

Transportation Full Committee
Minutes
January 17th, 2007

Present: Henry Anderson, Raymond Burton, Mary Deppe, Joseph Elgosin, Glenn English, Joel Godston, David Govatski, William Houle, Mike King, Stacey Doll, Greg Placy, David Price, Alan Rich, Jack Rose, Bruce Sloat, Steven Young.

Guests: Bill Watson

Glenn English called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Joe Elgosin made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 20th, 2006 meeting and was seconded by Joel Godston. All were in favor, none opposed, and the minutes were accepted.

Michael King introduced Bill Watson, the new Director of Planning at NHDOT.

Regional Transit Plan

Stacey Doll discussed how last summer NCC was awarded funding to write a coordinated transit plan, which needs to be in place in order to receive funding for transit operations. Stacey explained that in order to write the plan, she worked closely with Beverly Raymond to survey all of the transit providers, hold meetings around the North Country, and discuss how they could coordinate better and share resources. Stacey explained that there was not much time to write the plan, but even with the time constraints, NCC was the first in the state, and possibly in the country, to submit the plan. It is available online at www.tccap.org, on the Town of Haverhill's website www.town.haverhill.nh.us, and also NCC's new website, www.nccouncil.org.

Stacey also explained that Carroll County is conducting a feasibility study of Public Transit Providers, funded by USDA. There will be a meeting about this on Tuesday; 2/6/07 if anyone is interested. More information is available from Beverly Raymond. North Country Transit will also be working with CTAA, Community Transit Association of America on new planning efforts in Colebrook on 2/7/06 at 10am.

David Price explained that ridership on the Tri-Town bus that goes through Littleton, Lancaster and Whitefield has increased by about 18% this year and is at about 29% capacity. This bus travels a deviated fixed route and is ADA compliant. On request, it can coordinate with the bus from Boston. According to NHDOT, 29% is considered to be a satisfactory level of ridership. Most riders use this resource to go to work and medical appointments.

There was some discussion about whether or not DHHS is still working on their transit initiative that was started last year dealing with hiring a brokerage firm. The idea is to have a central dispatch system that would distribute requests to the appropriate transit authorities so that transportation needs will be met. This can help to reduce idle time for vehicles. This project appears to be moving forward.

Ten Year Plan

Bill Watson explained that he is very familiar with the Ten Year Plan and that there is currently not enough funding even though there are plenty of needs. He explained that the RPC's need to look at what projects are in the plan and how we can view them differently. He also explained that no new projects can be added until the needs and revenue are better matched. He explained to the committee that DOT sees three groupings of TYP projects:

- 1.) Projects that are very far along – let them be finished
- 2.) Projects that haven't gotten far – revisit them
- 3.) Projects that have had no action – look at them differently

Since the TYP does not explain the background of the projects or the problem being solved, maybe they should be reviewed and decide if there is still a problem. If so, can there be other solutions? Is CSS an option?

There was some concerned from the committee about whether or not this will be a fair process. Will all of the RPC's be active?

Greg Placy explained how he reviewed all of the projects with Michael King and Mary Deppe. All of the projects in the North Country, with the exception of three, are to repair roads because they are failing apart.

Bill Houle said that he thought each RPC should be given a methodology about how this process should be done. This would make the efforts from each RPC consistent.

Some people felt that the overall problem is that the legislature has failed to appropriate money effectively. Now the towns are paying for it because road maintenance costs were overlooked and now the roads need a lot of work.

Michael King explained that DOT wants a letter with recommendations by April 1st. NCC will do the following and report back to the committee:

- 1.) Send a letter to all NCC communities explaining what is happening and asking them to review all of the projects in their town and provide any comments
- 2.) Form a subcommittee and look at all projects, define problems, and note any alternative solutions
- 3.) Swap projects/reprioritize
- 4.) State the top two priorities

Joel Godston made a motion to support the proposed methodology, Joe Elgosin seconded, all were in favor and the motion was approved. Bill Watson also supported this methodology.

Bill Watson also explained that Ansel Sanborn is back to work on the Long Range Transportation Business Plan. DOT will be coming out with a strategic plan this spring and there will possible be another round of public meetings. DOT has been working on responding to al of the recommendations made.

It was restated that the Transportation Committee and the NCC Board of Directors supports an increased fuel tax.

Bruce Sloat made a motion to make a recommendation that the fuel tax be increased. Joel Godston proposed an amendment to suggest a minimum increase of three cents. David Govatski seconded, all were in favor and the amended motion was approved.

Bruce suggested that each committee member call the state legislators about this once the minutes are approved. Someone else suggested getting support from Reynolds and Gallus.

Safe Routes to School

Michael King explained that the RPC's met with John Corrigan (Safe Routes to School Coordinator). He passed out a brochure and explained that schools will be surveyed to find out where problems are. DOT will try to develop a prioritized list of projects that involve safety within two miles from schools. Mike explained that he is not sure what NCC's role will be, but eventually we will be involved.

Rail Subcommittee

The rail subcommittee met and discussed the problems that were brought forth by Bruce Sloat. A letter of concern was written to Commissioner Murray and Tom Burack from NH DES and both were passed out to the committee. Joe Elgosin made a motion to approve the letter, Jack Rose seconded the motion, all were in favor and the letters were approved.

New Business:

Michael King explained that NCC is in the process of re-writing the UPWP contract for 2008-2009. He explained that we are considering the needs of DOT, the priorities for NCC, and Context Sensitive Solutions, since DOT wants to see more of that.

Someone suggested writing a letter to the Governor and Council in support of Commissioner Murray. Jack Rose made a motion in support of the letter, Steve Young seconded, and all were in favor.

Adjourn:

Joe Elgosin made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Jack Rose.

Postscript:

Joel Godston submitted some handouts to be attached to the minutes.

Please note the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 21st, 2007.

Minutes Approved: 3/21/07