Central NH Regional Planning Commission
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CNHRPC Full Commission Meeting
Meeting Summary
Thursday, January 12, 2023
7:00pm

Remote Zoom Meeting

Commission Attendees: Diane Adinolfo, Town of Allenstown
Sandy McKenney, Town of Allenstown
Barbara Randall, Town of Boscawen
Jim Bibbo, Town of Bradford
Harry Wright, Town of Bradford
John Schneider, Town of Canterbury
Erle Pierce, City of Concord
Matthew Hicks, City of Concord
Ken Swayze, Town of Dunbarton
Susanne White, Town of Hillsborough
Clarke Kidder, Town of Hopkinton
Joe Schmidl, Town of Salisbury
Emilio Cancio-Bello, Town of Sutton
Russell Tatro, Town of Webster

CNHRPC Staff: Craig Tufts, Senior GIS/Transportation Planner
Matt Baronas, Regional Planner
Matt Monahan, Senior Planner
Matt Taylor, Project Planner
Michael Tardiff, Executive Director
Stephanie Alexander, Senior Planner
Vincent Pagano, Regional Planner

The meeting began at 7:05 PM, called to order by CNHRPC Chair Clarke Kidder. Due to inclement weather travel was deemed unsafe and the meeting was held remotely via zoom so no formal business would be conducted.

Introductions
All members attending via zoom introduced themselves.

Speakers – Craig Tufts & Matt Baronas – *CNHRPC Staff*

Mike Tardiff shared that CNHRPC staff has worked on several Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) projects and is currently working with the Town of Deering to complete another, making it an apt time to review the process with the Full Commission.

Craig Tufts provided an overview of what a NRI includes and its purpose. The product provides a complete inventory of natural resources in town including information about wildlife habitat, drinking water, surface waters, agriculture, and recreational and cultural resources. It includes information as well as maps, a co-occurrence analysis, and recommendations. The process also engages the town's community and its natural resources services. The outcomes can help inform planning decisions and open space planning.

Matt Baronas provided detail on the weighted co-occurrence analysis portion of the NRI. This analysis is a way of encapsulating information about many natural resources in one product, making it a key element of the NRI product. It works by having an assigned relative value to each layer, the layer's location and value are then overlaid to achieve a cumulative score throughout an area. In the context of the NRI, the town committee, CNHRPC staff, and residents via a survey assign values to each natural resource layer. The layers and scores are overlaid and mapped so that locations with the highest scores from more overlapping resources and higher rated resource inputs are pinpointed within the town.

Matt presented a co-occurrence example of Loudon's drinking water. The three maps showed water wells as one input and the varying levels of aquifer's transmissivity as the others. These combined to depict the drinking water category co-occurrence which emphasizes the locations in town most important for Loudon's drinking water. Building on this example, Matt included a table showing the weighting of a full co-occurrence with all the layers included in all categories. These weighted layers culminated in a single map depicting the full co-occurrence analysis. The visual representation makes it easy to find areas in town that could be important to conserve or are more primed for development.

Craig then detailed CNHRPC's process for completing an NRI. The first step involves developing a project team that includes a subset of the Town's Conservation Commission who possess a unique local expertise and CNHRPC staff who bring regional and planning expertise. Additionally, other outside experts provide information as needed. Then the team develops the full list of natural resource data layers to include by uncovering what is available, determining what is worth collecting, and highlighting what is unique about the town. Next public input is collected, usually in the form of a survey. Resident responses can help inform what natural features are most important in town, where beloved places are located, and if there is a unique point of emphasis for the Town or its character. The information garnered in this stage informs not only what layers to use but how they should be weighted. The final stage of the process is developing the NRI document. The content is organized by resource category and includes descriptions of the natural resources in town, maps showing the relevant combinations of resources, descriptions and depictions of the co-occurrence analysis results, and recommendations. The NRI is designed to compliment the master plan and builds off existing planning documents including hazard mitigation plans.

Craig also highlighted that in addition to the traditional physical NRI document, online interactive mapping documents (ArcGIS Online StoryMap) have been developed to use as a tool to communicate the results. Matt provided a demonstration of the online StoryMap companion, showing its online format and maps that have the ability for users to pan around and zoom in to investigate. Craig concluded by again highlighting the NRI as a useful planning tool, aiding in decision making including related to zoning, housing, infrastructure, conservation and more.

