

**MINUTES  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**SOUTHERN MAINE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**9:00 AM  
January 10, 2008**

**In attendance were:** SMRPC Executive Director Paul Schumacher, Chairman Peter Morelli, Vice Chairman Robert Heard, Treasurer Richard Bicknell, Mike Huston, John Wood, Roxanne Eflin, Chester Chapman, Joyce Wood, Nancy Perkins, Greg Tansley and Sandra Mowery.

Absent were: James Gulnac, Judy Bernstein and Wallace Reid

**1. Minutes of the November 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

Dick Bicknell wanted to clarify that he did not oppose the acceptance of Brownfields RLF Environmental Consultant motion; that he only abstained, as he had questions and did not fully understand it.

Roxanne Eflin also wanted a modification made to the LD262 Tax Credit, that the motion was for not only for support, but also to join the coalition. Motion was made to accept amendments and seconded by Joyce Wood. With amendments, minutes of the November 8<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved.

**2. Treasurer's Report:**

Paul Schumacher reported that the checking account had approximately \$4,100.86, \$164,965.67 in Accounts Receivable and \$0.00 in Accounts Payable. Motion was made to accept Treasurer's Report. Motion passed unanimously.

**3. Brownfields RLF Implementation Plan**

Chuck Morgan advised the board that as part of the loan applications, applicant fiscal information is needed. Biddeford/Saco Economic Development Corporation has been hired to do the underwriting of the applications. Eligible applications will then be forwarded to EPA. EPA gives a yes for repayment eligibility and a yes for program eligibility and then a V-RAP is established.

Richard Bicknell stated that he was uncomfortable with and did not understand the fiscal review portion of the loan application and Chuck Morgan informed him that the Biddeford/Saco Economic Development Corp. did this part, that we did not have to be concerned with this portion of the application process.

The Plan has been forwarded to EPA and DEP for their final approval. Roxanne Eflin asked: if by accepting the plan, could we now accept applications and Chuck Morgan told her that yes, we could. Mike Huston asked if the EPA would pick up the typos and review regulations in the Plan and Chuck said yes. Richard Bicknell

asked about any legal requirements that we should be doing, that he was uneasy with this part. Chuck Morgan informed him that by the hiring of Bidd/Saco Econ. Dev. Corp, they would be using their documents and contracts and with their past experiences and expertise, we should have no problems. Paul Schumacher also informed the committee that Bidd/Saco Econ. Dev. Corp. has their own lawyer available and that with EPA and DEP, there are three checks. Joyce Wood asked how SMRPC was going to do a loan in a town and then maybe review that project in a town; how was this going to work? Paul Schumacher said that if this happened, SMRPC would excuse ourselves. We would not loan money, plus review town's plans. Motion was made to accept the Fund Implementation Plan and approved.

#### 4. **RLF Grant Process**

Chuck Morgan was going to see if he could lower consulting costs by having State DEP could do certain activities instead of the consulting firm.

Within the Fund Implementation Plan, Page 17, G. Grant Agreements; discussion was about the minimum grant award to municipalities and nonprofit corporations of \$50,000.00. Discussion was to make minimum award to \$50,000 and maximum to \$360,000.00. Robert Heard suggested that we isolate municipalities and nonprofits. Roxanne Eflin suggested that the last sentence of G. Grant Agreements, 1. (A grant award may be made less than \$50,000 if sufficient need is demonstrated by a municipality or nonprofit corporation). John Wood asked how we were going to balance the small and large municipalities as we don't have a grant writer. How can a small town apply? Chuck told the committee that if the smaller town did not have the capacity; we could get them help elsewhere. John Wood asked Chuck; that if he found a project, could he come to him and Chuck told him that we could send our consultant out for a grant.

Nancy Perkins thought the format for the recent municipal officials meeting in Alfred (questioning) might be useful to get questions answered. Paul agreed that this would probably be a good idea.

Peter Morelli suggested severity and urgency of an environmental project (Public Health Risk) be another criteria.

Chuck spoke about the point system to getting a grant. Chuck will come up with guidance for the point system. Nancy Perkins asked if a breakdown could be given for private/public sectors? Chuck will come up with some guidelines for points. Richard Bicknell believed that point systems are very negative. That points screen out, but talking to the applicant and getting their enthusiasm is also necessary. "Use plain old judgment." John Wood suggested that we not favor certain projects, but not exclude them either, but if competing with another source of dollars; might be useful.

Chuck advised that at present we have a deadline of June 1, 2008 for applications. Most important is to call for projects. May get 6 to 8 applications a year. Need to

invite applicant and present the project to us, discuss it and then we will rank the project. Should identify 2 or 3 projects and then chose.

Discussion of criteria listed within the application. Joyce Wood suggested that a listing of criteria be given to each applicant.

