

## **Minutes of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission Meeting**

Date: Friday, January 12, 2018

11:00am – 2:30pm

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

2 Washington Square – Union Station

Worcester, MA

### **Members Present**

Undersecretary Chrystal Kornegay (Chair)  
Brian Bullock (At-Large)  
Dave Christopolis (At-Large)  
Linda Dunlavy (Franklin Regional Council of Governments)  
Corinne Fitzgerald (Senate President Appointee)  
Trish Settles (Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission)  
Judy Terry (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission)  
Bill Veno (Martha's Vineyard Commission)  
Jay Coburn (Cape Cod Commission)

### **Members Absent**

Nathaniel Karns (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission)  
Wendy Hudson (Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission)  
Donna Hamel (At-Large)

### **Others Present**

Ryan Ambrose, DHCD  
Toby Gould, Rural Commonwealth  
Beth Bandy, Rural Commonwealth  
Tucker Holland, Town of Nantucket  
Philip Crean - MHP  
Don Bianchi – MACDC  
Jeffrey Walker – SRPEDD  
Janet Pierce – CMRPC  
Seth Nadeau – Congressman McGovern's Office

### **Welcome and Introductions**

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

### **Adoption of Minutes from September 8th, 2017 Commission Meeting**

Board voted to approve minutes without amendment.

### **Overview of Organizational Models**

Commissioners were presented research comparing two similar rural focused statewide organizations in Maryland and Pennsylvania. This document outlined how each organization is organized, their mission,

and how they are funded as compared to the RPAC. Commissioners had asked for this document to be prepared as part of a larger discussion on how the RPAC can better meet the needs of rural Massachusetts. Commissioners were interested in the fact that each organization had at least one full time staff member. As a result, a working group was formed to develop a scope of work for a full time staff person or a consultant to investigate outside funding sources for such a position. The ultimate goal of this work is to present a proposal to the Rural Caucus.

### **Briefing on Meeting with Rural Caucus**

Commissioners were briefed on a meeting held between a group of RPAC Commissioners and the Rural Caucus. The meeting was held on November 1, 2017 in the State House in order to start what is hoped to be a long term conversation between the Caucus and Commission members. Caucus members were presented with the demographics study of rural Massachusetts prepared by Linda Dunlavy and staff at FRCOG. The conversation turned to Short Term Rental legislation and RPAC's desire to comment on the concept of such legislation. Caucus members suggested that the RPAC prepare a letter for leadership which would need to be voted on at the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Discussion and Vote on Draft Letter**

Commissioners discussed the draft letter that supported concept of legislation addressing Short Term Rentals in Massachusetts. Commissioner Corinne Fitzgerald expressed concerns about the legislation and the rights of property owners. After minor changes to the draft letter, a vote was held to approve submitting the letter to House and Senate leadership. By a vote of 7 to 1, with Chair Chrystal Kornegay abstaining, the RPAC voted to submit the letter. The vote was as follows:

Judy Terry	Yay
Bill Veno	Yay
Brian Bullock	Yay
Linda Dunlavy	Yay
Jay Coburn	Yay
Dave Christopolis	Yay
Trish Settles	Yay
Corinne Fitzgerald	Nay
Chrystal Kornegay	Abstain

### **DEP Educational Program**

RPAC Chair Chrystal Kornegay and Commissioner Linda Dunlavy gave a brief update on the development of a DEP educational program that is intended to help commissioners gain a better understanding of water / sewer and Title V issues and how they affect rural communities. Linda Dunlavy is working to find an individual with experience at DEP who would be willing to come to RPAC meetings to present on these issues.

### **Next Steps / General Comment from Commissioners**

- **Small Business Technical Assistance Letter:** Dave Christopolis
  - Commissioner Dave Christopolis discussed the issue of Small Business Technical Assistance funding as another issue that the RPAC should consider commenting on. He mentioned that there is currently a letter writing campaign calling to restore funding for

Small Business Technical Assistance to \$2 million and volunteered to write a draft letter for discussion at the next RPAC meeting.

- **Housing Choice Initiative:** Linda Dunlavy
  - Chair Chrystal Kornegay gave a brief overview of the Housing Choice Initiative and accompanying legislation. Commissioner Linda Dunlavy outlined concerns that small towns with no housing production may be left out of important state capital programs. Chair Kornegay pointed out that the program itself is able to change in the future and asked Linda Dunlavy to work with rural stakeholder groups to develop a small town program to accompany the Housing Choice Initiative.
  
- **Rural Caucus Scope of Work:** Judy Terry, Brian Bullock, Linda Dunlavy, Trish Settles, Dave Christopolis, Jay Coburn, Ryan Ambrose (DHCD Staff)
  - The working group will meet to prepare a scope of work for either a full time staff member or a consultant to investigate outside funding opportunities to pay for a full time staff person. This scope of work would be the first step towards making a proposal to the Rural Caucus.
  
- **MBI Update:** Ryan Ambrose (DHCD Staff)
  - DHCD staff will work with MBI to provide consistent, quarterly reports to commissioners so that RPAC can better track MBI's progress towards providing broadband internet to rural Massachusetts.

### **Public Comment**

Tucker Holland, from the Town of Nantucket, commented that he is supportive of the Housing Choice Initiative.

### **Meeting adjourned at 2:30pm**