

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, December 13, 2018
Hadley Farms Meeting House – Norwottuck Suite
41 Russell Street, Route 9, Hadley, Massachusetts 01035**

Commission Members Present Were:

Lynn Arnold	Alternate Commissioner	Holland
T.J. Cousineau	Alternate Commissioner	Blandford
William Dwyer	Commissioner	Hadley
Walter Gunn	Commissioner	Longmeadow
Richard Holzman	Commissioner	Chester
Jack Jemsek	Commissioner	Amherst
Joseph Knight	Alternate Commissioner	Ware
Josh Kusnierz	Commissioner	Ware
Mark Paleologopoulos	Commissioner	Agawam
Marcus Phelps	Commissioner	Southwick
Tracey Plantier	Commissioner	Wilbraham

Guest Speaker Present:

James Fuccione, Senior Director, Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative

PVPC Staff Present:

Becky Basch, Senior Planner
Patrick Beaudry, Manager of Public Affairs
Tim Brennan, Executive Director
Indrani Kowlessar Gallagher, Executive Assistant/ Office Manager

Communities Not Represented at the December 13, 2018 Commission Meeting

Amherst	Hatfield	Russell
Belchertown	Holyoke	South Hadley
Brimfield	Huntington	Southampton
Chesterfield	Ludlow	Springfield
Chicopee	Middlefield	Tolland
Cummington	Monson	Wales
East Longmeadow	Montgomery	West Springfield
Easthampton	Northampton	Westfield
Goshen	Palmer	Westhampton
Granville	Pelham	Williamsburg
Hampden	Plainfield	Worthington

1. Chairman’s Call to Order, Welcome and Minutes of the Regular Commission Meeting Held on October 11, 2018

The December 13th meeting of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) was called to order at 5:53 p.m. by Planning Commission Chairman Walter Gunn who welcomed all those present. Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to address the minutes of the regular Commission meeting held on Thursday, October 11, 2018.

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2018.

Mr. Gunn asked if there any questions, comments or corrections regarding the subject meeting minutes but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR CORRECTIONS, THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 11TH COMMISSION MEETING WERE APPROVED WITH TWO ABSTENTIONS BY JACK JEMSEK AND MARCUS PHELPS.

2. Minutes of the Executive Committee Meetings Held on September 27, 2018 and October 25, 2018

Mr. Gunn stated that the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings held on September 27, 2018 and October 25, 2018 were distributed for reference and information purposes only and no action needs to be taken. Mr. Gunn then moved to take up the next agenda item.

3. In Pursuit of Age-Friendly Cities and Towns Across the Pioneer Valley and the Commonwealth

Mr. Gunn remarked that the theme of tonight's special presentation and regional forum is age-friendly cities and towns. Mr. Gunn next announced that the lead presenter on the above-noted topic is James Fuccione, Senior Director of the Massachusetts Health Aging Collaborative (MHAC). Mr. Gunn consequently asked Mr. Fuccione to begin his opening remarks.

Mr. Fuccione noted that his presentation will consist of explaining the MHAC's mission and the age- and dementia-friendly community movement as well as what efforts related to this movement are taking place in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Pioneer Valley. Mr. Fuccione explained that the MHAC was founded by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and began initially as a steering committee. Mr. Fuccione noted that the MHAC steering committee informed the Tufts Health Plan Foundation on its grant making as this foundation had determined that health aging would be its primary focus. Mr. Fuccione remarked that the MHAC next became a more action-oriented group which concentrated on the following four strategic pillars as annotated in his PowerPoint presentation: 1) build the age-friendly movement; 2) deepen capacity-building at the community level; 3) embed access, equity and inclusion within the age-friendly movement; and 4) develop and promote a policy and advocacy platform for healthy aging. Mr. Fuccione next underscored that building an age-friendly environment is not exclusively for older people since the purpose of such an effort is for all residents to be able to grow up and grow old in the setting of their choice.