Paul Schumacher discussed cost recapture – Chuck informed committee that within a grant funding – nonprofit and municipalities could take over a piece of property and later sell it at a profit. Should they repay some of the profit back at a declining rate (example 20% a year.) John Wood told committee that Burlington, VT buys lots of property and then sells it for profit. He suggested a larger percentage, as Towns will wait the 5 years to avoid paying us back. Mike Huston agreed, but he felt that at least it should partially be paid back. He suggested that towns should explain to us their plans on properties and Chuck said at this time the committee could negotiate this recapture with towns at application time. Robert Heard stated that he felt that the Feds gave grant moneys and had no expectations for repayment. That the monies are free to help local municipalities to make a little money on the side. To be careful with extension of time for repayment. John Wood said that the dollars would come back to us to reissue to another project. Greg Tansley stated that the grant was given for a project to get cleaned up for redevelopment, the grant's cleanup was achieved, the applicant should not be expected to repay, they did what was asked of them. Sandra Mowery stated that these recapture funds could be used for other projects. Greg Tansley reiterated that it is a grant – no need to payback. Nancy Perkins asked if there was any other program like this in Southern Maine? Peter Morelli said, "Yes." Mike Huston said that he was uncomfortable with the 5-year deadline.

Paul Schumacher discussed the formula issue – could be concrete. Leave statement: Based on design of project." May be needed to recapture some monies. Greg Tansley stated that the project was done, why penalize them, they did the project. Mike Huston asked, how can that be a penalty? If you make a profit, within 100-years, you should pay us back. This may be our last round of monies. We may not get more. We could keep the program running with recapture monies coming in. Greg Tansley stated that if the Town gets a Grant for a roadway, the town gets it back by use of the roadway. Nancy Perkins from a small town stated that smaller towns do not have access to funds, if towns do not replenish it. Peter suggested that later discussion to redraft may be in order. Paul Schumacher suggested we do more research. John Wood asked if we could reissue grant monies returned to us? Chuck said he thought we could, but will check for sure. Richard Bicknell suggested that we revise as we go along, more flexibility.

Paul Schumacher advised the committee that our first application is in (Riverdam Mills in Biddeford). They want \$635,000, a total project amount of \$7,400,000. They provide 20%. The project is affordable housing – 80 residential units with remainder mixed-use industrial.

Peter Morelli asked if more dollars were available and Chuck informed them that each January, they make more dollars available. Next round in October. If you have a project come to us – we'll find monies.

Roxanne Eflin asked if we could move the deadline up from June 1<sup>st</sup>. We needed press coverage. Chuck suggested May, Mike stated April or May. Greg Tansley suggested that the committee decide. Paul Schumacher suggested a floating deadline. Roxanne Eflin suggested a fixed deadline. Chuck said April, (No Berwick program \$200,000) in March/April – will find out. Be a good time – funding gap. John Wood stated that if a deadline and the Town knew they wouldn't make it, they wouldn't try. Roxanne suggested a second deadline would be a good idea. Richard Bicknell asked if Chuck had a sense of how many applications we might receive and Chuck stated he did not.

**5. Personnel/Salaries and Benefit Package**

John Wood stated that with the salaries from GPCOG, he recommended salary increase of 8%. There had been no increase in 8 years except the usual 3.5% – 5% normal and customary. John Huston will gather information and get copies to the committee by next meeting. Joyce Wood will not make next meeting, but approved the 8% increase.

**6. New Employee**

Paul Schumacher introduced Julia Dawson as our new Senior Transportation Planner. Both Peter Morelli and Sandra had worked with and knew Julia prior.

**7. Assistance Logs**

Paul Schumacher discussed billing of our time and how we outlined it to towns. He informed the committee that we also use weekly timesheets. We operate as a consulting firm, so we should bill as one. The billing sheet doesn't even cover for each town – we need to use sub-categories for billing as well. How do we account for time? State Contract/Matching Funds/General Commission (Town/Counties). Peter Morelli stated that we need to get a handle of where our time is going. John Wood suggested a blurb as to what is free for the Town's dues. Paul Schumacher stated that a 2-page letter went out with this information with the dues letters. He stated that the Selectmen and Planning Board Chairperson got letter and insert.

**8. Other**

Building Codes: Roxanne Eflin informed the committee that the State Planning Office needs feedback for proposed Statewide Building Codes. Check State Planning Office website and read and make comments. Very complex – learn about it. John Wood noted that Code Enforcement Officers are considering adopting the international codes. Roxanne Eflin stated that training was a huge part. Greg Tansley stated that there was a lot of opposition, that Codes Enforcement Officers are not happy with this. Erosion of home rule authority. Roxanne Eflin suggested a goal that comments had to be in by January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Paul Schumacher spoke about the recent movement on DECD decentralization and work being sent to regions. Doesn't know what it means, they have no monies.

Talking with Barry Tibbetts. Grant – requiring assessing framework – interest to have assessing done on a regional level, rather than town-to-town.

Mike Huston advised committee about the Efficiency Grants – get them in. Some monies have been made available as Topsham backed out.

Next meeting: Thursday, February 21, 2008