

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of Executive Committee Zoom Meeting
Thursday, May 28, 2020

Present were:

Walter Gunn, Chair – Longmeadow
Judith Terry, Vice-Chair – Chesterfield
Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk – Belchertown
George Kingston, Treasurer – East Longmeadow
T.J. Cousineau, Assistant Treasurer – Blandford
Marilyn Gorman Fil - Monson
Mark Paleologopoulos – Agawam

PVPC Staff:

Kimberly H. Robinson, MUP, Executive Director
Rana Al-Jammal, Transportation Senior Planner Specialist
Lisa Edinger, Accounting Manager
Indrani Kowlessar, Executive Assistant/Office Manager
Catherine Ratte, Principal Planner/Environment and Land Use Section Manager
Lynn Shell, Support Staff

1. Chairman’s Call to Order, Welcome and Approval of the Minutes of the April 23, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting

The May 28th Executive Committee Zoom meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Commission Chair Walter Gunn. Mr. Gunn then took roll call and the following Executive Committee members responded “yes”: Walter Gunn, Judy Terry, Doug Albertson, George Kingston, T.J. Cousineau, Marilyn Gorman Fil, Mark Paleologopoulos.

Mr. Gunn next called for a motion to approve the April 23, 2020 meeting minutes.

MOVED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, SECONDED BY JUDY TERRY, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 23, 2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED. THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, MR. GUNN TOOK ROLL CALL AND THE MINUTES WERE ACCEPTED AS PRESENTED BY THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO RESPONDED “YES”: WALTER GUNN, JUDY TERRY, DOUG ALBERTSON, GEORGE KINGSTON, AND MARILYN GORMAN FIL; T.J. COUSINEAU ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE.

2. Warrant/Financial Reports

PVPC’s Accounting Manager Lisa Edinger referred to the Planning Commission’s April 2020 warrant and she highlighted checks #18079 through #18109 which comprise the second round of DPH COVID-19 emergency funding payments to PVPC’s communities. There being no questions, Ms. Edinger next reviewed the *Financial Summary Profile* reflecting PVPC’s account balances as of May 27, 2020. Executive Committee members agreed that the Financial Summary looks very good. In response to a question about PVPC’s line of credit, Ms. Robinson noted that PVPC applied for a line of credit increase before United Bank was absorbed into Peoples United Bank. She stated that PVPC received a lengthy document indicating that we had been approved for a \$300,000 line of credit but after reviewing the document, she had several concerns. One concern was that instead of adding a line of credit of \$150,000 for a short term period, Peoples United was erasing PVPC’s original line of credit and providing a new one in the amount of \$300,000 which included certain adverse and restrictive obligations. In addition, the new line of credit was only being offered through December 31, 2020. Ms. Robinson stated that after conferring with PVPC’s legal counsel, it was decided that PVPC should keep the original \$150,000 line of credit, withdraw the new \$300,000 line of credit, and revisit this conversation at a future time.

3. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Town of Southampton to Assist with Completing the Town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Update

Catherine Ratte, Principal Planner/Environment and Land Use Section Manager, stated that the Town of Southampton has

received funding from the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program to complete their MVP process and they are including an update of their Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Ms. Ratte noted that the Town is hiring PVPC directly to complete their OSRP.

Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to address agenda item 3.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT, NOT TO EXCEED \$7,000, WITH THE TOWN OF SOUTHAMPTON, TO ASSIST WITH COMPLETING THE TOWN'S OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN (OSRP) UPDATE. THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, MR. GUNN TOOK A ROLL CALL AND THE MOTION WAS APPROVED BY THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO RESPONDED "YES": WALTER GUNN, JUDY TERRY, DOUG ALBERTSON, GEORGE KINGSTON, T.J. COUSINEAU, MARILYN GORMAN FIL AND MARK PALEOLOGOPOULOS.

4. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to Advance Staffing and Implementation of the Hampden County Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Over Five Years Starting July 1, 2020; Including a Sub-Contract With the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts With Whom PVPC Has Been Co-staffing the Hampden CHIP With Funding From Baystate Health Systems

Ms. Ratte noted that the Baystate Health Systems has been funding the PVPC for the past 2 years to staff the Hampden County Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and they are providing funding for an additional 2½ years. Ms. Ratte also stated that in collaboration with the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts, PVPC applied for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Determination of Need funds and PVPC was selected for 5 years of funding.

Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to address agenda item 4.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT, NOT TO EXCEED \$385,000, WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO ADVANCE STAFFING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HAMPDEN COUNTY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CHIP) OVER FIVE YEARS STARTING JULY 1, 2020; INCLUDING A SUB-CONTRACT WITH THE PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS WITH WHOM PVPC HAS BEEN CO-STAFFING THE HAMPDEN CHIP WITH FUNDING FROM BAYSTATE HEALTH SYSTEMS. THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, MR. GUNN TOOK A ROLL CALL AND THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO RESPONDED "YES": WALTER GUNN, JUDY TERRY, GEORGE KINGSTON, DOUG ALBERTSON, T.J. COUSINEAU, MARILYN GORMAN FIL, AND MARK PALEOLOGOPOULOS.

5. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Town of East Longmeadow to Provide Planning Board Assistance During the Town's Search for a New Director of Planning and Community Development

Ms. Ratte stated that the Town of East Longmeadow's contract with their Director of Planning and Community Development was not renewed and the Town would like the PVPC to provide assistance to their Interim Planning Director. Mr. Kingston explained that the contract is for the PVPC to assist with non-routine Planning Board tasks as needed.

Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to address agenda item 5.

MOVED BY JUDY TERRY, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT, NOT TO EXCEED \$8,000, WITH THE TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW TO PROVIDE PLANNING BOARD ASSISTANCE DURING THE TOWN'S SEARCH FOR A NEW DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, MR. GUNN TOOK A ROLL CALL AND THE MOTION WAS APPROVED BY THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO RESPONDED "YES": WALTER GUNN, JUDY TERRY, DOUG ALBERTSON, T.J. COUSINEAU, MARILYN GORMAN FIL, AND MARK PALEOLOGOPOULOS; GEORGE KINGSTON ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE.

6. Discussion Regarding PVPC's 2020 Annual Meeting and Elections

Ms. Robinson stated that according to PVPC's By-laws, the Annual Meeting does not necessarily need to be convened in June and she suggested that the Executive Committee consider postponing this meeting until sometime in the fall which could allow everyone to get together in person instead of having to hold the meeting via Zoom. Ms. Robinson also noted that the PVPC's By-laws maintain that Executive Committee officers and members may continue to serve in their roles until the elections occur which can happen later in the year. Executive Committee members agreed that postponing the Annual Meeting might be the best approach. Ms. Robinson stated that it isn't necessary to choose a date for the Annual Meeting at this time. Ms. Robinson also suggested having a short business meeting of the full Commission in June which would be an opportunity to provide updates. She asked if the elections should be held in June via Zoom or if Executive Committee members are comfortable continuing in their positions until the Annual Meeting is convened in the fall. Committee members agreed that they could wait until the fall. A discussion followed about the timing for the June business meeting and it was decided that it should be held on June 11th. Executive Assistant Indrani Kowlessar confirmed that she will notify Commissioners and Alternates that the Annual Meeting will be held in the fall, on a date to be determined, and that there will be a regular full Commission meeting on June 11th.

Mr. Kingston noted that there is a suggested motion for item 6 that needs to be acted on. Mr. Gunn then called for an amended motion to address agenda item 6.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO POSTPONE THE PVPC'S JUNE 2020 ANNUAL MEETING UNTIL A DATE IN THE FALL TO BE DETERMINED, AND TO SCHEDULE A SHORT BUSINESS MEETING OF THE FULL COMMISSION TO TAKE PLACE ON JUNE 11, 2020 VIA ZOOM. THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, MR. GUNN TOOK A ROLL CALL AND THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO RESPONDED "YES": WALTER GUNN, JUDY TERRY, GEORGE KINGSTON, DOUG ALBERTSON, T.J. COUSINEAU, MARILYN GORMAN FIL, AND MARK PALEOLOGOPOULOS.

7. Personnel Items

Ms. Robinson noted that Deputy Director Jim Mazik technically retired from the PVPC in January however he has been working on a part-time basis which will continue until June 30th. Ms. Robinson stated that she and Mr. Mazik have worked to ensure a good transition of his many responsibilities and she reported that all of his responsibilities beyond the Community Development Section have been effectively transitioned to other PVPC staff. She added that the transition of his responsibilities in the Community Development Section will be completed by June 30th. Ms. Robinson noted that Mr. Mazik will be available if we need to call him for further information and she stated that she appreciates his commitment to the organization and to a successful transition. Mr. Gunn also expressed his appreciation and he underscored that Mr. Mazik will be missed.

Ms. Robinson next provided an update on the compensation audit that PVPC is conducting, noting that she is very pleased with the progress. She stated that Section Heads are being interviewed, job descriptions are being developed, and a report will soon be put together. At this point, Ms. Robinson thanked Indrani Kowlessar for the huge amount of work she has done on this project and for keeping everything on track. Mr. Gunn asked if input will be needed from PVPC's Operations Subcommittee. Ms. Robinson stated that she anticipates talking with the Operations Subcommittee in early July.

