

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)

**Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held on Thursday, June 11, 2020
Zoom Meeting**

**Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
60 Congress Street, Springfield, Massachusetts 01104**

Commission Members Present Were:

Doug Albertson	Alternate Commissioner	Belchertown
Joanna Brown	Commissioner	South Hadley
Mark Dunn	Alternate Commissioner	Hadley
William Dwyer	Commissioner	Hadley
Christopher Flory	Alternate Commissioner	Williamsburg
Walter Gunn	Commissioner	Longmeadow
Marilyn Gorman-Fil	Alternate Commissioner	Monson
Richard Holzman	Commissioner	Chester
Mike Hutchins	Commissioner	Blandford
Jack Jemsek	Commissioner	Amherst
Jay Joyce	Alternate Commissioner	Granby
George Kingston	Commissioner	East Longmeadow
Linda Leduc	Alternate Commissioner	Palmer
Michael Marciniec	Commissioner	Palmer
James Moore	Commissioner	Wilbraham
Mark Paleologopoulos	Commissioner	Agawam
Tracey Plantier	Alternate Commissioner	Wilbraham
Judy Terry	Commissioner	Chesterfield

PVPC Staff Present:

Patrick Beaudry
Lisa Edinger, Accounting Manager
Patty Gambarini, Principal Environmental Planner/Section Head
Indrani Kowlessar, Executive Assistant/Office Manager
Kimberly H. Robinson, MUP, Executive Director
Louise Sullivan, Administrative Assistant I Specialist

Communities Not Represented at the April 9, 2020 Commission Meeting

Brimfield	Huntington	Tolland
Chicopee	Ludlow	Wales
Cummington	Middlefield	Ware
Easthampton	Montgomery	West Springfield
Goshen	Northampton	Westfield
Granville	Plainfield	Westhampton
Hampden	Russell	Worthington
Hatfield	Southampton	
Holland	Southwick	

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome and Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held on April 9, 2020

The June 11, 2020 Zoom meeting of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Planning Commission Chair Walter Gunn who welcomed all those present. Mr. Gunn stated that four Executive meetings each year and an annual meeting in June are required by PVPC bylaws. Mr. Gunn noted that each year at its annual meeting, the PVPC presents a guest speaker, recognizes one or more staff members and has an election for committee

members. Mr. Gunn reported that because the PVPC's Executive Committee voted on May 28th to postpone its annual meeting until September, it was decided to hold the elections at today's Commission meeting. Mr. Gunn called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Thursday, April 9, 2020 Commission meeting.

MOVED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, SECONDED BY TJ COUSINEAU, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2020.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions, comments or corrections regarding the subject meeting minutes. Doug Albertson, Alternate Commission member representing the Town of Belchertown, remarked that the heading of the minutes should not indicate that the meeting was held in the PVPC's large conference room. Mr. Gunn agreed saying the heading of the minutes will change to reflect it being a zoom meeting. Joanna Brown, Commission member representing the Town of South Hadley, asked that no number be stated in the April Commission meetings regarding the housing development units being proposed as a subdivision over the Dry Brook Aquifer and she asked that Richard Harris's title be changed from Town Manager to Director of Planning and Conservation.

THERE BEING NO OTHER QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR CORRECTIONS, THE AMENDED MINUTES OF THE APRIL 9, 2020 COMMISSION MEETING WERE APPROVED WITH ONE ABSTENTION BY ROLL CALL. Voting to approve the April 9th Commission meeting minutes were: Mark Paleologopoulos, Doug Albertson, Michael Hutchins, Ted Cousineau, Richard Holzman, Judy Terry, Jay Joyce, Mark Dunn, Walter Gunn, William Dwyer, George Kingston, Marilyn Gorman Fil, Linda LeDuc, Michael Marciniac and Joanna Brown.

2. Nomination and Anticipated Election of PVPC Commissioner Jack Jemsek from the Town of Amherst to Fill an At-Large Member Vacancy on the Executive Committee
3. Mr. Gunn, as a member of the PVPC nominating committee, nominated Jack Jemsek to Fill an At-Large Member Vacancy on the Executive Committee. Mr. Gunn asked for nominations from the Commission members. There being none, Mr. Gunn made the motion that Jack Jemsek be elected to the Executive Committee to replace Lynn Arnold who has left the PVPC Executive Committee. Mr. Gunn then put forth a roll call asking the Commission members present to approve the appointment of Jack Jemsek as a Commissioner representing the Town of Amherst. Voting to approve the appointment of Jack Jemsek were: Mark Paleologopoulos, Doug Albertson, Michael Hutchins, Ted Cousineau, Richard Holzman, Judy Terry, Jay Joyce, Joanna Brown, William Dwyer, George Kingston, Marilyn Gorman Fil, Linda LeDuc, Michael Marciniac and Mark Dunn.

Mr. Gunn moved on to the next agenda item.

