

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

Date: Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
11:00am – 2:30pm  
MA State House  
Room 350, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA

### **Members Present**

Undersecretary Chrystal Kornegay (Chair)  
Brian Bullock (At-Large)  
Dave Christopolis (At-Large)  
Linda Dunlavy (Franklin Regional Council of Governments)  
Representative Paul Mark (Speaker of the House 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)  
Nathaniel Karns (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission)  
Donna Hamel (At-Large)

### **Members Absent**

Corinne Fitzgerald (Senate President Appointee)  
Wendy Hudson (Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission)

### **Others Present**

Ryan Ambrose, DHCD  
Toby Gould, Rural Commonwealth  
Beth Bandy, Rural Commonwealth  
Jared Freedman, Representative Kulick's Office  
Kyera Sterling – Representative Mark's Office  
Chris Kluchman, DHCD  
Kate Lacy, MHP

### **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 January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Commission Meeting**

Board voted to approve minutes without amendment.

### **Discussion and Vote on Draft Letter of Support for Small business Technical Assistance**

Commissioners discussed the draft letter drafted by Dave Christopolis calling for the Governor to restore \$2 million in funding for Small business Technical Assistance in FY19. After a discussion, it was

decided to send the letter to House Ways and Means Chair Jeffrey Sanchez instead of Governor Baker. By a vote of 10 to 0, with Chair Chrystal Kornegay abstaining, the RPAC voted to submit the letter. The vote was as follows:

Brian Bullock	Yay
Dave Christopolis	Yay
Linda Dunlavy	Yay
Rep. Paul Mark	Yay
Trish Settles	Yay
Judy Terry	Yay
Bill Venno	Yay
Jay Coburn	Yay
Nat Karns	Yay
Donna Hamel	Yay
Chrystal Kornegay	Abstain

### **DEP Educational Program**

RPAC Chair Chrystal Kornegay and Commissioner Linda Dunlavy reported that they are still working to identify a potential former DEP staff member to help educate Commissioners on issues surrounding water and sewer.

### **Discussion on Opportunity Zones**

Commissioners briefly discussed Federal Opportunity Zones and raised questions that they have heard from their communities. These concerns centered on how towns apply and how do rural communities that are designated as Opportunity Zones effectively market themselves to investors.

### **MBI Update**

Ed Donnelly from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute was on hand to provide an update to the RPAC. Commissioners commented that they have in the past had trouble receiving regular updates from MBI and asked that they be forwarded any public report that is prepared by MBI staff.

### **Housing Choice Initiative Briefing**

Commissioners welcomed Chris Kluchman, Housing Choice Program Director, to discuss proposals for thresholds to the Housing Choice Grant Program for small or low-growth communities. Commissioners expressed concerns about rural community's ability to compete for grants under the current program and also discussed concerns surrounding capacity to manage these grants in small communities. RPAC Chair Kornegay assured the group that their concerns and recommendations will be taken into consideration and Chris Kluchman offered to come to any community to speak about the program.

### **Discussion and Vote Draft Executive Director Job Description and Legislative Memo**

Commissioners discussed the draft job description for a proposed Executive Director position and a legislative memo. The proposal calls for the creation of an Office of Rural Policy led by a full time Executive Director who reports to the RPAC. Commissioners discussed the proposal, specifically where the organization would be located. Commissioners voted on approving the draft job description and

legislative memo and voted to forward these documents on to the Rural Caucus and request a meeting. The vote was as follows:

Brian bullock	Yay
Dave Christopolis	Yay
Linda Donleavy	Yay
Rep. Paul Mark	Yay
Trish Settles	Yay
Judy Terry	Yay
Bill Veno	Yay
Jay Coburn	Yay
Nat Karns	Yay
Donna Hamel	Yay
Chrystal Kornegay	Abstain

**Additional Items**

Commissioners discussed the need to elect a new Chair and Vice-Chair and asked that these elections be added to the agenda for the June 2018 meeting.

Commissioners asked that staff check with the Governor’s Office of Boards and Commissions on when their appointments expire.

**Public Comment**

None

**Meeting adjourned at 1:45pm**