

**PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)**  
**Minutes of the Full Commission Meeting Held on Thursday, December 8, 2016**  
**Hadley Farms Meeting House – Norwottuck Suite**  
**41 Russell Street, Route 9, Hadley, Massachusetts 01035**

Commission Members Present Were:

Albertson, Doug	Alternate Commissioner	Belchertown
Lynn Arnold	Alternate Commissioner	Holland
Daniel Beaudette	Commissioner	Belchertown
Jesse Belcher-Timme	Commissioner	Easthampton
Carly Camossi	Commissioner	West Springfield
Mark Cavanaugh	Commissioner	South Hadley
T.J. Cousineau	Commissioner	Blandford
William Dwyer	Commissioner	Hadley
Marilyn Gorman Fil	Alternate Commissioner	Monson
Walter Gunn	Commissioner	Longmeadow
Linda Hamlin	Alternate Commissioner	Huntington
Jack Jemsek	Commissioner	Amherst
George Kingston	Commissioner	East Longmeadow
Michael Marciniec	Commissioner	Palmer
Mark Paleologopoulos	Commissioner	Agawam
Tracey Plantier	Commissioner	Wilbraham
David Sanders	Alternate Commissioner	Wilbraham
Stephen Snow	Commissioner	Williamsburg
Judy Terry	Commissioner	Chesterfield
Jay Vinskey	Alternate Commissioner	Westfield
James Whalen	Commissioner	Wales
Jeffrey Wyand	Commissioner	Huntington

Guests Present:

William Reyelt, Principal Planner, Smart Growth Programs, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Elaine Wijnja, Principal Land Use Planner, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

PVPC Staff Present:

Patrick Beaudry, Manager of Public Affairs  
Tim Brennan, Executive Director  
Chris Curtis, Chief Planner/Section Manager  
David Elvin, Principal Planner  
Indrani Kowlessar Gallagher, Executive Assistant/Office Manager  
Larry Smith, Senior Planner

Communities Not Represented at the December 8, 2016 Commission Meeting Were:

Brimfield	Hatfield	Russell
Chester	Holyoke	Southampton
Chicopee	Ludlow	Southwick
Cummington	Middlefield	Springfield
Goshen	Montgomery	Tolland
Granby	Northampton	Ware
Granville	Pelham	Westhampton
Hampden	Plainfield	Worthington

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome and Minutes of the Regular Commission Meeting Held on October 13, 2016

The December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) was called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Commission Chairman Walter Gunn. Following introductions around the room, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address the October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2016 AS PRESENTED.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were 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 13<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING WERE APPROVED WITH ONE ABSTENTION.

2. Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting Held on September 22, 2016

Mr. Gunn commented that the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on September 22, 2016 were previously distributed for information and reference purposes only and no action need be taken. Mr. Gunn then moved to take up the next agenda item.

3. Presentation by and Discussion With Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Staff Who are in the Midst of Developing Revised MGL c40 Regulations to Authorize the Creation of New “Starter Home Zoning Districts” Which are Intended to Encourage Municipalities to Adopt Zoning Provisions That Allow for the Development of Modest-Sized, Single Family Homes on Smaller Lots in Smart Growth Locations

Mr. Gunn called upon Tim Brennan to introduce this special presentation and the two guest presenters from the DHCD. Mr. Brennan explained that specific zoning changes were made in the last gasp of the legislative agenda which authorized the creation of new “starter home zoning districts”. Mr. Brennan further stated that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), to its credit, has created an advisory group tasked with helping DHCD staff to draft new regulations that would allow these starter home zoning districts to go forward in interested Massachusetts cities and towns in 2017. Mr. Brennan further stated that William Reyelt and Elaine Wijnja of the DHCD are here this evening to brief Commission members about these zoning changes and the draft regulations which are still under development. Mr. Brennan then asked Mr. Reyelt and Ms. Wijnja to begin their informational presentation.