4. Update on COVID-19 and the PVPC's Work on Response and Recovery

Mr. Gunn invited Ms. Robinson to introduce this agenda item. Ms. Robinson reported that the PVPC was approached by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and asked to distribute emergency COVID-19 funds to 31 PVPC municipalities. Ms. Robinson explained that the funding arrived in two \$250,000 amounts which needed to be dispersed very quickly. PVPC staff delivered the first round of funding in less than one week followed by distribution of the other \$250,000. Ms. Robinson remarked that the state encouraged the PVPC to apply for additional funds to assist in supporting the COVID-19 related work in which member communities are engaged. She reported that the state will be giving PVPC another \$50,000 and PVPC's Emergency Preparedness Planner, Chris Goshea has been engaging with and assisting our communities. Ms. Robinson announced that the PVPC has developed a survey to be distributed to the local Boards of Health asking if they have the tools necessary to implement Governor Charlie Baker's phases for the reopening of Massachusetts. Mr. Gunn suggested that this survey be sent to the Commissioners as well. Ms. Robinson replied that she can set up a committee to ensure that the PVPC is communicating effectively and she asked for feedback. Judy Terry, Commission member representing the Town of Chesterfield, voiced her approval saying that two-way communication between the PVPC and the communities is extremely important and James Moore, Commission member representing the Town of Wilbraham, strongly agreed.

Ms. Robinson noted that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is an Economic Development District and as such, is an entity of the United State Economic Development Administration (EDA). Ms. Robinson explained that the PVPC is responsible for the development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the PVPC has been invited to apply for \$400,000 to be used for capacity building; bringing economic development projects to fruition; adding staff over a two-year period; and updating the CEDS to include disaster recovery and response information. She added that the \$400,000 needs to be spent by September 30, 2022.

Ms. Robinson announced that funding is available from Massachusetts Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) which are available for social services and for micro-enterprise business grants. She reported that all our eligible communities have been asked if they would be interested in applying for these grants which have to be submitted within the next three weeks. Eligible communities are either entitlement communities including Springfield, Holyoke and Chicopee that receive funding directly from the state or mini-entitlement communities that receive their funding from the PVPC and sometimes also the state. Ms. Robinson reported that two applications for this funding will be sent out tomorrow. An application is being submitted by 30 communities that have agreed to work together on domestic violence and one is being submitted by nine communities in collaboration with Common Capital for micro enterprise business grants. Ms. Robinson added that work being done on Census 2020 is wrapping up but there are certain areas that still need attention.

5. Community Reports/Updates from PVPC Commission Members

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any Commission members who had a community update. Jay Joyce, Alternate Commissioner representing the Town of Granby spoke about how Granby does not have sewers and explained how he has exhausted all avenues for assistance. Ms. Robinson offered to speak with him about it. When Jack Jemsek, Commissioner representing the Town of Amherst, reported that Amherst is losing 50% of its downtown businesses, Ms. Robinson indicated that perhaps she and Mr. Jemsek can set up a call to discuss the matter further.

Joanna Brown, Commission member representing the Town of South Hadley, remarked that it's going to be a year or two before there is a COVID-19 vaccine yet all the towns want to open up their businesses. Ms. Brown then advocated for N-95 masks to be more widely distributed especially for people over the age of sixty. Ms. Robinson indicated that she would discuss this topic further with Ms. Brown.

Tracey Plantier, Alternate Commissioner representing the Town of Wilbraham, asked how many PVPC goals and projects have been taken off the table or modified because of COVID-19. Ms. Robinson replied that she has been impressed about the amount of work that the PVPC staff has been accomplishing. She added that the funding that the PVPC has recently received will be used to hire one or two more consultants or contractors to assist in the new work that the PVPC has taken on.

Richard Holzman, Commissioner representing the Town of Chester, mentioned that when it's realized that workers can perform much if not all of their job responsibilities while working from home, employers and employees will find living in high density urban centers less desirable. Employers will save the cost of office space and employees won't have to spend time and gas money to commute. Mr. Holzman commented on Ms. Brown's remarks regarding face masks saying that the Amherst Board of Health received significant donations of masks from the Home Depot and Wal-Mart.

Ms. Brown spoke of the significant need for commitment to social justice and criminal justice, and Mr. Holzman underscored the importance of welcoming people of color and immigrants. Ms. Brown emphasized that the Commission members need to be leaders in what will be a new way of living.

6. Executive Director's Highlights Including an Update on How the PVPC is Supporting its Member Communities in the Midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Mr. Gunn invited Ms. Robinson to begin her Executive Director's report highlighting how the PVPC is supporting its member communities in the current pandemic. Ms. Robinson reported that the safety of PVPC employee is first and

foremost. She further reported that because Governor Charlie Baker has suggested that no more than 25 employees be in a place of business, the number of employees allowed in PVPC is limited to 12 and 75 – 80% of PVPC employees will be working at home. Ms. Robinson underscored that everyone is required to wear a mask and a thorough deep cleaning of the PVPC office space will be conducted tomorrow evening into Saturday morning.

7. Other Business

Mr. Gunn thanked everyone for their attendance and he called for a motion to adjourn this Thursday, June 11, 2020 Commission meeting.

MOVED BY MICHAEL MARCINIEC, SECONDED BY JAY JOYCE, TO ADJOURN THE THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2020 COMMISSION MEETING. THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO CONDUCT, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 6:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Albertson, Secretary/Clerk
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at this April 9th Meeting:

- Agenda and Suggested Motions for the Thursday, June 9, 2020 Commission Meeting
- Minutes of the Thursday, April 9, 2020 Commission Meeting