

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)

Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 29, 2018
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
60 Congress Street, Large Conference Room
Springfield, Massachusetts 01104

Present were:

Walter Gunn, Chair – Longmeadow
Judith Terry, Vice-Chair – Chesterfield
Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk – Belchertown
George Kingston, Treasurer – East Longmeadow
Mark Cavanaugh, Assistant Treasurer – South Hadley
Lynn Arnold – Holland
T.J. Cousineau – Blandford

PVPC Staff:

Tim Brennan, Executive Director
Pat Beaudry, Manager of Public Affairs
Lisa Edinger, Accountant
James Mazik, Deputy Director for Operations/Community Development Section Manager
Catherine Ratte, Principal Planner/Environment and Land Use Section Manager
Lynn Shell, Support Staff
Lori Tanner, Senior Economic Development and Policy Analyst
Eric Weiss, Municipal Services Coordinator

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome and Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting Held on October 25, 2018

The November 29th Executive Committee meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Commission Chairman Walter Gunn. Mr. Gunn welcomed everyone in attendance and he introduced Eric Weiss, PVPC's new Municipal Services Coordinator. Mr. Weiss noted that he had previously worked in the region's Hilltowns and he is already acquainted with several Executive Committee members. James Mazik, Deputy Director for Operations and Community Development Section Manager, stated that Mr. Weiss has over 25 years of experience working in government and regional service. He noted that Mr. Weiss was the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Higher Education Consortium for 3 years; he worked at the Hampshire Council of Governments; and he was also the Director of the Hilltown Resources Management Cooperative for 13 years.

At this point, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2018 Executive Committee meeting.

MOVED BY JUDY TERRY, SECONDED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 25, 2018 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any comments, corrections or questions concerning the minutes of the October 25, 2018 Executive Committee meeting but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 25, 2018 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WERE APPROVED WITH ONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER, T.J. COUSINEAU, ABSTAINING FROM THE VOTE.

2. Warrant/Financial Reports

Mr. Gunn asked PVPC Accountant Lisa Edinger to comment on PVPC's October 2018 warrant. Ms. Edinger first highlighted check #16919 payable to Eric A. Kinsherf, CPA, in the amount of \$6,749.95 and she stated that this payment is for accounting services for the communities of Chesterfield, Blandford and Goshen. Ms. Edinger also referred to check

#16949 in the amount of \$5,712 payable to CADMUS Group LLC which is for a Land Use Green Communities project. Ms. Edinger also highlighted check #16977 in the amount of \$42,000 payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts/GIC which is a partial payment on the PVPC's quarterly July to September employer's share of health insurance as well as check #16978 in the amount of \$8,395.89 also payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts/GIC which is for the retirees' quarterly portion for the July through September time period. Finally, Ms. Edinger stated that check #16981 in the amount of \$5,000 payable to DeRose Consulting is for a Regional Data Website project that is being funded with a grant awarded to the Pioneer Valley Regional Ventures Center, Inc. which is the Planning Commission's companion nonprofit.

Ms. Edinger next reviewed PVPC's account balances as of November 29, 2018 as reflected on a report entitled *Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Financial Summary Profile*. With regard to PVPC's OPEB account, Ms. Edinger noted that PVPC has a substantial balance and therefore PVPC's CPA firm, Melanson Heath, has suggested temporarily holding off on additional OPEB contributions. Ms. Edinger noted that this issue will be discussed further by Certified Public Accountant Pat Squillante when she presents their audit findings at the January 2019 Executive Committee meeting. Ms. Edinger noted that PVPC's auditors are currently finalizing their FY 2018 audit reports and PVPC should be receiving a draft version of their audit report in December.

After Ms. Edinger had completed her report and answered a handful of questions, Mr. Gunn moved to take up the next agenda item.

3. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOE&EA) in Order for the PVPC to Conduct Two Projects Recently Selected for Funding Under the EOE&EA's Planning Assistance Grant Program, Including:
 - a) Development of a Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development Policy in Concert With the City of Springfield; and
 - b) Development of a Low Impact Development Approach, Coupled With New Stormwater Design Standards, for the Town of Southampton

Mr. Gunn called on Catherine Ratté, Principal Planner, Environment and Land Use Section Manager, to address this agenda item. Ms. Ratté stated that this is a competitive grant program that is available through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Ms. Ratté stated that PVPC offered to work with a number of communities but Springfield and Southampton were the only ones that were able to do so given the time constraints of the grant and PVPC applied on behalf of those communities. Ms. Ratté reminded Executive Committee members that PVPC has assisted the City of Springfield with their Climate Action Resilience Plan, as well as their Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant, and the City now wants to have the regulations that will help with the enforcement of the City's Green Infrastructure Design Guide. As regards the Town of Southampton, Ms. Ratté noted that PVPC is helping the Town comply with federal MS4 stormwater regulations. Ms. Ratté added that this grant requires a local match comprised of either cash or professional staff and, therefore, it is often difficult for communities that have limited staff to achieve the match requirement.