Mr. Reyelt thanked Mr. Brennan for the opportunity to share information on the progress that’s been accomplished to date regarding changes made to the provisions of Chapter 40R. However, Mr. Reyelt underscored that, at this point, the only information that he can provide is an overview of the statutory changes since there are several regulatory issues that still need to be resolved.

Mr. Reyelt stated that sections 37-54 of Chapter 40R is the vehicle of the zoning changes which has established Starter Home Zoning Districts (SHZDs). Mr. Reyelt added that these changes are part of the Commonwealth’s most recent Workforce Development Bill and the clear intent of the legislation is to encourage creating these SHZDs in order to facilitate building more affordable housing units for the Commonwealth’s workforce. Mr. Reyelt next explained that the definition of a starter home is “a single family home not exceeding 1,850 square feet in heated living area.” Mr. Reyelt then commented that the basic characteristics of a starter home overlay district requires three continuous acres of developable land area; zoning that allows for a density of at least four units per acre on developable land; and at least 50% of the housing units must have three or more bedrooms.

Mr. Reyelt explained that, in addition, a provision has been added to Chapter 40R which impacts local governments’ imposition of local environmental regulations. More specifically, Mr. Reyelt explained that SHZDs are not subject to environmental and health regulations unless the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has determined that local conditions warrant imposing more restrictive local standards or the imposition of local standards make the contemplated housing development infeasible. Commission member Stephen Snow asked if this provision will function like Chapter 40B in that it will allow an override of local zoning. Mr. Reyelt responded no since SHZDs are entirely voluntary on the part of Massachusetts communities as is Chapter 40R in general. Specifically, Mr. Reyelt stated that municipalities will need to apply to establish one of these SHZDs which is created using overlay zoning and therefore would sit on top of whatever zoning regulations are already in place at the local level.

Mr. Reyelt remarked that, although the majority of changes made to 40R were related to SHZDs, there were also proposed regulatory changes to the definition of an eligible location. Mr. Reyelt explained that these changes involve: expanding the

.5 mile radius from a transit station to up to one mile around transit for SHZDs; SHZD land has to be primarily commercially zoned; 50% of the site has to be either substantially developed or underutilized; and the other 50% of the site cannot be commercially zoned or previously developed. In addition, Mr. Reyelt noted that changes were also made to the definition of a highly suitable location which include: the location is characterized by available infrastructure such as public water; multi-modal access; and being in or adjacent to a Priority Development Area.

After Mr. Reyelt concluded his remarks, Mr. Gunn opened the floor for questions and comments. Mr. Gunn asked for details on the timeline for implementing these Chapter 40R revisions. Mr. Reyelt responded that the goal is to get revised Chapter 40R regulations filed with the Executive Office of Administration and Finance by January 2017. Mr. Reyelt added that a public hearing is required but the current estimate is that these revised regulations could be promulgated in final form by March of 2017.

Judy Terry noted that these Chapter 40R revisions will not likely work in rural communities because most of these municipalities do not have public water and sewer lines and therefore cannot meet the specified Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Title V regulations. Mr. Brennan added that this is not the first time that this obstacle has been identified in western Massachusetts but there seems to be a penchant to allow the regional DEP offices to implement their own approach. Ms. Wijnja commented that since this is the first time that she has heard this concern, she and Mr. Reyelt will raise this issue with applicable DEP staff.

Mr. Reyelt expressed his appreciation for the constructive feedback offered by Commission members and he encouraged them to contact either him or Ms. Wijnja if they had additional questions or comments about the revised Chapter 40R regulations that are being drafted by DHCD. Mr. Gunn thanked Mr. Reyelt and Ms. Wijnja for their informative presentation and he then moved to take up the next agenda item.

