

MINUTES
The Finance & Budgeting Committee
of the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts – May 23, 2024
hybrid meeting, Windsor Town Offices / Zoom

In attendance: Joe Nowak – Adams, Committee Chair; Dicken Crane – Windsor, Board Chair; Chris Cozzaglio – Berkshire Regional Planning Commission; Bob O’Connor – EOEEA (*virtual*); Lisa Hayden – Administrative Agent (*virtual*); Kate Conlin – Woodlands Partnership Coordinator

Call to order and welcome

- 4:11 p.m.

Approval of minutes from January 12, 2024 and April 26, 2024

- January 12, Motion by C. Cozzaglio, Second by D. Crane, all in favor.
- April 26, Motion by C. Cozzaglio, Second by D. Crane, all in favor – C. Cozzaglio abstention

Heritage Area Feasibility Study strategy, planning agency involvement, discussion before June Annual Meeting

- K. Conlin gave an overview of data and short narratives regarding various metrics in the Partnership Region that could be part of the Feasibility Study based on details that are in other Feasibility Studies. Has had verbal confirmation that FRCOG and BRPC can be involved. Planning agencies made the original 2015 Partnership Plan. Unclear on how far the \$50,000 within Agent contract will get us toward completion of a feasibility study. Importance of drawing on resources that already exist, maps and data that are already available, access to resources that planning agencies already use.
- Need to check if towns must formally support the effort. Reach out to historical societies, conservation commissions. Select Boards and Town Administrators can facilitate this outreach.
- If tourism is focused on knowing what the communities are about and is paired with natural resource based economic development and municipal financial sustainability efforts, it likely will have more support from residents.
- Next steps: meet with planning agencies before June 26th to inform the Annual Meeting
- Discussed options to have D. Crane keep in touch with Committee Chairs, which would not violate open meeting laws. Perhaps a different way of communicating, such as “Slack” or other brief messaging tools. Fewer committee meetings punctuated by committee chair gatherings? Chair gatherings with Executive Committee? The importance of sharing Committee work and grant progress in a newsletter, both to the Board and the public.

Legislative strategy development regarding sustainable federal funding

- Reach out to Congressman Neal’s office: Joanne Shugrue, Pittsfield Office Case Worker and Reilly Lee, Federal, (let them know that C. Cozzaglio is unable to participate in this) – isn’t as much of an urgent need to meet right now, but before May of next year. Reach out January 2025. Possibility to invite someone from the Office to a meeting or retreat, and give a head’s up that we will be seeking additional funding support. K. Conlin will invite local legislators to the Annual Meeting.

Agent updates: Annual Summer Meeting in June; EOEEA Woodlands Partnership Implementation Grant submitted; Catalyst Grant submitted; recent Name Change legislation meeting with EOEEA; Greylock Glen communication

- A recent call with the Government Relations staff at EOEEA clarified that the language provided was to meet the standards set by the Comptroller. They are happy to assist as the process unfolds. Sen. Mark was updated about this meeting.
- Two grants submitted recently. EOEEA Woodlands Partnership Municipal Services study. Catalyst for hiring a development and funding professional and preparing for end of Agent contract.
- New Director at Greylock Glen reached out to set up a meeting. Potential Board meeting in the fall if ready. Potential to be involved in Mass Audubon educational content for the Outdoor Center site.

Scheduling next meeting(s)

- Ready to meet after Annual Meeting and planning agencies involvement, results of talking to state and local delegations. July 18, 4-5pm.

Any item(s) not anticipated within 48 hours

- Letter from Forest Service received recognizing our new name.
- US Forest Service outreach grant final funding round. Next generation climate forestry crew could be renewed as a funding request. Trying to recruit people from non-traditional backgrounds into the forestry profession. Subgrant to Greenagers?
- J. Nowak – Jennifer Morse is trying to find a member for Cheshire. Attended a fundraiser for Sen. Mark and he expressed support for the Woodlands Partnership.

Public comment

- none

Adjourn

- C. Cozzaglio motion, D. Crane second, all in favor. 5:06 p.m.