Mr. Fuccione defined an age-friendly environment as a place that fosters health and well-being as its residents age and is accessible, equitable, inclusive, safe, secure and supportive. Mr. Fuccione next remarked that the age-friendly movement was first launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2005-2006 and first began as an age-friendly cities movement due to the global aging demographic and migration trend to cities. However, Mr. Fuccione noted that over time this undertaking became an opportunity for all sizes of communities worldwide and more recently for the United States. In fact, Mr. Fuccione explained, Massachusetts is presently ranked as one of three age-friendly states along with Colorado and New York.

At this point, Mr. Fuccione reviewed the evolution of the age-friendly community movement. As he noted earlier, Mr. Fuccione remarked that this movement was initially started by the WHO. Mr. Fuccione explained that, at first, only a handful of cities and towns worldwide had seized the opportunity to become age-friendly communities. However, once the American Association of Retired Professionals (AARP) became the US affiliate for the WHO age-friendly community process, the movement accelerated and, at this time, more than 300 cities and towns across the United States are participating.

Mr. Fuccione reviewed a slide in his PowerPoint presentation with a flower graphic which depicted the eight domains of an age-friendly community that were developed by the WHO. Mr. Fuccione explained that these domains include such themes as transportation; housing; social participation; respect and social inclusion; community support; and health services. Mr. Fuccione then underscored that becoming age- or dementia-friendly is a decision that needs to be made by the community. Specifically, Mr. Fuccione explained, in order for a city or town to be designated by AARP as an age- or dementia-friendly community, a city or town's chief elected official, select board chair or town manager has to endorse this goal so that the other municipal departments of that particular community are on board with the process.

Mr. Fuccione next displayed a PowerPoint slide which highlighted the framework for a dementia-friendly environment. Mr. Fuccione remarked that the above-noted framework concentrates on education and awareness in different sectors of the community such as transportation, housing, banking, emergency services and businesses. Mr. Fuccione next stated that the initiative Dementia Friendly America has created toolkits that can be used by communities to raise awareness in businesses and agencies within the above-noted sectors to help them better understand, assist and support individuals with dementia in their respective municipalities.

Mr. Fuccione noted that the MHAC advocated incorporating age and dementia friendly as a best practice into the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Community Compact. Mr. Fuccione explained the Community Compact has a list of approximately 80 best practices that a city or town can choose from and in return the Commonwealth will provide some degree of funding to that municipality. Mr. Fuccione noted that the addition of age friendly as a best practice in the Commonwealth's Community Compact has since been adopted. Mr. Fuccione next remarked that, when communities begin to think about the elements that they want in an age-friendly environment, the MHAC encourages cities and towns to include physical environment, public safety, education, walkability and access to healthy foods and especially economic stability. Mr. Fuccione subsequently noted that the State of Massachusetts is ranked 49 out of 50 on the elder economic security index and the reason for this poor ranking is primarily due to the high cost of health care in the Commonwealth.

At this point, Mr. Fuccione displayed a map which indicated the locations of age friendly communities in Massachusetts as designated by AARP. Mr. Fuccione explained that the communities on the map which are indicated by a green heart are municipalities that are working toward achieving the age-friendly designation. Mr. Fuccione further stated that cities and towns marked with a red heart have already had their applications accepted by AARP and they have embarked on the process of becoming age-friendly municipalities. Mr. Fuccione consequently indicated that PVPC member communities West Springfield, Agawam and Northampton have been designated as age friendly and Springfield is in the working toward achieving this goal.

Mr. Fuccione next reviewed the following other age-friendly movements taking place across Massachusetts:

- Age-friendly University Movement: This movement is administered by Dublin City University in Ireland. In Massachusetts, Lasell College, UMass-Boston and William James College have received the Age-friendly University designation.
- There are 140 dementia friendly communities in Massachusetts and the Commonwealth has the most memory cafes in the country. Mr. Fuccione explained that memory cafes are places where people living with dementia and their caregivers can comfortably socialize with each other.