4. Staff Presentation to Accompany Release of the New Edition of the Commission's "Pioneer Valley Trails Map" Including an Update on the Anticipated 2017 Launch of the Valley Bike Share Project

Mr. Gunn asked PVPC staff presenter Chris Curtis to begin his presentation on the new edition of the *Pioneer Valley Trails Map* and the anticipated launch of the Valley Bike Share Project. Mr. Curtis began his presentation by noting that the *Pioneer Valley Trails Map* is a home-grown product and it has been a best seller in local bookstores and camping stores. Mr. Curtis added that the second edition of this map has been released and copies are being made available to Commission members at this meeting. Mr. Curtis noted that the *Pioneer Valley Trails Map* has been developed as a two-part project: namely the physical map along with a companion website that provides expanded information and detailed trails data. Mr. Curtis next explained that the *Pioneer Valley Trails Map* project goals principally include encouraging area residents to take advantage of outdoor opportunities for exercise; informing residents about trails in the Pioneer Valley and unique features located near them; and creating a general guide to hiking and biking choices throughout the Pioneer Valley region.

At this point, Mr. Curtis displayed a PowerPoint slide of the *Pioneer Valley Trails Map* and he reviewed, in detail, the map's features. Mr. Curtis next gave an overview of the companion *Pioneer Valley Trails Map* website, <http://connecticutriver.us>, which Mr. Curtis noted contains information on recreational opportunities in the Pioneer Valley including hiking and biking assets; directions to specific trails; parking; and the length and difficulty level of each trail. Mr. Curtis underscored that this is the second edition of the *Pioneer Valley Trails Map* and he highlighted that the first trails map sold out with over 2200 trails maps sold with the revenues of \$9,700 gained from map sales used to finance the map's second edition.

At this point, Mr. Curtis focused on an update on the Valley Bike Share initiative which is a project that the PVPC has been working on for over 1½ years. Mr. Curtis remarked that the Valley Bike Share Project is a program initially targeted at the urban core communities of Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, Amherst and South Hadley as well as the campus of the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Mr. Curtis remarked that bike sharing is a new transportation option for communities that gives people an alternative to relying on cars in urban communities and it is ideal for short point-to-point trips between bike share stations and other destinations. Mr. Curtis further stated that another appealing feature of the Valley Bike Share Project is that it provides a potential connection to the Pioneer Valley's expanding passenger rail services. Mr. Curtis then reviewed the benefits of implementing a bike share program in the PVPC's region including promoting healthy, active living; encouraging downtown revitalization and economic development; creating more livable communities; attracting and retaining young professionals; and reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Curtis next discussed the steps that have been taken thus far in order to implement the Valley Bike Share Project. Mr. Curtis noted that these steps have included a feasibility study that was completed in 2014. In addition, Mr. Curtis stated that PVPC staff worked with the five communities which had self-identified as being interested in a project to develop a Regional Bike Share Committee and ultimately a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was created that committed these communities to jointly move forward with the implementation project. Mr. Curtis remarked that other steps taken thus far include applying for federal and state funding through the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) assistance program and getting CMAQ funds programmed in our region's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Mr. Curtis explained that outreach efforts have been ongoing to corporate and other institutional entities across the region seeking financial sponsorships that can help underwrite ongoing operating costs along with formalized commitments from the participating communities outlining how each intends to pay for their community's share of the cost of launching the project. Mr. Curtis added that the business plan model being developed for the bike share program will specify that the communities will own the bikes and stations and a vendor who has experience with operating these kind of system will be contracted.

Mr. Curtis next explained that certain choices had to be made concerning which kind of bike share system should be implemented. Mr. Curtis noted that there are two types of bike share systems are on the market. Mr. Curtis remarked that the first option is a system that has a fixed dock for the bicycles and the software is installed on the dock itself. Mr. Curtis noted that the second option is a smart bike system which is when the software is loaded onto each bike. Mr. Curtis stated that the PVPC's bike share advisory committee has made the decision to select the smart bike option since it is more cost effective, has a built-in GPS and it provides riders with the flexibility to park anywhere in the bike share project's designated service area.

