



**North Country
Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting
At
Medallion Opera House
20 Park Street, Gorham, NH
And via Zoom
Tuesday, March 7th, 2023
10:00AM-12:00PM**

Minutes

1. Call to Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 10:08AM.

Robin Irving (Lancaster)
Harry Juergens (Stratford)
Stanley Judge (Shelburne)
Michele Cormier (Randolph)
Raymond Gorman (Colebrook)
Cart Martland (Sugar Hill)
Paul Robitaille (Gorham)
Nick Altonaga (NCC)

Virtual:

David Campbell (Jackson)
Rosalind Page (Lisbon)

Bill Watson (NH DOT)
William Rose (NH DOT)
Chris Turgeon (NH DOT)

2. Approve Meeting Minutes: January 24, 2023 **

Nick Presented the Meeting Minutes from January 24, 2023.

Carl Motioned to approve the minutes from January 24th, 2023.

Harry Seconded.
Motion Carried.

3. CMAQ Applications **

Nick presented the CMAQ program information.

Paul asked what the source of waiting on the EV projects is?

Bill: There was no guidance or process in place until recently for reviewing and scoring these projects. The guidance had not come out from FHWA at the time of the submittals and review by NHDOT. Lacked guidance on performance measures and how public-private partnerships are organized.

Guidance has now been received by State DOTs. We want to be sure to NOT put out the CMAQ funds in front of the previously established EV charging funds. We want to be in line with the timelines of the other State DOTs. Ensure that Charging Stations are appropriate distances apart from each other, that we meet the fast charging requirements. Want to be sure that the administrative requirements on the CMAQ EV charging is the same that is on the NEVI and other Charging infrastructure programs.

Recommendation was made to the DOT Commissioner to move the non-charging projects into the TYP. Within 6-months, we will have a gameplan for processing these funds. Some of those projects will not be eligible.

On the infrastructure/charging side, our priority will be on the municipal charging infrastructure, with private retailers, etc. as secondary. All done in the context of the larger EV charging network.

Robin: Can anyone update us on the status of the VW Settlement funds?

Nick will check with DES on the status of that program.

Michele: There is a corridor plan for EV charging stations? Would this allow for people to travel throughout the state?

Bill: Every state had to develop and approve an EV Charging Plan. It is not site-specific but notes prime areas/focused areas for siting EV chargers. Was a difficult plan to develop that met Federal requirements without there being any Federal requirements in place. Will send a copy to Nick and he can send it to the Group.

Nick Presented the two (2) CMAQ Applications.

Bill: TAC does not necessarily need an approval, but just need a positive air quality benefit. As long as they are eligible and show an emissions reduction, all projects will be added to the TYP and be reviewed by GACIT.

Michele: What is the goal of moving forward replacement projects if we don't have a process for the charging stations?

Bill: We believe there is merit to moving forward the projects under the guidance that currently exists.

Carl: Maybe the difference is that the EV-Specific station funding is for public/retail locations, versus these vehicles that will be charged at the maintenance facility.

Robin: Has there ever been any discussion about the impact on the grid of increasing the load from electric vehicles? Have heard a lot recently about the strains on the grid.

Paul: These are both winning projects and show the public that the changeover is possible.

4. Ten-Year Plan Projects **

Question about YOE: YOE is the Year of Expenditure is project funding with 3.7% annual inflation calculated in.

Nick Presented the Shelburne project and NHDOT comments.

Michele: Asked about the details of the Shelburne project and what it was actually proposing.

Nick: Would improve the road grade and raise the roadway up out of the flood zone slightly. Not fully out of the floodplain/hazard area but significantly lower flood risk.

Stan: Would maintain the flow of water and not have the road act as a dike.

Nick presented the Gorham project.

William: \$4,925,000. (80%) would come from the Allocation.

Michele: Is this intended that the bicycles and pedestrians would share the sidewalk/path?

Paul: I believe it would not be shared; the bicycle lane would be next to the sidewalk.

Carl: Next time you can round off the numbers to simplify it for the group.

Nick Presented the Randolph Project.

Michele: Have questions about the Eastbound lane and traffic lanes. Needed clarification on design.

Carl Motioned to approve the previously established regional project priority rankings for submittal to the New Hampshire DOT for inclusion in the Ten-Year Plan.

Robin Seconded.

William: Commission will be the one formally approving the list of projects to put forth.

Robin: Will we be approving at the Current year or the YoE estimate?

William: Approval is for the Year of Expenditure.

Unanimous vote in favor.

Motion Carried.

5. Regional Transportation Plan - Draft **

Nick provided a brief update on the status of the Regional Transportation Plan. Have many sections drafted. Corridor sections will be the most work for organizing and formatting data.

6. Updates

- a. SADES Inventory
- b. On-Call Engineering Services
- c. Other NCC Projects

Nick provided an update on NCC SADES/RSMS+ Work. Suggested any town that wants these surveys and forecasts done to contact him. He provided an update to the On-Call Engineering opportunity. Working on Sugar Hill with HEB right now. Will have additional funds available in the next Fiscal year to support these efforts in other communities.

Nick Suggested that anyone who wants locally directed traffic counts to talk to him.

d. Scenic Byways

Carl: Planning Meeting took place in January. The chair Mike Bruno is working to get a bigger group of members together. Working to update the Corridor Management Plans this year/soon. The recommendations in the Corridor Management Plans have almost all been implemented. We need new goals. In a way, moving closer to the original Scenic Byways map/network from the 1990s that had the entire network together. Want to treat it as a full system. Eliminate some of the overlap in the byways, and work with anyone working to have a portion of the trail (Waterville Valley wants their portion of NH49 to be the Mad River Byway).