After Mr. Fuccione concluded his remarks he opened the floor for questions. Tim Brennan asked if the statistic that Massachusetts is ranked 49 out of 50 on the elder economic security index is applicable statewide. Mr. Brennan added that this figure has to be driven heavily by economic circumstances in the Boston region. Mr. Fuccione noted that, although this is a statewide statistic, the data behind it is probably driven by the cost of Boston housing east of Interstate 495. Mr. Gunn asked what the first step in the process is after a municipality's public officials have agreed that they should pursue age-friendly community status. Mr. Fuccione explained that, after the community's leadership is in agreement to pursue an age-friendly community designation, the online application on AARP's website needs to be completed. Mr. Fuccione remarked that the above-referenced application has six key questions such as who the community's lead contact is; an accounting of the types of age-friendly programs and infrastructure that the city or town currently has in place; the community's goals; and how the city or town will include older adults in the planning and decision making process. Mr. Fuccione stated that after the application is submitted and approved the community will receive certification from AARP and will have 1-2 years to develop an assessment and action plan.

There being no more questions for Mr. Fuccione, Mr. Gunn thanked him for his informative presentation and he moved to take up the next agenda item.

4. Spotlighting a New and Recently Funded Collaboration on the Part of Chicopee, Holyoke, South Hadley and the PVPC Aimed at Making These Communities Friendly for All Age Groups

Mr. Gunn invited PVPC staff presenters Pat Beaudry, Manager of Public Affairs, and Becky Basch, Senior Planner in the Environment and Land Use Section, to begin their joint presentation on an age-friendly initiative taking place in the communities of Chicopee, Holyoke and South Hadley. Mr. Beaudry began his opening remarks by explaining that the focus of this agenda item is to provide information on an age-friendly initiative involving the above-noted three municipalities that has recently secured funding. Mr. Beaudry noted that his comments will concentrate on the origin story of this initiative and Ms. Basch will review the specific details of this program.

Mr. Beaudry explained that Mr. Fuccione had asked Mr. Beaudry to arrange a meeting on age-friendly communities with one of the PVPC's 43 member municipalities and Mr. Beaudry stated that he contacted the City of Chicopee on behalf of

Mr. Fuccione. Mr. Beaudry observed that, after the above-noted meeting, Chicopee Mayor Richard Kos enthusiastically endorsed developing an age-friendly initiative in Chicopee and he expressed interest in getting other PVPC member cities and towns involved in this project. Mr. Beaudry further stated that, in a short period of time, Ms. Basch had submitted a grant application to the Tufts Health Plan Foundation on behalf of the Cities of Chicopee and Holyoke and the Town of South Hadley which was subsequently approved.

At this point, Mr. Beaudry asked Ms. Basch to begin her portion of the presentation. Ms. Basch noted that the first part of this initiative will start with a community needs assessment to find out what kinds of age-friendly programs currently exist in Chicopee, Holyoke and South Hadley within the domain areas as defined by the WHO. Ms. Basch remarked that a component of the needs assessment will be a community engagement process which will include public meetings at senior centers; developing a survey; and bringing in translation services for Spanish speaking neighborhoods in order to get as much input as possible from the broader community of seniors and care givers. Ms. Basch added that final products as a result of this initiative will include an action plan for advancing age-friendly initiatives within the three-town area; developing a Pioneer Valley livability score; evaluating community engagement methods; and planning for regional age-friendly initiatives.

After Mr. Beaudry and Ms. Basch fielded a few questions from Commission members, Mr. Gunn thanked them for their instructive presentation and he moved to take up the next agenda item.

5. Presentation, Discussion and Initial Endorsement of the Planning Commission's Proposed Top Ten Resolves for 2019 Including a Brief Overview of the Past Year's Accomplishments

Mr. Gunn noted that the focus of this agenda item is to initially endorse the Commission's proposed draft Top Ten Resolves for 2019. Mr. Gunn next explained that Commission members will be asked to initially endorse the draft 2019 Resolves and he added that a final vote to adopt the Resolves will be taken at the February 21st Commission meeting. Mr. Gunn subsequently asked Mr. Brennan to provide more detailed information on this agenda item.

Mr. Brennan remarked that many years ago the PVPC began the practice of setting ten priority goals to focus on within the calendar year. Mr. Brennan further stated that these ten goals are used to measure how the PVPC did in achieving those objectives at the end of the year and he added that the draft 2019 Top Ten Resolves are based on feedback from the staff of the PVPC's various planning sections. After Mr. Brennan briefly reviewed each of the PVPC's proposed 2019 Top Ten Resolves, he noted that, following the initial endorsement from Commission members, the draft 2019 Resolves will be broadly distributed to the PVPC's 43 member communities as well as to chief elected officials, planning board chairs, state and federal legislators asking for their review and comment.

