



# Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## Franklin Regional Planning Board— *MINUTES*

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| Date & Time: | Thursday, November 2, 2017 / 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

- Jerry Lund**, Chair, Leyden At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Joan Rockwell**, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, Colrain At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Thomas Miner**, 2nd Vice Chair, Shelburne At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- John Baronas**, Deerfield Planning Board
- James Basford**, Orange At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Ted Cady**, Warwick Planning Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Thomas Hutcheson**, Greenfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Nathan L’Etoile**, Northfield At-Large
- Richard Nathhorst**, Leverett Planning Board
- Charles Olchowski**, Greenfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Micki Paddock**, Shutesbury At-Large
- John Ryan**, New Salem At-Large
- Mike Shaffer**, Erving Planning Board
- Greg Snedeker**, Gill Select Board
- Cam Stevenson**, Shelburne Planning Board

### FRCOG STAFF

- Peggy Sloan**, Planning & Development Director
- Liz Jacobson-Carroll**, Administrative Services Assistant
- Kimberly Noake MacPhee**, Land Use & Natural Resources Program Manager

### PRESENTERS/GUESTS

- Melissa Cryan**, Land and Water Conservation Fund Stateside Coordinator - MA Division of Conservation Services
- Marie-François Hatte**, Associate Director – Water Resources Research Center - UMASS
- Nancy Hazard**, Greening Greenfield
- Katherin McArthur**, MassDOT
- Linda Overing**, New Salem
- Ritchie Davis**, The Recorder

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| <b>1. Introductions</b>  | J. Lund, FRPB Members |
| J. Lund convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. A round of introductions followed. |                       |
| <b>2. Review and Approval of September 28, 2017 FRPB Minutes</b>             | G. Walker, Clerk      |

**Tom Miner moved to adopt the 9/28/17 minutes, Ted Cady seconded the motion, and the motion passed with 3 abstentions.**

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| <b>3. Presentation on Planning for Climate Change in the Deerfield River Watershed</b> | K. MacPhee, Land Use & Natural Resources Program Mgr. - FRCOG |
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Referencing the heavy rain event experienced earlier in the week, MacPhee introduced several tools to be used by municipal officials as they plan for the impacts of climate change, particularly as it pertains to flooding. K. MacPhee summarized FRCOG efforts related to adaptation planning to address flooding and other climate change issues in the Deerfield River Watershed.

The widespread road closings, power outages, property damage, and flooding seen throughout the state earlier in the week are no longer unusual in the region. K. MacPhee outlined recent events including: the microburst in Whately in 2008; the regional ice storm in 2008; Tropical Storm Irene in August of 2011; the crippling snow storm in October of 2011; and the tornado in Conway in February 2017. These weather events, when put into perspective, reflect changes in climate. Climate is the average weather an area sees over a longer period of time, long enough to yield meaningful averages.

MacPhee noted the wealth of data collected, and reports, graphs and on-line tools produced by the Northeast Climate Center at UMass in recent years. MacPhee demonstrated an interactive on-line tool which can be used to predict flooding on a section of the Deerfield River in Colrain. The expected summer climate for Massachusetts by the end of this century is expected to resemble South Carolina. While the amount of precipitation falling in the northeast in intense multi-day events has increased 71% since 1958, the region continues to experience drought conditions because the soil cannot absorb a high volume of water in a short period of time, nor can current stormwater management systems properly handle it. MacPhee noted that changing climate patterns – higher temperatures, shorter winters, more frequent & intense storms, and droughts -- amplify the risks to municipal and regional infrastructure, local and regional economies, public health, and natural resources and the environment.

The goals of an Adaptation Plan are typically to: protect human lives, health and welfare; protect property and infrastructure; protect natural resources; and to sustain the local economy and government. The plan for the Deerfield River Watershed involves four key sectors: Natural Resources, Infrastructure, Local Economy & Government, and Human Health & Welfare.

Noting that infrastructure includes roads, bridges, culverts, drinking water wells, wastewater treatment systems, communication networks, power grids, the emergency response network, schools, and other facilities, the focus will be on the increased risk of flooding of infrastructure. Franklin County infrastructure includes over 2,000 miles of roads, about 300 bridges, many 1,000s of culverts, public water supplies, wastewater treatment plants, private wells, and toxic & hazardous chemical use/storage facilities. Most of the infrastructure is located within the floodplains and adjacent to rivers, and were sited based on historic weather and flooding patterns. Further, land use in the 100 year floodplain is 75% residential and 25% industrial/commercial/public. MacPhee plans to work with watershed towns to identify and map the various at-risk components of local infrastructure, consider the exposure to climate variability for each, determine potential impacts and then develop adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Infrastructure that has worked in the past will likely not work well in the future. Response strategies that we currently have for flooding roads and culverts, in particular, are no longer adequate. For example, culverts that are simply replaced without consideration of their capacity to handle runoff from current and future storm events will blow out again. The capacity of our towns to fund other responses is limited, however. Recognizing the challenge of devising workable adaptation and mitigation strategies, MacPhee proposed starting with data and mapping from UMass, as well as local knowledge.