Report of the Chair / Treasurer's Report

Mike Tardiff presented the budget in order to highlight what CNHRPC staff had been working on, starting by announcing the commencement of the commission's first Invest New Hampshire program with Boscawen to help with housing related tasks. There are more applications with other towns forthcoming. Mike also shared that the Regional Housing Needs Assessment process is close to being completed and will be discussed in detail at the next Commission meeting. The budget is profitable earlier in the year than previous, with income coming from an array of programs including an Economic Development Planning Program that begun recently, a Warner Groundwater Protection Ordinance Project that is well underway, Development Reviews, Circuit Riding, and more. The budget totals around $50,000 a month.

Local Hazard Mitigation Planning Program Update

Stephanie Alexander provided an update and overview of the CNHRPC local Hazard Mitigation Planning Program. The program has been active since 2001 and annually, CNHRPC receives new federal funding to update more local Hazard Mitigation Plans (Plan). Every five years, each community is mandated by federal law to develop an updated Plan for review and approval in accordance with current federal and state Plan requirements. A newly updated Hazard Mitigation Plan will enable a community to better protect itself from the impacts of natural disasters, severe weather events, and climate change through collaboration and completing a set of mitigation actions over the next five years.

To date, the Commission has received funding to update about 80 Plans in the Central NH region. These Plans are completely paid for by federal funds (75%/25%) with a required in-kind match by communities (the value of staff and volunteer time). As long as a Plan has not lapsed (expired), a community can apply for federal Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants over a wide variety of mitigation grant programs: https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/hazard-mitigation-planning/requirements.

CNHRPC administers the federal grants on behalf of the region's communities and every grant cycle brings both challenges and successes. Stephanie works closely with NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NH HSEM) staff for both the grant administration and the review and approval of newly updated Plans. Delayed grant funding can cause local Plans to lapse (expire) before a new Plan update is approved for the next five years. New federal 2023 Plan requirements will need to be applied to CNHRPC's Plans going forward, increasing the time spent on Plan updates.

A Hazard Mitigation Plan update is a significant undertaking, and its content can contribute to a community's Master Plan and Capital Improvements Program, and can contribute to Department and Board priorities over the next five years. Stephanie helps Hazard Mitigation Committees spearhead the work at the local level. The current grant round is Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC 2020) which covers Plan updates for Canterbury, Concord, Hopkinton, Loudon, Dunbarton, Pittsfield. CNHRPC is working with NH HSEM to obtain BRIC 2021 funding for seven more communities this year, plus trying to obtain a separate grant as soon as possible for two communities whose Plans are lapsing very soon. Stephanie announced the submittal of the first BRIC 2020 updated Plan, the Canterbury Hazard Mitigation Plan, for conditional approval in October and are awaiting either a list of revisions or the conditional approval from NH HSEM. CNHRPC is currently awaiting conditional approval for five updated Plans and staff will begin working with Hopkinton this month to start their Plan update process.

New Hampshire Ten Year Transportation Plan Update

Craig provided an update on the New Hampshire Ten Year Transportation plan, sharing that five projects were submitted to CNHRPC and its Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) from Concord, Hopkinton, Hillsborough, Pembroke, and Salisbury. CNHRPC's on call engineer has developed conceptual plans and cost estimates for each improvement project. The CNHRPC TAC established a scoring committee and criteria to rank the projects. The established rankings of Concord, Hopkinton, Hillsborough, Pembroke, then Salisbury were presented to the full TAC and met with more discussion before being accepted and the top three were sent to NHDOT for consideration of inclusion in the Ten Year Plan. Concord has also applied for funding through a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant which if successful could free up additional funding for the other ranked projects. Further information about NHDOT's Ten Year Plan progress and the CMAQ application will come in March.

Staff Reports

Members of Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission staff provided an update on the various projects they were working on. Vincent Pagano shared that he has been working on a range of projects including Capital Improvement Plans in Epsom and Deering, Economic Development Committees in Loudon and Epsom, the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, the Mink Hills Recreation Study Committee in Warner, the Epsom Master Plan and more. Matt Monahan had been working on the Warning Groundwater Protection Ordinance project, circuit riding in Boscawen, Bradford, and Bow, plan reviews, land use development regulation work in Dunbarton, and the Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 8:10 PM.

DRAFT