After Ms. Ratté had responded to several questions raised by Executive Committee members, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address agenda item 3.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY LYNN ARNOLD, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$20,028.75 CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS (EOE&EA) IN ORDER FOR THE PVPC TO CONDUCT TWO PROJECTS RECENTLY SELECTED FOR FUNDING UNDER THE EOE&EA'S PLANNING ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM, INCLUDING:

- a) DEVELOPMENT OF A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE/LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN CONCERT WITH THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD AT A COST OF \$9,128.75
- b) DEVELOPMENT OF A LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT APPROACH, COUPLED WITH NEW STORMWATER DESIGN STANDARDS, FOR THE TOWN OF SOUTHAMPTON AT A COST OF \$10,900.

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 MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

4. Seeking Advisory Recommendation From the Executive Committee on the Potential Use of an Innovative Approach and Format to Report on the Planning Commission's Major 2018 Accomplishments

Mr. Brennan stated that he would like feedback from the Executive Committee on whether to move forward with a new format that is being considered for the PVPC's 2018 *Major Accomplishments* report. PVPC's Manager of Public Affairs, Pat Beaudry, noted that the format for PVPC's current version of the report is strictly text and photos and he felt that there may be a way to share PVPC's report in a publication that would serve a dual purpose such as with a calendar format. Mr. Beaudry then distributed two sample calendar formats for Executive Committee members to look over noting that one is produced by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) which is based in Philadelphia, while the other is from the Boston-based Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Mr. Beaudry stated that he believes the cost for the new calendar format would be comparable to the cost of the PVPC's current version of its Accomplishments report. Mr. Brennan added that a price quote he recently received from DVRPC was \$6,000. Mr. Brennan noted that several hundred copies would be needed in order to cover all of PVPC's member cities and towns as well as the Western Massachusetts Legislative Delegation. Mr. Beaudry stated that he is prepared to move forward with this new format if the Executive Committee members believe that it's appropriate. Mr. Mazik noted that the annual *Major Accomplishments* reports are posted on the PVPC website and that resource can be used to track the work that PVPC has done over a period of several years. Mr. Mazik stated that the calendar format could be provided as a condensed, glossy version of the report, however, he recommended that PVPC continue to post the original content of the Accomplishments report online. Mr. Gunn agreed and suggested retaining these two report formats. He noted that the calendar version could be used more as an information and marketing tool and while also keeping the original report layout in digital format. Mr. Gunn asked if it is necessary to provide printed copies as well. Mr. Brennan explained that some communities still do not have sufficient broadband capability and he also noted that state and federal legislators might be more likely to read the report if provided in a hard copy version.

Mr. Gunn noted that key meeting dates were included on the sample calendars and he asked if there are other types of key dates that should be included for the PVPC calendar. Mr. Beaudry stated that there are national milestones throughout the year that could be used to highlight PVPC's work in each section such as *National Emergency Preparedness Month* and *Bike Week*. In response to a question from Mr. Gunn, Mr. Beaudry stated that it would not be necessary for the Executive Committee to review the pre-press copy of the calendar. At this point, Mr. Gunn then asked Executive Committee members if they are agreeable to the idea of moving forward with a calendar format for the PVPC's 2018 *Major Accomplishments* as long as there is also a digital version of the content encompassed in the original version of the Accomplishments report. Executive Committee members agreed, with a consensus, to move forward with the calendar format approach, and Mr. Gunn suggested that they contact Mr. Beaudry if they would like to offer any ideas regarding the new format. At this point, Ms. Terry remarked that she enjoys reading Mr. Beaudry's monthly *Pioneer Valley Progress Report* which she often refers to others.

