Minutes of Meeting: July 17, 2019

The July 17, 2019 meeting was held at the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments office, 40 Church Street, Lowell, Massachusetts. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Chair Pat Wojtas presiding. The following were in attendance, as indicated in Attachment #1:

Councilors

- Christopher Tribou, Billerica Planning Board
- Pat Wojtas, Chair, Chelmsford Board of Selectmen
- Philippe Thibault, Dracut Alternate
- Sen. Edward Kennedy, Lowell City Council
- Jerry Frechette, Lowell Planning Board
- Chuck Walkovich, Pepperell Planning Board
- Stephen Themelis, Pepperell Alternate
- Jayne Wellman, Tewksbury Board of Selectmen
- Rick Reault, Tyngsborough Board of Selectmen

Guest

- Adriane Queiroz, Partnership Specialist, U.S. Census Bureau

Staff

- Beverly Woods, Executive Director
- Jay Donovan, Assistant Director
- Carmen Bellerose, Financial Officer
- Katrina Garavanian, Executive Assistant

I. Presentation: 2020 Census Outreach – Adriane Queiroz, Partnership Specialist, U.S. Census Bureau

Adriane Queiroz from the U.S. Census Bureau provided an overview of the 2020 Census process, the need for communities to obtain accurate counts, and the many job opportunities with the U.S. Census Bureau.

Following the presentation, Adriane provided handouts to the Council and encouraged the Councilors to contact her with any additional questions at adriane.a.queiroz@2020census.gov.
II. Minutes of Meeting: June 19, 2019

The minutes were distributed to all Councilors for review. Based on a motion made by Steve Themelis and seconded by Jerry Frechette, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the June 19, 2019 meeting.

III. Executive Director’s Report

The Executive Director’s Report was previously distributed to the Councilors for review. Upon a motion made by Phil Thibault and seconded by Sen. Ed Kennedy, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Executive Director’s Report as presented. The report is included as Attachment #2.

IV. Financial Report and Warrant

Carmen Bellerose presented the Financial Report and the Warrant for review and signature. Based on a motion made by Rick Reault and seconded by Jerry Frechette, the Financial Report and Warrant were unanimously approved. The Financial Report is included as Attachment #3.

V. Old Business

1. Draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Beverly Woods noted that the Draft Regional Transportation Plan was released for public comment in June. NMCOG received comments from MassDOT involving minor changes in format. Copies of the comments were included in the meeting packet. There were some comments regarding LRTA transit services received at the July 16th public meeting, however, those comments do not directly affect the RTP. The MPO will be meeting on July 24th to vote on endorsement of the Regional Transportation Plan. The entire document is available online at http://www.nmcog.org/regional-transportation-plan.

Based on a motion made by Steve Themelis and seconded by Sen. Ed Kennedy, the Council voted unanimously to authorize the Chair to vote in favor of endorsing the Regional Transportation Plan as amended.

2. Producer Responsibility Resolution

Beverly Woods reminded the Council that John Hite from the Conservation Law Foundation had provided a presentation at the May Council meeting on potential solutions for municipalities to navigate trash/recycling issues. As discussed at the June meeting, a draft resolution is included in the Council packet for consideration. Beverly highlighted one section that deals with expanding the items covered under the Bottle Bill and increasing the deposit from 5 cents to 10 cents. There is legislation pending on an expanded bottle bill.
Sen. Ed Kennedy made a motion to strike the “increase in the deposit fee to 10 cents” from the resolution. The motion was seconded by Steve Themelis. The Council agreed unanimously to omit the fee increase.

Based on a motion by Steve Themelis, and seconded by Jayne Wellman, the Council unanimously agreed to approve the amended resolution.

3. MARPA Testimony on H.48

Beverly Woods updated the Council on the hearing held for H. 48. She provided a copy of Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies’ written testimony.

4. Allocation of Matching Funds for MassTrails Grant

Beverly stated that NMCOG has received a $12,000 MassTrails Grant to develop a regional trail map. She requested that the Council approve the allocation of $3,000 in assessment funds for the required match.

Based on a motion by Sen. Ed Kennedy, and seconded by Chris Tribou, the Council voted unanimously to approve the $3,000 match.

5. Other Old Business

There was none.

