Northern Middlesex Council of Governments  
40 Church Street, Suite 200  
Lowell, MA 01852

Minutes of Meeting: January 16, 2019

The January 16, 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

- Mary McBride, Billerica Alternate
- Pat Wojtas, Chair, Chelmsford Board of Selectmen
- Philippe Thibault, Dracut Alternate
- Jerry Frechette, Lowell Planning Board
- Stephen Themelis, Pepperell Alternate
- Rick Reault, Tyngsborough Board of Selectmen
- Ron Keohane, Tyngsborough Alternate
- Darrin Wizst, Westford Planning Board

Staff

- Beverly Woods, Executive Director
- Jay Donovan, Assistant Director
- Carmen Bellerose, Financial Officer
- Katrina Garavanian, Executive Assistant
- Justin Howard, Transportation Program Manager

Other

- Patricia Kirwin-Keilty, on behalf of Lowell City Councilor / Senator Edward Kennedy

I. Minutes of Meeting: December 13, 2018

The minutes were distributed to all Councilors for review. Based on a motion made by Steve Themelis and seconded by Darrin Wizst, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2018 meeting. Phil Thibault abstained as he was not present at the December meeting.
II. 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 Jerry Frechette, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Executive Director’s Report as presented. The report is included as Attachment #2.

III. 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 Mary McBride, the Financial Report and Warrant were unanimously approved. The Financial Report is included as Attachment #3.

IV. Old Business

1. NMCOG Representative to the NMMPO

Beverly Woods informed the Council that as the NMMPO representative must be a Selectman, the previous appointment of Chuck Walkovich is not consistent with the MPO’s MOU and the Council’s bylaws, as he is a Planning Board member. Ron Keohane, a Tyngsborough Selectman, volunteered to be the representative to the NMMPO.

Based on a nomination by Rick Reault and seconded by Darrin Witz, the Council voted to nominate Ron Keohane, and then voted unanimously to appoint Ron Keohane as NMCOG’s representative to the NMMPO.

2. Planning Assistance Grant Award Update

Beverly Woods informed the Council that NMCOG has received the signed contract from the state allowing work to begin on the Planning Assistance grant from EOEEA. NMCOG will begin developing/improving accessory dwelling unit and solar zoning bylaws for the communities of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Pepperell, Tyngsborough and Westford. Also included is work with Tyngsborough to create a tree retention bylaw. These funds are available over the remainder of FY2019 and FY2020.

3. Project Referrals

Included in the Council packets was information on an ENF for a proposed intersection improvement project at Route 129 and Riverneck Road in Chelmsford. NMCOG received a withdrawal notification from MEPA today. The proponent will resubmit the ENF at a later date.

4. Other Old Business

There was none.

V. New Business
1. **Community Reports**

There were none.

2. **Amendment of the FY2019-FY2023 Transportation Improvement Program**

Justin Howard informed the Council that the NMMPO met on January 3rd and voted to release a draft TIP amendment for public review and comment. The amendment involves the programming of $293,311 in Federal Lands Access funding for the extension of the Merrimack Riverwalk in Lowell from Boott Mills to the Concord River Greenway trail. A public meeting to receive comments on the amendment was held just prior to tonight’s Council meeting and no comments have yet been received. The NMMPO will meet on January 23, 2019 to vote on adopting the amendment.

Based on a motion by Steve Themelis, seconded by Jerry Frechette, the Council voted to authorize the Chair to vote affirmatively on the amendment at the upcoming NMMPO meeting.

3. **Regional Transportation Plan Update – Public Involvement Process**

Justin Howard explained that the NMMPO is required by federal regulation to update the Regional Transportation Plan every four years. Work has begun on the updating process and the outreach process has been initiated. Attached to the Council packet is a flyer regarding the availability of a written survey. Justin Howard explained NMCOG’s role in gathering project information from the communities. He requested that member communities advertise the availability of the survey to their residents through their municipal websites, electronic newsletters or other means.

4. **DLTA XII RFP Process**

Jay Donovan informed the Council that NMCOG recently received a signed contract for the next round of DLTA funding and issued an RFP to the local communities for project proposals. Jay Donovan sent a copy of the RFP to each of the Councilors as well. The Council packet included information regarding eligibility for proposals under this year’s program.

5. **Approval of Match Commitment for the 2019 Mass Trails Grant Application**

Beverly Woods stated that NMCOG is interested in applying for a $15,000 grant under the MassTrails program to create a regional trail map. A local community has requested the project and the map would include all of the municipal trails, plus those owned and/or managed by the Federal government, State, and non-profit organizations. The grant program requires a 20% match, therefore, NMCOG requests that the Council approve a match commitment of $3,000 for the project. The grant application is due on February 1st.
Based on a motion from Steve Themelis and seconded by Mary McBride, the Council unanimously approved the match commitment.

6. Other New Business

There was none.

VI. Announcements

There were none.

VII. Adjournment

Following a motion made by Phil Thibault and seconded by Jerry Frechette, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

CLERK'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that this is a true copy of the Minutes of the meeting of January 16, 2019.

Attest:  

Stephen Themelis, Clerk