

## **Transportation Advisory Committee**

### **Minutes**

**April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**Present:** Raymond Burton, Glenn English, Joe Elgosin, Frank Claffey Jr., Henry Anderson, Scott Knowlton, Florence Houghton, Bonnie Moroney, Sid Regen, Stan Judge, Becky Newton, Patsy Kendall, Doug Grant, Bob Stevenson, Bill Ernst, and William Rines

**Staff:** Mary Deppe, Tara Bamford, and Michael King

**Guest Speaker:** John Corrigan, NHDOT

### **Call To Order:**

Glenn English called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. The TAC members went around the room and introduced themselves. There are several new members that have been appointed for 2008. The minutes, agenda, and handouts were passed out. Joe Elgosin made a motion to approve the minutes from the 12/19/07 TAC meeting. Bob Stevenson seconded the motion, all were in favor and the minutes were approved.

### **NH Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS)**

John Corrigan gave an informative PowerPoint presentation about the NH Safe Routes to School Program. He explained that the major issues addressed by SRTS are: Safety, Physical Fitness, and Reducing Congestion. This program intends to provide a fun and safe way for children to get to and from school while also creating cleaner air and contributing to a decrease in the rate of childhood obesity (which is currently on the rise nationally and contributes to mental and physical health problems). One of the major problems today is that there are too many children coming to school each day in private vehicles. This increases travel time for drivers and contributes to dangerous conflicts with walkers and bikers. This can be especially hazardous during the winter, where in many areas it is difficult to keep the sidewalks free and clear of snow and ice. John explained that the Edward Fenn Elementary School in the Town of Gorham is a great example of how this program funding can be used, as Gorham was awarded funding to build a sidewalk.

John Corrigan went on to explain that SRTS is a Federal program that is administered by the NHDOT. It is funded under SAFETEA-LU and is a 100% grant, based on reimbursement.

John explained that the SRTS program required applicants to create a task force of community members (school, municipality, parents, students, community organizations) to develop community support for the project and to identify barriers and craft solutions. There are "5 E's" that are framework of this program: Evaluation, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Engineering.

John also discussed how this is becoming a more competitive funding program and there are certain items that must be addressed:

- 1.) Effective community planning leading to a comprehensive travel plan.
- 2.) A Task Force with wide community representation.

- 3.) Applicants must document the home-to-school connection.
- 4.) The program MUST be cost effective.
- 5.) The Task Force should develop creative solutions.

\*\*John also mentioned that there will be special consideration to communities with limited resources (must be documented.)

There is a cap of \$100,000 for infrastructure projects. 70-90% of the total funding for this round will be spent on infrastructure projects while the other 10-30% is reserved for non-infrastructure.

The applications must be submitted to DOT and the North Country Council (for review/ranking) by the deadline of May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008. There will be another grant round some time in the near future after that, most likely in the summer or fall of 2008. In this round, three North Country Communities have showed interest in applying for funding; Franconia, Jackson, and Pittsburg.

There was a question and answer period and John gave the committee the website, some brochures, and his contact information, (603) 271-1980.

### **Councilor Raymond Burton**

Councilor Burton showed his support for the Safe Routes to School Program. He went on to discuss that a George Campbell is to be confirmed as the Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

### **Corridor Planning / NCC Organizational Changes**

Tara Bamford explained that there have been some organizational changes at North Country Council and that there has been re-organizing done to make sure that everything is functioning together properly; land-use, transportation, natural resource planning, economic development and community planning.

Tara also explained that NCC recently submitting an application to NHDOT to fund a Corridor Study for Route 3, from Whitefield to Stratford. The maximum grant size is \$50,000, so it makes sense to study one portion of Route 3 at a time. Tara went on to explain that it is a critical time for the economy in that area and this study will tie into that. She also explained that Route 3 is the only link that NH has with Canada. NCC will be given an opportunity to present the project and explain the application and that we will be asking some TAC representatives from the towns in the study area to come to NHDOT and show support for the project. Tara then passed around handouts with a summary of the project.

Becky Newton explained that a CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Study) is currently being developed for the Town of Groveton. There was a meeting this past winter and an economic development expert from Chicago reviewed the downtown area. She also explained that business owners have petitioned to have signage to direct people into the downtown area, because currently people pass right by it taking the Church Street "short-cut".

## **NHRTA**

Michael King explained that there is a newly formed NH Rail Transit Authority, being the 5<sup>th</sup> authority created in the State. The purpose is to look at the possibilities of providing transit through rail. Michael explained that he was appointed to be on the NHRTA by Governor Lynch and that someone from Berlin will most likely also be appointed. Currently, NHRTA is in the process of establishing the mission and goals. The major concentrations so far are:

- Manchester – Boston Commuter Rail
- Down-easter from Portland to Boston (passing through NH)

Michael explained that he has requested that some of the NHRTA meetings be held in the North Country and that once they are planning, TAC members will be invited to attend.

Michael also explained that on the freight side of rail, currently Saint Lawrence and Atlantic is raising funding to upgrade the track and to increase the capacity for additional freight.

## **Transit**

Mary Deppe explained that Beverly Raymond was unable to make the TAC meeting, but she had emailed an update with the following information:

- North Country Transit is going to submit a 3 year grant to the Endowment for Health to help with the implementation of the Carroll County system. One of the objectives in the plan is to have it fund a position that would be located in Carroll County to assist with marketing and support the first year. Then it would help with operations for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- Town funding; as of 3/18/08 four towns had signed on to support the project at their town meetings, creating \$12,000 of local financial support. The Moultonborough Lion's Club also contributed \$15,000 for the match for the purchase of one demand response vehicle.
- Vehicle Requests: Beverly submitted a request to DOT for an earmark. Anyone that would like can submit a letter of support to Carol Shear Porter.
- The Committee for Public Transportation in the North Country (CPTNC) is working to put together a Rural Coordinating Council (RCC) for Northern Grafton and Coos Counties. The RCC is a requirement of the State for the new brokerage system that is being developed.

Patsy Kendall of Plymouth explained that her organization is trying to develop transit in the Plymouth area, but it is proving to be very difficult. She explained that Plymouth is in "the middle of nowhere" and that it is difficult to get help from people in starting this project up. Mary Deppe explained that UVLSRPC recently submitted an application for funding to NHDOT that would coordinate efforts with NCC and LRPC to develop a Regional Coordinating Council for the area that Patsy's organization is in. Mary explained that there were conversations specific to Plymouth's problem and that they are going to be a focus of the project if it is funding.

Patsy also mentioned that they are organizing a Summit on Rural Transportation Planning and that more information will be given to the TAC in the future.

### **Other Issues**

Mary Deppe passed around a copy of the New Hampshire Highways Magazine and explained that it is a very informative publication that distributed for free. A sheet was passed around to gather names and addresses of anyone that would like to be put on the distribution list.

Michael King mentioned that there is going to be a reauthorization of the Transportation Bill and that people need to pay attention and write letters to Congress if they feel strongly one way or another.

### **Adjourn**

Joe Elgosin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Henry Anderson. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 5pm.

*Minutes Approved: June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008*