VI. New Business

1. Community Reports

Phil Thibault informed the Council that Dracut is releasing a new bid request for the Collinsville Fire Station as the previous bid was over budget. New bids will be in prior to the November town meeting. He also stated that Dracut Access TV will finish construction on their new studios by the end of the month going from 1,700 square feet to 4,300 square feet.

Rick Reault explained that Tyngsborough will hold a special town meeting regarding the Tyngsborough Country Club. This is the town’s fourth vote on the 84 acres and potential preservation of open space. He provided an overview of the ongoing process and described how the town arrived at this point.

Sen. Ed Kennedy reminded the group that the last weekend of July is Lowell’s Annual Folk Festival.

Jayne Wellman informed the Council that a new elementary school will be built in Tewksbury. She added that discussions are ongoing about the reuse of the two schools that the new building will replace. She also noted that the regional dispatch center construction has begun. The town
is sorting out parking issues for the new fire station. Tewksbury’s DPW facility is under discussion at this time as well.

Chris Tribou stated that the new Billerica high school is coming along well.

2. Project Referrals

Beverly Woods stated that currently there are three projects in the region under MEPA review:

- The Solar Energy and Storage on Pleasant Street in Dunstable
- The Main Street Well Station and Access Road Upgrades in Dunstable
- The River Road Well in Tyngsborough

A copy of the MEPA table was included in the Council packet, along with staff comment letters on the Pleasant Street Solar project and the Dunstable Water Infrastructure Project. Beverly explained the concerns and recommendations provided by NMCOG staff.

Based on a motion by Steve Themelis, seconded by Jerry Frechette, the Council voted to approve the NMCOG staff comment letter regarding the Solar Energy and Storage on Pleasant Street in Dunstable, on a 7-2 vote with Sen. Ed Kennedy and Chris Tribou opposed.

Based on a motion by Steve Themelis, seconded by Jerry Frechette, the Council voted unanimously to approve the NMCOG staff comment letter regarding the Main Street Well Station and Access Road Upgrades in Dunstable.

3. Air Quality Memorandum of Understanding

Beverly Woods informed the Council that the current Air Quality Memorandum of Understanding between MassDOT, MassDEP the Regional Planning Agencies, Regional Transit Authorities is outdated. Federal Highway is requiring an updated version reflecting current regulations and partner agencies, and outlining responsibilities within the transportation and air quality planning process. Beverly requested that the Council authorize the Chair to endorse the updated version at the MPO meeting on the 24th.

Based on a motion made by Sen. Ed Kennedy and seconded by Phil Thibault, the Council voted unanimously to authorize the Chair to vote in favor of endorsing the Memorandum of Understanding at the NMMPO’s July 24th meeting.

4. Proposed Merrimack Valley Summit – October 2019

Beverly Woods informed the Council that NMCOG and the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) were recently contacted by the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA) regarding a half-day conference on Climate Change and Sustainability. The expected attendance for the event is 150-200 people. MSGA would be fiscally and contractually
responsible for both the event and the logistics. They would like the event to be co-hosted by MSGA, NMCOG and MVPC. MSGA has asked for $1,000 contribution from NMCOG and MVPC. They would also charge a $25 registration fee and seek out sponsors. NMCOG and MVPC would be involved in major programming decisions and would help with outreach. The event would be scheduled for late October, and most likely be held at UTEC in Lowell. Included in the Council packet was a preliminary concept for the event.

Based on a motion from Sen. Ed Kennedy and seconded by Jerry Frechette, the Council voted unanimously to approve NMCOG’s contribution of $1,000 to the Summit from assessment funds.

5. Nomination Process for NMCOG Officers

Beverly Woods explained the nomination process for NMCOG officers. A nomination form and Council list was distributed with copies to be mailed as well. Nominations are due back to NMCOG no later than August 15th. The Clerk will contact nominees to determine their interest in serving and nominations will also be accepted from the floor. Voting will occur during the September Council meeting.

6. Summer Meeting Schedule – Cancellation of August Meeting

As there is no current need for the August meeting, the Council agreed there will be no meeting unless a need arises.

7. Other New Business

There was none.

VII. Announcements

There were none.

VIII. Adjournment

Following a motion made by Steve Themelis and seconded by Rick Reault, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.
CLERK'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that this is a true copy of the Minutes of the meeting of July 17, 2019.

Attest: [Signature]

Stephen Themelis, Clerk