

Minutes of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission Meeting

Date: June 23, 2017
11:00am – 1:30pm
Franklin Regional Council of Governments
12 Olive Street
Greenfield, MA 01301

Members Present

Undersecretary Chrystal Kornegay (Chair)
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 Commission)
Judy Terry (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission)
Bill Veno (Martha's Vineyard Commission)
Nathaniel Karns (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission)

Members Absent

*Representative Gailanne Cariddi (Speaker of the House Appointee)**
Jay Coburn (Cape Cod Commission)
Konnie Lukes (At-Large)
Wendy Hudson (Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission)

Others Present

Ryan Ambrose, DHCD
John O'Rourke, Conway Board of Selectmen
Bob Armstrong, Conway Board of Selectmen
Tom Hutcheson, Conway Town Administrator
Margaret Nartowicz, Rutland Town Administrator
Beth Bandy, Charlemont Board of Selectmen
Don Bianchi, MACDC

Welcome and Introductions

Undersecretary Chrystal Kornegay (Chair) welcomed members of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission and each member briefly introduced themselves. Undersecretary Kornegay then led Rural Policy Advisory Commission members in a moment of silence to honor the memory Representative Gailanne Cariddi, who passed away on June 27, 2017.

Adoption of Minutes from March 10th, 2017 Commission Meeting

Board voted to approve minutes without amendment.

Scheduling Future 2017 – 2018 Meetings

Commission members decided to schedule the next four RPAC meetings. The agreed upon dates are as follows:

- Friday, September 8th, 2017 – Orleans, MA
- Friday, January 12th, 2018 – Worcester, MA
- Friday, March 9th, 2018 – Boston, MA
- Friday, June 8th, 2018 – Greenfield, MA

The exact time and location of each meeting has yet to be determined.

Presentation Discussion – Rural MA Demographic Data and Socioeconomic Conditions

The presentation on the demographics of rural Massachusetts was originally presented at the March 10th 2017 meeting but commission members were not able to clearly see it due to the lighting in the room. The presentation was added to the RPAC website so that commission members and the public would be able to access the full report. Discussion focused on slides 21-23, which outlined the three types of rural communities identified in the state. Linda Dunlavy was tasked with creating definitions of the three types of communities and summarizing them within the RPAC FY16 Annual Report.

Discussion of RPAC Annual Report

A draft of the RPAC FY16 Annual Report was shared with commission members two weeks before the June 23rd meeting for comment. Along with the addition of an expanded definition of the three community types outlined in the Demographic Data Report, commission members discussed the need for the addition of a report for each of the working groups. Commissioners agreed to submit report for approval by July 14th.

Western MA Group Meeting

Linda Dunlavy gave a brief overview of the Western Massachusetts Rural Group meeting hosted at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments offices in Greenfield on May 3rd, 2017. The meeting was held in order to get input from other organizations working on policy issues in rural Western Massachusetts. Commissioners discussed ways to replicate this meeting across the state. The idea of extending the public comment period at the end of regularly scheduled commission meetings was discussed.

The Year Ahead

At the April 2017 meeting, commission members finalized the three topic areas that the commission would focus on in the year ahead. They were as follows:

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

Members agreed to keep the four existing working groups and spend the summer looking at each topic area through the lens of their own group. This process includes an online survey of town administrators of the challenges facing each town in relation to the three topic areas. At the next Rural Policy Advisory Commission meeting, members will reorganize for the year ahead.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30pm