While FRCOG has digitized FEMA’s 100 year floodplain maps, the data used to develop them was collected over 30 years ago – prior to significant development as well as changes due to tropical storm Irene. Regulatory boundaries articulated in local bylaws are important as are the interactive USGS inundation mapping tool demonstrated earlier. The Nature Conservancy’s map of the “Active River Area” for the entire CT river watershed shows how the river would flow unimpeded, and can be useful for big picture planning. Funding may be available to map other sub-watershed sections of river (as done recently for Conway and Ashfield). MacPhee offered to send a link to the interactive tool to all those interested.

Next steps for MacPhee and town officials include identifying key partners and their roles at the federal, state, regional and town levels, articulating goals, developing strategies with co-benefits, and filling in data gaps.

Lund reminded attendees that the federal government released a climate change report today that is based on data from past 3 years.

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| <p><b>4. Presentation on Assessing the Vulnerability of Stream Crossings in the Deerfield River Watershed</b></p> | <p>Marie-Françoise Hatte,<br/>Associate Director –<br/>UMass Water Resources<br/>Research Center</p> |
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MF. Hatte spoke about MassDOT’s project to assess the vulnerability of road and stream crossings in the watershed, from both transportation and ecological points of view. The team involved geoscientists, engineers, and ecologists, including scientists from USGS’s Conte Lab. The Deerfield River watershed was chosen for this pilot project in part because some data was already available -- from research done by UMass on wildlife passages over roads, and by others following Tropical Storm Irene.

The upgrading or replacement of stream crossings improves resiliency, is better for wildlife, reconnects streams to their headwaters, and increases the movement of wildlife. Towns can save money in the long term if they upgrade or replace these crossings before the next disaster. While doing so is expensive, there are some sources of money available.

The goal of the MassDOT project was to come up with a method to assess vulnerability and then to prioritize the projects. From a transportation point of view, impacts could be structural, hydraulic, geomorphic and/or disruptive of critical services. A structural evaluation was based on rapid field assessments for culverts, and MassDOT bridge inspection reports, which are scored from a “0” low risk to a “1” high risk. A hydraulic evaluation assessed how much water the area could handle before

flooding, and a geomorphic evaluation looked at the effects of the flood on the river, including stream power, erosion, the movement of sediment, and the accumulation of woody debris. The ratings from these three evaluations were synthesized into a “risk-of-failure score” which was then combined with a criticality score (measuring the extent of disruption of emergency services/ambulance trips). MF. Hatte showed a flow chart representing the process of score development and then introduced the interactive mapping tool, or “stream-crossings explorer” that uses this scoring system for all the stream crossings in the Deerfield watershed in MA and VT.

P. Sloan suggested that Highway Superintendents could utilize the tool to screen structures before inspecting them in person to help prioritize their work. MF. Hatte noted that the data could help towns secure funding for infrastructure improvements. For example, if one knows there is a grant available from Mass Audubon, town officials could look at the ecological vulnerability of the crossings in town, and make a case for addressing habitat which might also improve the transportation infrastructure. Trout Unlimited went out and physically located all of the crossings and each site has photographs and measurements. MF. Hatte encouraged anyone who encounters a problem with the tool to inform UMass.

K. McArthur said that a new MasDOT project initiation tool will incorporate this new tool and will be used to determine where MassDOT crews should gather additional information for the culvert inventory. This should help with incorporating some resilience measures into upcoming projects. In response to a question from T. Hutcheson, MF. Hatte indicated that the information can be downloaded and used with other GIS mapping tools. In response to a question from J. Lund, K. McArthur indicated that resiliency planning is starting to be incorporated into MassDOT’s operations. J. Lund’s expression of thanks was followed by a round of applause.

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| <b>5. Update on FERC Relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility</b> | T. Miner, CRSEC Chair & 2nd Vice Chair - FRPB |
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T. Miner expressed his enthusiasm at being able to share significant news including:

- On 10/27/17, CRC and FRCOG filed a joint Motion to Intervene in response to FirstLight’s request for a temporary amendment to their current license to allow them to use the full storage capacity of the upper reservoir during the winter months.
- CRC is convening a meeting of stakeholders (especially towns) on Nov. 30 to discuss recreation issues related to relicensing. FRCOG will attend.
- CRC, FRCOG and other interested stakeholders in the relicensing of the FirstLight hydropower facilities have requested a meeting with DEP and EEA staff to discuss several items, including:
  - The role of DEP’s 401 Water Quality Certification staff in the on-going settlement discussions
  - The current position of the Gill Conservation Commission and Select Board on the status of required erosion mitigation work that has not satisfied the conditions in the Order of Conditions issued by the Gill Conservation Commission. This work falls under the current FERC license
  - FRCOG’s response to FERC’s acceptance of FirstLight’s erosion causation study and FirstLight’s conclusion that high flows are the primary cause of erosion not project operations
  - FRCOG’s position on FirstLight’s responsibility for erosion causation and mitigation

