

Minutes of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission Meeting

Date: April 28, 2017
11:00am – 1:30pm
Massachusetts State House
Room 437
24 Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02133

Members Present

Undersecretary Chrystal Kornegay (Chair)
Representative Gailanne Cariddi (Speaker of the House Appointee)
Brian Bullock (At-Large)
Dave Christopolis (At-Large)
Donna Hamel (At-Large)
Linda Dunlavy (Franklin Regional Council of Governments)
Corinne Fitzgerald (Senate President Appointee)
Trish Settles (Central Massachusetts Regional Planning District Commission)
Judy Terry (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission)
Bill Veno (Martha's Vineyard Commission)
Nathaniel Karns (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission)

Members Absent

Jay Coburn (Cape Cod Commission)
Konnie Lukes (At-Large)
Wendy Hudson (Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission)

Others Present

Ryan Ambrose, DHCD
Karen Bresnahan, DHCD
Samantha Kaufman, EOHED
Jessica Atwood, FRCOG
Tristan Sullivan-Wilson, Senator Lesser's Office
Carston Snow, MHP
Philip Crean, MHP
Jared Freedman, Representative Kulik's Office

Welcome and Introductions

Undersecretary Chrystal Kornegay (Chair) welcomed members of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission and each member briefly introduced themselves.

Adoption of Minutes from Marth 10th, 2017 Commission Meeting

Board voted to approve minutes without amendment.

Scheduling Future Meetings in 2017

The Commission briefly discussed and voted to change the date of the next meeting from Friday, June 9th to Friday, June 23rd. The exact time and location of the meeting have yet to be determined. Commission member Linda Dunlavy will be in charge of organizing the next meeting.

Finalization of Top Issues:

Commission members were asked to finalize the three key issues that were developed during the March 2017 meeting. After some discussion, members agreed upon the following three issues:

1. Water/Sewer and Title 5
2. Rural Service Delivery
3. Small Business Support

Discussion of RPAC Annual Report

- A draft report will be sent around by Ryan Ambrose to commission members two weeks before the June 23rd meeting.

MBI Status Report Discussion

Linda Dunlavy briefed commission members on the MBI Tracking Report provided by Peter Larkin. The report discussed current negotiations that individual towns are currently engaged in as well as provides a progress report for projects already in progress. Following the report commission members engaged in a discussion of MBI's progress and the role that the RPAC can have in tracking. Some members were still concerned that MBI was not making adequate progress, warranting continued monitoring.

RPAC Involvement Moving Forward

Members discussed how the RPAC can be involved and comment on potential legislation. Undersecretary Kornegay discussed that regular meetings with the Rural Caucus moving forward would be beneficial. In the long term, members would like to get to a place where the legislature says that they should run potential legislation by the commission. However, the commission can advise on legislation impacting rural communities but cannot support or oppose any potential bill.

Presentation – Rural MA Demographic Data and Socioeconomic Conditions

Commission members Linda Dunlavy and Franklin Regional Council of Governments staff member Jessica Atwood discussed the presentation outlining demographic data and socioeconomic conditions in the rural communities of Massachusetts. The presentation outlined the challenges facing rural communities, including an aging population, lower levels of higher education attainment, lower home values, and less employment opportunities as compared to urban communities. The report also outlined possible economic development strategies based off of the findings in the report.

The report was somewhat hard to view on the projector in the room and commission member Brian Bullock suggested that members comment after all get a chance to fully review the report. A copy of the report can be found [here](#).

Additional Discussion

The commission discussed next steps ahead of the next scheduled meeting. The primary topics included how the commission would recommended that they monitor the progress of MBI going forward. The commission will also work to further describe each of the three categories that were decided upon. Finally, the commission began discussing ways that they could comment on proposals by the administration that affect rural communities.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30pm