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

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, THAT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACT ON AN ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION FOR THE PVPC STAFF TO USE THE INNOVATIVE APPROACH AND CALENDAR FORMAT IN ORDER TO REPORT ON THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S MAJOR 2018 ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

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 MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

5. Staff Report on a Proposed, Revised Revolving Loan Fund Repayment Agreement and Schedule With the Nonprofit DevelopSpringfield for Brownfield Cleanup Activities at the Gunn Block Building in Springfield

Mr. Gunn called on James Mazik, Deputy Director for Operations and Community Development Section Manager, to address this agenda item. Mr. Mazik stated that in August 2014 approximately \$55,000 was issued to DevelopSpringfield through a loan commitment and promissory note for the historic Gunn Block Building which is situated on State Street in Springfield near Springfield Technical Community College (STCC). Mr. Mazik noted that the terms of the loan commitment required 3 installments over a 42 month period with 2% interest per year. Mr. Mazik stated that the first 2 payments with interest were made and the remainder of about \$18,500 in principal and \$370 in interest was due early last spring. Mr. Mazik noted that PVPC sent out two notices and then contacted DevelopSpringfield who said they did not

have the funds to pay the loan commitment. They explained that they ran into some major structural issues and costs have risen exponentially over what they expected. Mr. Mazik stated that DevelopSpringfield is applying for additional funds and they plan to address the structural issues and redevelop the project which they think will likely take several more years. Mr. Mazik reported that DevelopSpringfield has asked that PVPC amend their initial agreements. They have agreed to pay the interest due in the amount of \$370 and they will pay the principal of \$18,531.34 at the end of a 42 month term, or prior to that if they can get the necessary funding in place and are then able to turn the property over. Mr. Mazik stated that he and Mr. Brennan felt that this was amenable but as a way to protect PVPC's interest, he stated that he developed an amended letter and loan agreement and an amended promissory note and he also developed an Assignment of Proceeds that will be recorded at the Registry of Deeds. Mr. Mazik explained that this is a lien on the property that indicates that the balance of funds is to be paid prior to the end date which is July 1, 2022 or upon the transfer of the property. He noted that if DevelopSpringfield tries to sell the property, it will trigger the notice of repayment. Mr. Mazik stated that this is how PVPC intends to proceed and he noted that DevelopSpringfield has agreed with this arrangement. Mr. Brennan added that the Executive Committee is merely being made aware of what PVPC is doing with regard to this situation and no action formal is required on the part of the Executive Committee at this time.

6. Personnel Issues Including Recent Staff Recruitment Efforts and a Recent Staff Resignation

Before beginning his report, Mr. Brennan asked if Mr. Mazik would like to provide an update on staff recruitment in the Community Development Section. Mr. Mazik first stated that he wanted the Executive Committee to be aware that PVPC recently received a summons from the City of Springfield Housing Court. He stated that this is related to a loan that was issued over 15 years ago in the City of Springfield under PVPC's Home Modification Loan (HMLP) Program which involved \$5,000 for a ramp and some interior work. Mr. Mazik noted that the owners are now deceased and the property has been in disarray. He stated that PVPC has been summoned because we are on the lien of the property and PVPC's attorney was required to go to Housing Court on behalf of the Planning Commission. Mr. Mazik reported that PVPC is still on notice but Springfield Housing Court is aware that PVPC has no interest and this issue will resolve itself.

Mr. Mazik next reminded Executive Committee members that due to health concerns, PVPC's Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Planner Stephanie Bozigian-Merrick can, unfortunately, no longer continue working in her position. Mr. Mazik stated that Ms. Bozigian-Merrick has done a great job and it's very unfortunate that she will be leaving the PVPC. Mr. Mazik reported that the recruitment process for this position was conducted with the Hampden County Health Coalition (HCHC) membership, noting that HCHC did the primary interviews and then he conducted the final interview. Mr. Mazik announced that the individual who was identified as the finalist for the PHEP Planner position is Christopher Goshea from Millers Falls who currently serves as the PHEP Planner for the Greater Monadnock Public Health Network. Mr. Mazik stated that Mr. Goshea has extensive experience, which includes working as a firefighter and EMT paramedic in Montague. He also holds several professional emergency preparedness certifications. Mr. Mazik felt that Mr. Goshea will be a good asset for the PVPC to have on board.