Mr. Curtis next reviewed rollout of the bike share system noting that a total of 26 stations and 234 bikes is forecast at this point to be implemented for Phase 1 of the project. Mr. Curtis added that for Phase 2, a total of 24 stations and 216 bikes is proposed to be made available. Mr. Curtis added that other efforts to move this project forward include identifying station placement and station branding. Mr. Curtis explained that this endeavor includes looking for sponsors in return for providing them with the opportunity to advertise on specific stations and bikes.

Mr. Curtis noted that next steps for the Valley Bike Share project include contracting with MassDOT to secure CMAQ dollars to fund capital costs; identifying additional funding streams for ongoing operating costs; completing the vendor procurement selection process; initiating a public outreach and marketing campaign; and launching the system ideally by the summer of 2017.

Mr. Curtis then concluded his remarks and he asked if there were any questions or comments regarding his presentation. PVPC Commissioner James Whalen asked if there is a mobile app for the trails map. Mr. Curtis stated that this was a great idea and he will raise this suggestion with the PVPC's advisory committee. George Kingston asked if there is going to be a charge for the bikes and Mr. Curtis responded yes since there will be a membership fee and a per ½ hour rate use charge.

There being no further questions or comments for Mr. Curtis, Mr. Gunn thanked him for his interesting presentation and moved to take up the next agenda item.

5. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Contractual Agreement With the U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment, to Undertake an Update of the Westover ARB Joint Land Use Study

Mr. Gunn asked PVPC staff member Larry Smith to provide background information on this agenda item. Mr. Smith explained that every ten years the U.S. Department of Defense conducts an assessment of Westover Air Reserve Base by working with the host community of Chicopee and several surrounding municipalities including Granby, Ludlow, South Hadley and Springfield in order to identify compatibility or incompatibility issues both on the base and in the surrounding communities. Mr. Smith added that the U.S. Department of Defense will work with these cities and towns in order to compile recommendations on how to mitigate noise and safety issues. Mr. Brennan added that the above-noted communities each requested that the PVPC take the lead in advancing this project. At this point, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address this agenda item.

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$169,534.00 (\$148,287.00

FEDERAL/\$21,247.00 NON-FEDERAL IN-KIND MATCH) CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, OFFICE OF ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT, IN ORDER FOR THE PVPC TO UNDERTAKE AN UPDATE OF THE WESTOVER AIR RESERVE BASE COMPATIBLE USE AND JOINT LAND USE STUDY (JLUS).

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.

6. Presentation, Review, Discussion and Initial Endorsement of the Planning Commission's Proposed Top Ten Resolves for 2017 Including a Brief Overview of the Past Year's Major Accomplishments

Mr. Gunn noted that the focus of this agenda item is to initially endorse the Commission's proposed draft Top Ten Resolves for 2017. Mr. Gunn further stated that following the Planning Commission's endorsement the draft 2017 Resolves will be broadly distributed to the PVPC's 43 member communities for their review and comment. Mr. Gunn then explained that the draft Resolves will be brought back to the February 9<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting in order that they can be formally adopted. Mr. Gunn added that any feedback received regarding these draft 2017 Resolves from the PVPC's member communities or other individuals or organizations will be presented and discussed at the February 9<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting in the event further refinements are needed.

At this point, Mr. Gunn asked Mr. Brennan to provide more detailed information on this agenda item. Mr. Brennan remarked that the objective of the Top Ten Resolves is not to function as a complete list of all the work that the PVPC intends to accomplish. Mr. Brennan explained that, over the years, PVPC staff have discovered that focusing on ten items has been a useful practice. Mr. Brennan next explained that the PVPC's Major Accomplishments report is a retrospective of how the PVPC did with accomplishing the Top Ten Resolves from the previous year. Mr. Brennan added that the Major Accomplishments report serves as the PVPC's annual report which is distributed to its 43 member communities as well as to the Pioneer Valley's federal and state legislative delegations. At this point, Mr. Brennan thanked the PVPC's Manager of Public Affairs, Patrick Beaudry, who managed the compiling and production of this report in a compressed time frame in concert with the PVPC's section heads.

