder; **Cindy and Tom Hartwell**, Athol.

1. Introductions	Jerry Lund, FRPB Members
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J. Lund convened the meeting at 6:04 p.m. A round of introductions followed.

2. Review and Approval of March 24, 2016 FRPB Minutes	Joan Rockwell
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T. Miner moved to adopt the minutes of 3/24/16. J. Ryan seconded the motion, which passed with 1 abstention.

3. Presentation: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2016 Annual Report (Moved to item 4)	Jessica Atwood
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Jessica Atwood presented the Draft *2016 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Report*. This report is the first update to the 5-year 2015 CEDS Plan. Jessica explained the goals of the CEDS program and presented slides on changes in the 29-town region’s economic conditions; labor force and employment; income and wages; key industries; and economic resilience. J. Atwood asked the FRPB members to review the draft’s areas of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) which will be updated in the document. J. Atwood also reported on updates to action items.

FRPB members brainstormed a few regional improvements for inclusion in the report and expressed interest in knowing what exactly the Annual Report and CEDS Plan was used for. J. Atwood explained

that it guides what the FRCOG, towns and other regional organizations will work on over the next five years. She continued that the report is created according to a federal framework and submitted to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). By doing this, it maintains the region's eligibility to apply for certain EDA funding programs. Staff also uses the CEDS Plan to inform State and Federal officials of important regional programs and projects seeking assistance and funding.

J. Basford suggested that the inclusion of Amherst in the CEDS region might skew the data, and asked why that town was included. J. Atwood responded that it was included when the CEDS region was first created in 1995, due to UMASS being the largest employer of Franklin County residents.

J. Atwood requested feedback from the FRPB and noted that the Annual Report is available on the FRCOG website for review. J. Atwood will come to the next FRPB meeting asking for a vote.

4. Presentation on the Reuse Study for the Former International Paper Mill in Erving (Moved to item 3)	Rebecca Sherer
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Rebecca Sherer introduced the *Erving International Paper Mill Redevelopment Feasibility Study* explaining that the town is interested in looking at the potential for mill to be redeveloped. The town approved funds for a feasibility study, with FRCOG using Brownfields Program resources for a portion of it. R. Sherer explained that her company, Tighe and Bond (T&B), tailored the study to fit Erving's needs and assembled a team of consultants. The team had discussions with developers and assessed all resources and elements that would go into the evaluation including costs for marketing, architectural services, engineering, and site and hazardous building materials assessment. Two levels of environmental site assessment were done prior to the study and elements of those studies were added to the current one to capture all costs and constraints involved in redevelopment.

R. Sherer presented the town with 5 different redevelopment scenarios and associated costs, ranging from maximum reuse to the reuse of just 3 buildings, for residential and/or commercial uses. They also examined costs and considerations associated with mothballing and total demolition (*See slideshow handout for all scenarios*). Questions and suggestions from FRPB members regarding the various options followed.

J. Ward suggested using solar parking canopies in the parking lot as one way to keep costs down. R. Sherer said she personally liked that, and a solar roof, too, but said the ultimate goal was to find an option which minimizes the town's costs while putting the property into its most attractive state for further development. P. Marcus opined that local developers are savvy and can see the potential. The challenge is always in deciding whether or not to wait for a developer to make decisions or do up-front work on the property to make it more attractive.

D. Travers asked how commercial or residential redevelopment of the space fit into market absorption rates in Franklin County. R. Sherer replied that it doesn't necessarily match up with the marketing study conducted as the real estate market in Erving and Franklin County is struggling. Dry storage or warehousing might be used and that fits with the marketing study, she said.

J. Schermesser said if towns take the approach of only saving what's currently seen as valuable and demolishing the rest, they may not be able to meet the needs of future. J. Schermesser suggested

taking a take long range planning approach to redevelopment. J. Ryan said he'd like to understand better if the town supports residential and/or commercial development.

J. Lund pointed to similar projects — Haydenville's Brassworks, the Lunt and Millers' Falls buildings—and asked how their cost estimate numbers compare. R. Sherer said T&B's numbers on this project are conservative and include costs for removal of hazardous building materials as well as structural work.

Regarding funding sources, R. Sherer said the take away should be that while FRCOG works with communities and can help fund some things such as environmental site assessments and clean-up of Brownfields, funding is also needed for selective demolition and stabilization so municipalities can put a property in better standing to help them with redevelopment. Currently towns must know exactly what they want and then try to assemble funding or attract a developer for redevelopment. There is a gap here, R. Sherer noted. Towns struggle because they've taken on responsibility for a building and may not be able to afford getting it to the point of redevelopment. She added that perhaps more discussion is needed at the State level.

5. Update on FERC Relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility	T. Miner
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T. Miner reported that many studies involved in the relicensing of the pumped storage facility are yet to be completed. First Light is scheduled to file its final license renewal application on May 2. The current license expires in April 2018. T. Miner reported that it is very possible that FERC may grant a 1-year extension to the existing license because of the delays in completing fishery studies, due in large part to the closing of VT Yankee nuclear plant and the resultant impact on water temperature.

J. Lund asked if the change in ownership altered anything. T. Miner said existing staffing was expected to be maintained. J. Ward noted that there have been pressures made on operational changes while licensing is in process such as greater access to the river.

T. Hutcheson wondered if there was evidence of how streambank stabilization projects are performing compared to how they were expected to perform. T. Miner said bank stabilization projects have been effective overall but we have not had major spring or storm high-river flows to date, so they have not been fully tested. It is very important to have the current erosion control license article in the new license.

T. Miner said there was no discussion about using a new lower reservoir off the river instead of using the river as a reservoir. There is no chance that the pumped storage would be closed due to inefficiency as ISO New England considers it a vital resource that can be quickly dispatched to respond to New England's demands for electric power supply. T. Miner noted that FERC is looking at integrated operation of dams on the Connecticut River because currently the operations of the dams are not coordinated.

6. Update on the Proposed Kinder Morgan/TGP Pipeline Project	P. Sloan
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Jessica Atwood reported in P. Sloan's absence that Kinder Morgan (KM) has suspended their application (*See KM letter handout*). J. Atwood reported that P. Sloan is cautiously optimistic but notes that it is important to continue to monitor the project. It was noted that on May 26, 2016 KM-TGP will be submitting a report to FERC.

T. Cady moved to adjourn the meeting. T. Miner seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Documents Distributed/Presentations Viewed:

- Agenda
- Minutes of March 24, 2016
- Slide Presentation: *Erving International Paper Mill Redevelopment Feasibility Study*
- Slide Presentation: *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) program draft 2016 Annual Report*
- Letter to Kimberly Bose, Sec., FERC, from J. Curtis Moffat, Deputy General Counsel and Vice President Gas Group Legal, dated April 22, 2016.

The next meeting will be held on May 26, 2016.

Copies of all documents are available. Please contact Rebekah Boyd at admin@frcog.org or 413-774-3167 x100.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joan Rockwell, Clerk - FRPB