At this point, Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions or comments on the 2019 draft Top Ten Resolves. Following a few clarifying questions from Commission members, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to endorse the 2019 Resolves in a preliminary manner.

MOVED BY MARK PALEOLOGOPOULOS, SECONDED BY LYNN ARNOLD, TO ENDORSE, IN A PRELIMINARY MANNER, THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDED TOP TEN RESOLVES FOR 2019.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the subject motion but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDED TOP TEN RESOLVES FOR 2019 WERE UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED IN A PRELIMINARY MANNER.

Mr. Gunn asked Mr. Beaudry to present the new format of the 2018 Accomplishments report. Mr. Beaudry explained that, in the spirit of keeping the PVPC's documents concise, it was determined that, by changing the format of the PVPC's 2018 Major Accomplishments Report into a calendar design, it could be possible to capture a broader audience. Mr. Beaudry explained that each month of the 2018 Accomplishments calendar highlights the PVPC's outstanding work accomplishments during the prior, 2018 calendar year. Mr. Beaudry remarked that the goal is to transform the 2018 Accomplishments into a marketing piece that will better tell the PVPC's story. Mr. Beaudry added that this 2018 Accomplishments calendar is currently in draft form and the concept had been presented to the Executive Committee two

weeks ago to gain their support and feedback. Mr. Beaudry next encouraged Commission members to contact him if they had any input on the PVPC's new calendar reporting format.

6. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to Implement PVPC's 2019 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program Inclusive of a 5% \$12,704 Cash Match Commitment on the Part of the PVPC

Mr. Gunn explained that this agenda item addresses District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funding. Mr. Gunn explained that FY 2019 funding from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) amounts to \$254,069 and with it must come a 5% cash match of \$12,704 from the PVPC. Mr. Gunn then invited Mr. Brennan to provide more detailed information on this agenda item. Mr. Brennan remarked that DLTA is the only state funding that is received by the PVPC which in turn provides assistance to cities and towns. Mr. Brennan further explained that a 2019 project solicitation memorandum requesting potential DLTA projects has been sent to the PVPC's 43 member cities and towns. Mr. Brennan remarked that the above-noted request asks member cities and towns to propose projects for DLTA funding in the following two categories: planning work such as open space plans, zoning bylaws; and municipal projects that involve shared-services that are to be provided among multiple participating municipalities. Mr. Brennan commented that member communities have been asked to submit proposed requests to the PVPC by January 11, 2019 with the expectation that 2019 DLTA projects will be selected and underway before March 1, 2019.

At this point, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address this agenda item.

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$254,069 CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR FY 2019 DISTRICT LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (DLTA) PROGRAM SERVICES FOR ELIGIBLE PROJECTS IN PVPC MEMBER COMMUNITIES INCLUDING A REQUIRED 5% CASH MATCH (\$12,704) COMMITMENT BY THE PVPC.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions regarding the subject motion but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

7. Community Reports/Updates From Commission Members

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any community reports from Commission members. Bill Dwyer, Commission member representing the Town of Hadley, announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is redrawing its flood maps. Mr. Dwyer remarked that FEMA is apparently proposing to raise the flood level, meaning that larger areas will be subject to flooding and flood insurance. Mr. Dwyer asked if this is something that the PVPC might want to get involved in on behalf of its member communities along the Connecticut River. Mr. Dwyer further stated that information regarding this potential action by FEMA has been circulated to planning board members and chief elected officials in the town of Hadley. Mr. Brennan asked Mr. Dwyer to forward to him a copy of the above-reference information.

Josh Kusnierz, Commission member representing the Town of Ware remarked that the Town has a large-scale solar array bylaw but at this time this community is looking into creating a moratorium on the above-noted businesses. Mr. Kusnierz explained that reason for the Town's interest in creating a moratorium on solar development is that solar developer Ecos Energy recently purchased property in order to set up a solar farm in Ware. Mr. Kusnierz next commented that the Commonwealth's new Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) pilot program exempts solar companies from having to pay property tax which is of great concern to the Town officials. Joseph Knight, Alternate Commissioner Representing the Town of Ware, added that the Town is apprehensive that this project will move forward because the location of this proposed solar development is on top of a mountain at the bottom of which is a rural residential area. Mr. Knight noted that Ecos Energy's plan is to clear cut 60 acres and this action would increase stormwater runoff and impact homes at the bottom of the mountain.