8. Executive Director's Highlights and Updates

With regard to PVPC's reopening plans, Ms. Robinson reported that she put together a Reopening Committee of staff members to help with this work. She noted that all necessary cleaning supplies have been purchased, including hand sanitizer for every workstation. Also, PVPC is considering one-way hallways, as well as designating one door for entering the building and another for going out, and all staff are required to wear masks. Ms. Robinson noted that in this first phase of the reopening plan, a maximum of 25% of our staff can return to the office which amounts to 12 people. She further noted that PVPC will support Governor Baker's "Safer at Home" advisory so that staff can continue to work at home if they are able to do so. Ms. Robinson reported that PVPC will hire a cleaning crew to clean both floors including the carpets. In addition, the ducts will be cleaned and new filters will be installed. Ms. Robinson also reported that the Reopening Committee is developing a handbook which addresses questions about returning to the office and she has scheduled a full

staff meeting tomorrow to share updates on reopening. Ms. Robinson expected that PVPC will not open until the week of June 15th, noting that the health and safety of PVPC's team members is most important. Mr. Gunn noted that according to the Governor's plan, PVPC's meetings will need to continue via Zoom for a while. Mr. Gunn also remarked on the challenge of restricting on-site work to 25% given that additional staff may occasionally need to access the premises and he asked why the 25% restriction could not be applied to each of the two floors rather than to the entire organization. Ms. Robinson stated that she has discussed this issue with the boards of health and she is advocating that we take the most conservative approach. Ms. Robinson noted that PVPC needs to develop a control plan that will be posted and if PVPC is not meeting some requirements, staff can contact the Board of Health.

Ms. Robinson next talked about a grant opportunity that is available to the PVPC as an Economic Development District (EDD). She explained that as part of the COVID-19 response, the Economic Development Administration (EDA), on a federal level, is offering non-competitive grant funds for up to \$400,000 to existing EDDs to provide services in 4 categories including technical assistance and capacity building for the agency. Ms. Robinson noted that PVPC is applying for \$400,000 and the money must be spent by September 30, 2022. She stated that as part of this funding, the EDA is interested in ensuring that PVPC work on economic resilience in response to the pandemic. She also stated that she is interested in using some of those funds to do economic modelling for our communities around COVID-19. Ms. Robinson stated that the application is due next week; she expects to hear back fairly quickly and PVPC should receive the funds within 45 days.

Ms. Robinson also reported that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is providing a funding opportunity for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for cities and towns. She stated that there are two main categories that they are willing to fund out of this recovery money, namely (1) micro-enterprise business loans and (2) social services. Ms. Robinson noted that the CDBG funds go to our 43 communities in different ways. She explained that the Entitlement Communities are larger and receive funds directly; there are Mini-Entitlement Communities who get a little money; and then there are the Non-Entitlement Communities for whom we do much of that grant work. Ms. Robinson stated that PVPC has been reaching out to all of our communities, including those we might not have worked with for a while, and she reported that 26 of our towns are participating in these grant opportunities, which, excluding the Entitlement Communities, amounts to 68% of our communities. Ms. Robinson stated that at this time, each municipality can receive up to \$400,000 and she noted that the application deadline has been extended until June 12th. Mr. Gunn asked if we need to make some staffing adjustments in the Community Development Section. Ms. Robinson stated that PVPC will be posting an ad for a Planner/Senior Planner.

Ms. Robinson pointed out that our local boards of health have been tasked with the huge responsibility for enforcement around COVID-19 and PVPC has drafted a survey to find out how we can provide assistance. She noted that PVPC will be sending a health survey on COVID-19 enforcement to the local boards of health, and the selectboards will also be notified about the survey. In addition, Ms. Robinson reported that she has asked for a committee to work specifically on how PVPC can more effectively and consistently communicate with our Commissioners and Alternates about the work that PVPC is doing. She noted that she will be sending them an email update on the new funding opportunities and the health survey.

Finally, Ms. Robinson reported that June 30th is the deadline to spend down our Census 2020 money and PVPC plans to use the funds to promote engagement on the Census as best as we can. In response to a question from Mr. Gunn, Ms. Robinson stated that she will include the participation rates in her email to the Commissioners and Alternates.

Ms. Edinger noted that she normally would have presented the proposed amended FY20 budget to be voted on at today's Executive Committee meeting however considering the COVID-19 situation and PVPC's reopening expenses, she and Ms. Robinson agreed that it makes more sense to wait and present the budget at the June Executive Committee meeting. Mr. Gunn also noted that there is a specific action item that is voted on at the June Commission meeting related to the previous meetings but he could not recall what that item is at the moment. Ms. Robinson stated that she will look into it.

9. Committee Member Comments, Suggestions and Future Agenda Items

Mr. Gunn noted that he serves as the Nominating Committee for PVPC's Executive Committee officers and members and he stated that if there are any Committee members who do not wish to continue in their roles for the upcoming year, they should speak now. None of the Executive Committee members present indicated that they wish to step down. Mr. Gunn thanked everyone and he noted that he will contact Mike Marciniak who was unable to attend today's meeting. Mr. Gunn

added that he will send out inquiries regarding someone to fill the Executive Committee's at-large member vacancy.

There being no further comments, Chairman Gunn called for a motion to adjourn the May 28th Executive Committee meeting.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 28, 2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING; ALL THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION AND THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 5:11 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the May 28, 2020 Meeting

1. Executive Committee May 28, 2020 Meeting Agenda and Motions
2. Executive Committee April 23, 2020 Meeting Minutes
3. PVPC Warrant: April 1 through April 30, 2020
4. PVPC Financial Summary Profile as of May 27, 2020

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