



Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC)

Via Zoom

November 9, 2023, 9:00 to 11:00

Minutes

Present: Linda Dunlavy (FRCOG), Trish Settles (CMRPC), Jay Coburn (Cape Cod Commission/CDP), Wendy Hudson (NPEDC), Dave Christopolis (At-Large), Thomas Matuszko (BRPC), Kimberly Robinson (PVPC), Helen Zincavage (SRPEDD), Rep. Natalie Blais, Sen. Paul Mark, and Shaun Suhoski (MRPC designee) –

Quorum = YES

Members Absent: Sara Smiarowski (At-Large), Helena Fruscio Altsman (Secretary of Housing and Livable Communities Designee), Bill Veno (MVC)

Guests: Anne Gobi (Director of Rural Affairs), Ethan Melad (CMRPC), Dana LeWinter (MHP), Tom Hutcheson, Andy Hogeland, Gina Govini and Alyssa Rose, Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority; Eric Shupin and Alana Murphy, Exec Office of Housing and Livable Communities; Amanda Bebrin Cape Code Development Corporation.

- 1. Welcome and introductions:** Linda Dunlavy, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05am
- 2. Approve minutes of September 8, 2023:** Motion to approve minutes by Jay Coburn, seconded by Kim Robinson. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- 3. Presentation and Discussion on Housing - The** meeting began with a presentation by Gina Govini and Alyssa Rose of Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority entitled Our Piece of the Pie – Ensuring the Proposed Housing Bond Bill serves Rural MA. Following their presentation Eric Shupin and Alana Murphy, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities provided additional comments. The chair then opened the floor up for discussion with the members of the RPAC and guests.
- 4. The Rural Policy Plan Focus Area Governance** – Andy Hogeland provided a summary of Rural Municipal Modernization priorities. Rep Blais suggested adding technology needs for municipalities. And she suggested that members should send priority items to Linda, and she will draft a letter.
- 5. Discuss Legislation, Policies and Priorities** – Director Gobi, Representative Blais and Senator Mark outlined some current items in the legislature, including Chapter 90, housing, economic development, disaster relief bills, and the closeout budget. Director Gobi mentioned that her office now has a website: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/rural-affairs> and will be hiring for a Grant Specialist.
- 6. Future Activities, Priorities and Other Items** – The Commission members proposed new topics for future meetings, including the migrant crisis, rural transit, and mill towns. Some discussion was held

regarding the format for future meetings – live, hybrid or remote. Next meeting date was proposed for January 12th.

7. Adjourn: 10:52am

Respectfully submitted by Trish Settles, RPAC Clerk