Change of designations: Route 16 from Berlin up to Milan is a bit problematic due to developments and views. Idea to reroute and/or reconfigure the byways to better suit the scenic nature of the area.

Paul: Suggested maybe a small Byway for Cate's Hill Rd. Has an incredible scenic view that could be used as a loop.

Carl: When the portion in Berlin was de-designated, there was a town hall meeting. Attendees thought of alternate routes or loops. Could open up the possibilities for side trips and loops.

Michele: Scenic byways could be much more than just scenic. Expand to historical value.

Carl: It is scenic and cultural in nature. There is a requirement for numbers of commercial/industrial centers that may lead to de-designation. Have suggested to towns to think about projects that might really impact the byways (parking and facilities, etc.).

Stan: Is there a way to explain that even though the byway might go through a partial industrial area, can we provide its current state in the historical, scenic, cultural context? For Example, the stretch of road between Berlin and Gorham is bad on one side but the riverside is gorgeous in the summer and autumn.

Carl: Any town can propose additional byways and route changes.

e. Updates from Communities

Robin (Lancaster): Sent some projects to Annie Kuster's office for Congressionally Designated Funds.

- Paving and Restructure of Elm Street,
- Summer Street bypass. This connects to Page Hill Road that then connects to Rte.
- Asked DOT if they want to collaborate on the design and build. Information sent to Bill Watson.
- DES Project, Solar array going to site plan review. Issues raised included traffic along the access road and who owns the road and jurisdiction.
- In Consultation with Housing Subdivision group where Lancaster Floral used to be. Pushing a "Green community" concept. Will require a new driveway and plan for Floodplain at rear of the property.
- Sandwich shop lobbying at location near Rotary. Drive thru for ingress/egress was on side town road. Wanted to avoid issues seen by Dunkin Donuts (No longer internal ordering, drive-thru only)

Harry (Stratford): Town Meeting coming up and 250th Anniversary celebration coming up in June. Have lots of events planned.

Stan (Shelburne): Governor and Council signed a contract with Consolidated that will improve internet service to unserved and underserved. Speeds and prices look good.

- Robin: 788 service area has no connections into this project
- Ray: Colebrook is the same way, got left out of the plan.

Michele (Randolph): Town meeting next week: Asking for a pile of money. \$5 million project for Durand Road, or a phased approach to Reconstruction. Another promising thing is that Chuck Henderson attended our meeting last time and get excited about the Appalachia trailhead. Next Friday we are meeting with RMC, AMC, Randolph, DOT, etc. to start making that happen.

Ray (Colebrook): Final review of designs for downtown project. \$14 million school project under review this evening. Mixed opinion from residents and the board about if it is needed. Multiple water and sewer projects going on. Town Garage Solar installation. Possibly have a 30 acre solar field project coming in. Looking for Town Administrator and County Administrator position.

Paul (Gorham): Boat landing project north of the Dam has been completed. Negotiations ongoing for non-motorized parking lot for access to AT and Appalachia area. Negotiations are ongoing with landowners. Bond being presented at Town meeting for repairs to Stony Brook and other areas of town that were not done right at the time. Solar array at the school is ready for construction. Will be putting a whole solar array on the town garage. Solar projects should take 89% of town building use load off the grid. Acquired a grant to look at parking in the downtown area. Seeking to clear additional land owned by the town. Recently changed zoning laws to allow rental units above the retail downstairs. Hoping that this will increase the population downtown and make businesses more viable. Housing is an issue. Hoping that these land use laws and projects will increase the supply. Running into issues with the state fire code with sprinklers. Amount of building permits coming in are keeping the planning board very busy.

Carl (Sugar Hill): Nick mentioned the work going on in the village center to clear up issues with the sidewalk. Solar Array has been up for almost a year. Were expected a \$4,000/year benefit. Are saving more than \$6,000/year. Deal set with Consolidated that will bring new connections to the town.

Have been doing personal surveys of the Sugar Hill Roads and taking pictures and providing them to the town. Have seen an overall improvement in road quality. Provides a basis for telling the voters that the chosen projects are worth doing.

David (Jackson): Facilities committee exploring town properties for parking and. Working to improve and expand parking. Think we missed the application for EVs because we are looking to tap funding for setting up EV charging stations. Town meeting next week and elections. Big thing coming up is the Solar Energy ordinance. A Big way for the community to embrace solar energy and help the grid. Hopefully reduce some of the footprint. Asked to do our Capital Improvement Plan this year. Beginning discussions this week. Anticipate it being a big process.

Will be tapping some other TAC members for knowledge on plans and projects and getting things done.

7. Other Business

8. Meeting Scheduling

Will shoot for Late April or early May for another meeting.

9. Adjourn

Robin motioned to Adjourn.

Carl Seconded.

Motion Carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:01PM.

****Indicates vote of the TAC is required**

An in-person quorum (7) is needed in order to conduct any votes, so please plan to attend if you are willing and able. If this is not possible, please use the information on the following page to attend virtually. While attending in-person, please wear a face covering for the duration of the meeting and keep a safe distance between yourself and others. Thank you.

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