Mr. Kusnierz stated that Ware's planning board had approved a site plan proposed by Ecos Energy and the planning board voted 3-2 in favor of a special permit. However, Mr. Kusnierz noted that, since supermajority was needed, the proposal

was voted down. Mr. Kusnierz next explained that Ecos Energy is now suing the Town of Ware. Mr. Knight added that the hope is that putting a moratorium in place would slow down Ecos Energy's efforts to force their project through.

At this point, Mr. Kusnierz asked Commission members for advice on how to deal with the aggressive tactics of these kinds of solar developers. Mr. Brennan recommended that Mr. Kunzierz and Mr. Knight contact Doug Albertson, Alternate Commission member from the Town of Belchertown as this community has had similar concerns regarding solar development. Mr. Brennan next asked Ms. Basch to take back the Town of Ware's concern to the Catherine Ratté, Principal Planner and Section Manager of the Environment and Land Use section, since PVPC staff communicate with state agencies frequently about these kinds of projects. Mr. Brennan added that per state law the Town of Ware can require Ecos Energy to pay for the municipality's legal counsel. Mr. Gunn suggested that the Town of Ware amend its solar bylaw to require that solar development take place only in specific zones. However, Mr. Gunn underscored that you cannot use zoning to stop a particular project. Mr. Brennan added that if the Town of Ware wants to pursue developing a moratorium, this document needs to have a specific purpose which will have to be approved by the Commonwealth's Attorney General.

There being no more community updates, Mr. Gunn moved to take up the next agenda item.

8. Executive Director's Highlights Including an Update on the Status of the PVPC's Executive Director Search Committee

Mr. Gunn invited Mr. Brennan to begin his Executive Director's report. Mr. Brennan asked Mr. Beaudry to talk about the Pioneer Valley data portal event which will take place in January 2019. Mr. Beaudry announced that the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, the Davis Foundation and the Beveridge Foundation collectively identified a need for readily accessible data for nonprofit grantees as these grantees have a need for a data resource to support them whenever they and others need to develop grant applications. Mr. Beaudry explained that the above-noted foundations contracted with the PVPC to develop a new data portal. Mr. Beaudry remarked that this portal will be launched on Thursday, January 10th at Holyoke Community College's Culinary Arts Institute. Mr. Beaudry stated that there will be a game show at the launch and answers to game show questions will be based on information that can be found using the Pioneer Valley data portal. Mr. Beaudry further explained that the four contestants will compete on behalf of the charity of their choice.

9. Other Business Including the Schedule of the Commission and Executive Committee Meeting Dates for the First Half of 2019

Mr. Gunn remarked that the Commission and Executive Committee meeting schedules for the first half of 2019 had been previously distributed to Commission members. Mr. Brennan then asked Commission members to contact him in the next ten days if there are any major conflicts with the above-noted schedule which will be finalized at the end of December.

There being no further business to conduct, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to adjourn the Thursday, December 13, 2018 Commission meeting.

MOVED BY RICHARD HOLZMAN, SECONDED BY JOSH KUSNIERZ, TO ADJOURN THE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13TH COMMISSION MEETING. THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO CONDUCT, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 8:04 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Albertson, Secretary/Clerk
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at this Meeting:

- Agenda and Suggested Motions of the Thursday, December 13, 2019 Commission Meeting
- Meeting Minutes of the Thursday, October 11, 2018 Commission Meeting
- 2019 Calendar and Major Accomplishments
- Proposed 2019 Top Ten Resolves
- Summary Notes of the Thursday, September 6, 2018 Executive Director Search Committee Meeting

- Commission and Executive Committee Meeting Schedules for the First Half of 2019
- MassLive Article, “Neal, Lesser Among 33 Appointed to East-West Rail Advisory Panel; Palmer Gets a Seat at the Table” by Jim Russell dated December 6, 2018