Mr. Mazik next reported that the Community Development Section did not succeed in their efforts to recruit a Community Development Assistant and the PVPC is now looking for a part-time Housing Coordinator primarily to assist Shirley Stephens and Beth Sorrell with housing work. Mr. Mazik stated that PVPC also issued an Invitation for Bid (IFB) for a Housing Rehabilitation Specialist for the communities of Agawam and East Longmeadow without success. He stated that we are now looking to find a part-time, in-house person. Mr. Mazik noted that PVPC's current contracted Housing Rehabilitation Specialist, Rick Barus is thinking about retiring in 2-3 years. Given the very limited options in this type of specialty, Mr. Mazik underscored that it is important to begin to develop something now so that PVPC has the capacity to maintain the Rehabilitation Program which he noted is truly needed in our region.

Mr. Mazik next distributed a memo that he had given to Mr. Brennan on March 3, 1997 outlining his intention to work on municipal based projects outside of the PVPC region. He explained that at that time he was conducting this work on his own primarily outside the jurisdiction of work that is performed at the PVPC. Mr. Mazik stated that over the years that work has evolved into doing ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plans noting that he has completed approximately 18-20 plans over the years. Mr. Mazik stated that he worked on a plan several years ago in the Town of Millbury and he noted that their Chairman of the Commission on Disabilities also works for the Center for Living and Working, Inc. (CLW) in Worcester. Mr. Mazik stated that he has been collaborating with an individual who works extensively with the Massachusetts Office on Disability, Massachusetts Architectural Access Board and they have worked on 7 or 8 ADA projects in our border communities, namely Brookfield and Sturbridge and some communities in the eastern part of the state. Mr. Mazik reported that recently the Town of South Hadley appropriated \$35,000 for an ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan, noting that Town Administrator Mike Sullivan contacted him directly, and he provided Mr. Sullivan with

parameters for what this would cost. Mr. Mazik stated that at his suggestion, South Hadley contacted the CLW and they would like to get a price quote from CLW. Mr. Mazik stated that if South Hadley gets a price quote then he would be working for CLW and helping them with the Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan for the Town. Mr. Mazik stated that if Executive Committee members have any objections or concerns, then he would not pursue this work, otherwise he will proceed and CLW will submit a quote. Mr. Mazik then responded to a series of questions raised by Executive Committee members. In response to a question from Mr. Gunn, Mr. Mazik stated that this is work that PVPC does not do because PVPC does not have the expertise to conduct this type of work and the cost required to perform the work would be too high. Mr. Brennan explained that Mr. Mazik agreed that he needs to make this disclosure and put this on the public record because this work is inside the region. Mr. Brennan stated that he wanted the Executive Committee to be aware of it and to decide whether or not they are comfortable with it. In response to a question from Mr. Kingston, Mr. Brennan stated that to the best of his knowledge he believed that this would be consistent with the State Ethics Law. At this point, Executive Committee members indicated that they had no objection to Mr. Mazik assisting the CLS with a Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan for the Town of South Hadley.

Mr. Brennan reported that there have been two recent resignations in PVPC's Land Use Section. He noted that at the last Executive Committee meeting, Executive Committee members addressed a request for a substantial salary increase for staff member Ashley Eaton. Mr. Brennan reported that very soon after that meeting, Ms. Eaton resigned and accepted a position in New Bedford, Massachusetts. In addition, Mr. Brennan reported that Senior Planner Susan Westa has also just resigned and he noted that she was hired only last March to replace Senior Planner Larry Smith who has retired. Mr. Brennan reminded Executive Committee members that Andrew Smith accepted the position of PVPC Senior Planner with a focus on sustainability, however, after accepting the job Mr. Smith changed his mind and has decided to continue working for the City of Holyoke. Mr. Brennan noted that this position has not been re-advertised awaiting a state grant that has not yet arrived after several delays. Mr. Brennan stated that the Housing Planner position which Ms. Eaton had been trained for has been re-advertised but thus far very few applications have been received. He also noted that PVPC will re-advertise the Senior Planner position which was held by Ms. Westa. As regards the Senior Transit Planner position that was formerly held by David Elvin, Mr. Brennan noted that PVPC has not yet found a candidate that had sufficient expertise in that area and that position has been re-advertised. Mr. Brennan noted that PVPC was able to fill an entry level transit planner position and he reported that Brian Pigeon who hails from the Chicago metropolitan area began working for the PVPC earlier this month in the PVPC's Transportation Section.

