

NCC Transportation Advisory Committee
NCC Conference Room, The Cottage at the Rocks, Bethlehem, NH
Meeting Minutes
March 22, 2011

Present: Raymond Burton (NH Executive Council), Dean Eastman (NHDOT), Joseph Elgosin (Whitefield), Glenn English (Haverhill), Douglas King (NHDOT District 2), Benjamin Oleson (Lancaster), Doug Grant (Randolph), Richard Hamilton (Littleton), Stanley Judge (Shelburne), Carl Martland (Sugar Hill), Rob Nadler (Albany), Regan Pride (Lisbon), Brian Schutt (NHDOT District 1)

Staff: Tara Bamford, Planning Director

Call To Order:

Vice Chair Doug Grant called the meeting to order at 3:01.

1. Welcome / Introductions / Attendance

Round table of introductions was completed and attendance was taken.

2. Minutes

The minutes of 12/15/10 were unanimously approved as presented by motion of Elgosin/English.

3.NHDOT Updates

Ten Year Plan: Dean Eastman reviewed the current most likely funding scenario which would involve the two year registration surcharge sunseting and result in 70-80% of the Ten Year Plan projects in the North Country getting cut, and acknowledged that towns are getting discouraged. He emphasized the importance of continuing with the input and prioritization process anyway. Dean stated that I93 is the NHDOT's top priority. Dean explained that the reason the list came out before the RPCs' input was because the Legislature asked NHDOT what Ten Year Plan would look like without the registration surcharge or increase in gas tax. Several TAC members expressed frustration with the Legislature's unwillingness to either continue the \$36 registration surcharge or pass the .08 increase in the gas tax that would be necessary to leverage the level of federal funding needed to maintain the Ten Year Plan in the short term. Dean noted that Betterments are proposed to be cut as well despite the Districts already not having enough to keep up, and layoffs will be needed at NHDOT. There was discussion about the gas tax being fixed vs. a % and being next to lowest in New England. Ray Burton said that when GACIT meets in July to receive the NHDOT's Ten Year Plan and schedule hearings their emphasis will be on safety and their duty to recommend a plan to the legislature that is achievable at current funding levels. He noted that safety advocates and others who will be hurt by deteriorating roads like the tourism industry need to get out and be heard especially at election time.

4. Regional Transportation Improvement Plan

Dean Eastman emphasized that the TAC's input to NHDOT should be the regional priorities. Tara Bamford handed out the 2009 RTIP and noted that almost all of the projects on the RTIP were on federal or state highways that connected two communities and so were regional priorities. Brian Schutt and Doug King provided updates on each of the projects.

Tara reported that three additional projects were received from towns:

- Repave Bog Road in Stratford
- Replace Atwell Orange Brook Bridge on Sculptured Rocks Road in Groton
- Coordination of resurfacing with utility work on Main Street in Colebrook

Information received from the towns on these projects was sent out to the TAC in advance of the meeting. Tara also referred members to the information in their packets received from Colebrook regarding the bypass, US 2 in Jefferson, and the Stewartstown Bridge.

It was agreed that it is important to maintain the RTIP and continue to advocate for funding for the region's needs, but difficult to do a ranking of projects when so many towns were too discouraged to respond. Tara agreed to update the RTIP list in its present format based on this discussion and try to separate it into regional and local priorities for the TAC to take action on at the April meeting.

Some of the related issues discussed included:

- shift from 12' travel lane 8' shoulders to 11' travel lane 4' shoulders and safety benefits
- Conway bypass middle and north sections as possible regional priorities not yet on list
- need for safety audits at several Woodsville intersections and inclusion in NCC's next UPWP
- should bridges and the interstate be on same list ranked with other highway projects
- rest areas being transferred from NHDOT to DRED
- all 3 rest areas in District 1 are proposed for closure
- truckers need for places for their mandatory rest stops
- importance of gateways to welcome visitors
- benefits of an agency that can do marketing managing the rest areas vs DOT
- other sources of funds for betterments-type projects that are safety issues

5. Other Updates

North Country RideShare Update: Tara Bamford reported that NCC staff is gearing up to begin outreach efforts concurrent with the NHDOT launch of the new Trapeze software.

RCC Update: Doug Grant reported that there were applications for 2.5 times as much money as there was available for things like reimbursing volunteer drivers for driving the disabled. He also expressed frustration with the delays in implementing the new SCC/RCC system.

6. Other Business

Transportation Solutions NH: Doug Grant referred members to the handout in their packets on this initiative that he is part of and supported the TAC becoming a member to help it expand. He said the plan is for it to become a 501C3. Regan Pride suggested that endorsing the work of the group might be a more appropriate response than joining and suggested individual members could join on their own. By consensus the item was tabled until a later date.

Transportation Committee Finance Report: By motion of Burton/Martland it was unanimously voted to endorse the recommendations of the Report and to send a letter stating that to all appropriate decision makers, more specifically, the Governor, each Executive Councilor, and the state senators of the North Country. Tara Bamford offered to write the letter and have it sent out.

Future agenda items: Brian Schutt offered to present information at a future meeting on the new Ride Van that captures data about the roads, and on the DOT's activities regarding unnumbered roads.

Other News: Ray Burton reported that a bill to eliminate the Rail Authority which does not cost the state anything has passed the House. Carl Martland said rail needs to be looked at along with other transit issues rather than separately and gave the example of Manchester Airport not allowing bus service because it makes money from parking as an example of how dysfunctional the state can be when it comes to transit issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12.

Minutes Written by: Tara Bamford 3/22/2011