- FRCOG’s recommendations for what should be included in any settlement agreement regarding erosion and attainment of water quality standards in the Connecticut River
- Stakeholder meetings are continuing with FL on a Settlement Agreement. The process is about 3 months behind schedule.
- FL has reportedly completed its many relicensing studies.
- Next step will be FERC's accepting the license application as complete, triggering NEPA.
- The current license will expire at the end of April 2018.

J. Lund’s expression of thanks to T. Miner was followed by a round of applause.

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| <b>6. Other Planning Updates (State-wide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan &amp; Recreational Marijuana)</b> | P. Sloan, Planning Director – FRCOG & M. Cryan, MA DCS |
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M. Cryan introduced the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which identifies the gaps between existing recreation and conservation resources of the State and the needs of its residents. A current SCORP enables MA to receive Land and Water Conservation Funds, allocated annually, from the Federal government to acquire conservation and recreation land, and to build and renovate parks. MA has received over \$100 million toward over 520 projects since the LWCF’s inception in 1964. M. Cryan offered to send a spreadsheet containing information on all of the projects to anyone who is interested.

M. Cryan explained that community input is essential to the development of the SCORP. DCS surveys towns and volunteers, and has hired a consultant to conduct a phone survey. P. Sloan suggested that these surveys should be sent to regional planning agencies which can then distribute them to local officials. M. Cryan asked attendees where funding should be allocated noting that the State has \$2 million to distribute in the coming year. A comment was made that local Open Space & Recreation Plans (OSRP) should be reviewed to determine priorities for funding given the great deal of work put into them by individual towns. M. Cryan reviews each OSRP and has a good sense of their contents, collectively.

Discussion turned toward the need to more effectively direct residents and out-of-state tourists to outdoor recreational opportunities through both enhanced way-finding signs and on-line maps. C. Olchowski noted his surprise at the lack of highway and road signs in a region that touts its outdoor recreational opportunities. G. Snedeker said that millennials from NY, for instance, want overnight accommodations with direct access to mountain-bike trails. T. Hutcheson proposed a scenario where towns would be able to upload their trail information as a layer onto existing GIS maps. Further, he noted the importance of trail-accessibility to an aging population. J. Basford suggested a centralization of trail maps between organizations.

P. Sloan noted that OSRPs are now valid for 7, not 5, years and noted the interest of communities, including rural ones, for provision of downtown green spaces. Also there is a need for community swimming areas in light of the increasing frequency of high-temperature events in summertime. FRPB members expressed their concerns about the condition of state parks and the need for improved maintenance and staffing. M. Cryan noted that it is important to convey their concerns to State legislators.

J. Lund’s expression of thanks was followed by a round of applause.

P. Sloan reminded attendees that applications for the next round of DLTA funding will be available soon, and that towns wanting help with zoning revisions or public outreach pertaining to the impacts of recreational marijuana-facilities should consider applying. Residents, when they voted in favor of recreational use, may not have been thinking about the possible development of large scale cultivation or processing facilities.

J. Lund referenced Stan Rosenberg and Paul Mark’s attendance at a session on the topic in Leyden, noting that he learned that revenue from taxation of the industry will go into the state’s general fund, not toward public education regarding drug use, as had been discussed earlier. Lund expressed concern that advocates of spending on education will have to fight for those funds every year. P. Sloan reminded attendees that a Town Meeting vote is required to institute a local sales tax on marijuana products.

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| <b>7. Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting/Adjourn/Public Comment</b> | J. Lund, Chair - FRPB |
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T. Cady moved to adjourn the meeting, J. Ryan seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Documents Distributed / Presentations Viewed:

- Agenda
- FRPB Minutes, September 28, 2017 – DRAFT
- Presentation print outs:
  - Planning for Climate Change
  - Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- NOAA Massachusetts Key Messages (climate data)
- Flyers:
  - CPTC Fall 2017 Workshops
  - MA AG’s Open Meeting Law Regional Training Workshop
  - MA Rural Policy Commission Findings and Priorities

The next meeting will be held on January 25, 2018, at the Hampden Inn, 184 Shelburne Road, Greenfield, 6 – 8:00 PM. Copies of all documents are available. Please contact Liz Jacobson-Carroll at [ljc@frcog.org](mailto:ljc@frcog.org) or 413-774-3167 x101.

Respectfully submitted,

Gisela Walker, Clerk - FRPB