7. Executive Director's Highlights Including Noteworthy Staff/Agency Accomplishments; Status of Massachusetts State Retirement Board Billings; and Update on Replacement of a PVPC Crash-Damaged Vehicle

Mr. Brennan reported that the Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Listening Session for our region is now set for Tuesday, December 11th from 5-7 p.m. at the PVPC. He noted that, as of today, 12 people have signed up. Mr. Brennan explained that the idea is to try to do a rural plan for Massachusetts in 2019 which is being discussed among the 13 Massachusetts Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs).

Mr. Brennan next noted that important preparation work on Census 2020 is now underway. He stated that we had the first convening of our regional Complete Count Committee which is being led by PVPC's Data Manager and Analyst, Allison Curtis. Mr. Brennan stated that we had spokespeople here from the United States Census Bureau, as well as from the Massachusetts Attorney General's office and the Office of the Secretary of State. Mr. Brennan noted that we need to do our best to keep the count as accurate as possible. He pointed out that for each individual that is not counted this translates to about \$2300 per person per year of federal aid for an entire decade which has a huge financial impact here in the Pioneer Valley and elsewhere across the nation.

Mr. Brennan stated that Molly Goren Watts has been working with other PVPC staff and consultants on a newer regional data portal which is scheduled for a launch on January 10th. Mr. Beaudry explained that a launch party is being planned and will take place at HCC's new Culinary Arts Institute on Race Street in Holyoke. Mr. Beaudry explained that this is a collaborative which is funded by the major foundations of the region who identified a mutual need for the non-profits in the municipalities to have a more intuitive and accessible data source when applying for grants. He noted that closing out and reporting on the metrics can be difficult and time consuming so they wanted to create a regional source that is easy to access. Mr. Beaudry stated that the 4 key target audiences include municipalities, non-profits, academics and journalists.

As regards rail issues, Mr. Brennan stated that the state has finally announced the start of their new East West Rail Study. He noted that they have a 31 person advisory committee which is convening and the PVPC has been asked to serve on this MassDOT committee. Mr. Brennan noted that the first kick off meeting with MassDOT and consultants will take

place at the PVPC on December 18th from 1-3 p.m. and it will include Senator Eric Lesser, Senator Adam Hinds, and Mayor Sarno from the City of Springfield. Mr. Brennan noted that these committee meetings will be open to the public.

Mr. Brennan stated that we are getting ready for the last Commission meeting for this calendar year which will take place on December 13th in Hadley. He noted that James Fuccione, Senior Director, Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative will be a guest speaker and there will be a special presentation and regional forum on the Pursuit of Age-Friendly Cities and Towns Across the Pioneer Valley and the Commonwealth. Mr. Brennan noted that PVPC received a grant that will allow us to do a pilot project on friendly aging orientation for communities with Chicopee, Holyoke and South Hadley.

Finally, Mr. Brennan reported that in early December he will be attending a *Transportation for America* conference being held in Atlanta, Georgia.

8. Other Business

Mr. Brennan stated that he had nothing new to report on the issue with the Massachusetts State Retirement Board, however, he noted that he wanted to continue to keep this on the record. Mr. Brennan noted that the task force that was convened to work on this issue has not met since December 2017 and he did not believe that they will meet again or that they will generate the promised report. Mr. Brennan noted that the RPAs were fully prepared to receive the report and see what we could do with it but it has never been delivered. Mr. Brennan noted that we have an official representative, namely, Janet Pierce who is the Executive Director of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission and she periodically contacts state officials to check on this matter on behalf of all the affiliated Massachusetts RPAs.

Mr. Brennan also reported that as regards PVPC's Prius vehicle that was damaged in a crash during the summer, PVPC received the payment as well as a counter suit from the other insurance company but he noted that PVPC's insurance company is taking care of this and PVPC will not have to pay another bill.

Mr. Gunn asked if there was any other business to conduct. There being no further business for the Executive Committee to conduct, Chairman Gunn called for a motion to adjourn the November 29th Executive Committee meeting.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY LYNN ARNOLD, TO ADJOURN THE NOVEMBER 29, 2018 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING; ALL THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION AND THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the November 29, 2018 Meeting

1. Executive Committee November 29, 2018 Meeting Agenda and Suggested Motions
2. Executive Committee October 25, 2018 Meeting Minutes
3. PVPC Warrant: October 1 through October 31, 2018
4. PVPC Financial Summary Profile as of November 29, 2018
5. Staff resignation letter dated November 5, 2018
6. Staff resignation letter dated November 26, 2018