Mr. Gunn called for a motion to endorse the proposed PVPC's 2017 Top Ten Resolves in a preliminary manner.

MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO ENDORSE IN PRELIMINARY FASHION THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDED TOP TEN RESOLVES FOR 2017.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions or comments but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDED TOP TEN RESOLVES FOR 2017 WERE UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED IN PRELIMINARY FASHION.

7. Community Reports/Updates from Commission Members and the Executive Director

Mr. Gunn asked Mr. Brennan to begin his Executive Director report. However, Mr. Brennan first yielded the floor to Judy Terry to brief Commission members on the activities of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission given that Ms. Terry serves as the PVPC's official representative. Ms. Terry remarked that the Rural Policy Advisory Commission has held two meetings and she further explained that this group will meet on a quarterly basis. Ms. Terry next remarked that the work of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission consists of researching the issues that are critical to the welfare of the Commonwealth's rural municipalities and she added that the Pioneer Valley region has 29 smaller towns that fall within the Commonwealth's rural community definition. Ms. Terry commented that the first meeting of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission consisted of the swearing in of all Commission members. Ms. Terry next remarked that the second gathering was a meeting of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission's subcommittees and Ms. Terry added that she is serving on the Infrastructure Committee. Lastly, Ms. Terry remarked that the major issue before the Infrastructure Committee is how to improve so-called last mile high speed broadband service to rural under-served towns. Ms. Terry added that she will have more to report at the February 9<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Brennan next brought up a housekeeping item specific to the Major Accomplishments report which needed to be resolved with before this report goes to press. Mr. Brennan explained that there is a page in this report which lists each Commission and Alternate member's telephone number. Mr. Brennan asked if Commission members are comfortable with having their telephone numbers listed in this publication. Mr. Brennan added that most of these telephone numbers are for each community's city or town hall although it is possible that some home and cell phone numbers may have been inadvertently comingled with this list. After a brief discussion, Mr. Brennan stated that PVPC staff will review the above-noted telephone list to ensure that only city and town hall phone numbers are published. In addition, Mr. Brennan stated that any municipal planning boards with email addresses will be included as well.

At this point, Mr. Brennan began his Executive Director report. Mr. Brennan announced that, earlier this week, the Baker Administration released District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funding for FY 2017. Mr. Brennan further stated that the release of DLTA funding had strong advocates in Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito and Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ashe. Mr. Brennan consequently urged Commission members to thank Lieutenant Governor Polito and Secretary Ashe for their enthusiastic support of the DLTA program statewide.

Mr. Brennan stated that Union Station is tentatively scheduled to open in late January. Mr. Brennan added that PVPC's transit section has been working with the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) on revising bus schedules and updating signage because the deployment of PVTA busses needs to be moved from the Springfield hub to out of Union Station.

Mr. Brennan announced that statewide zoning reform legislation will be re-submitted in 2017. Mr. Brennan next explained that PVPC staff met with the Valley Development Council (VDC), which is principally made up of municipal planners from the Pioneer Valley, to gather input on zoning reform which in turn could be fed back into the next iteration of this statewide legislation. Mr. Brennan then remarked that one unknown factor on the Senate side is who will be the sponsor of this current version of zoning reform legislation since its sponsor in the Senate, namely Senator Daniel Wolf of Cape Cod, will step down next month. However, Mr. Brennan noted that Representative Stephen Kulik of Worthington will most likely remain the lead House sponsor of this bill on the House side.

Mr. Brennan noted that PVPC staff have been investing a great deal of time with state legislators in order to brief and engage them in terms of advocacy for key passenger rail projects which will positively impact the Pioneer Valley. Mr. Brennan noted that one such project involves adding additional service on the Knowledge Corridor north-south route, north of Springfield; and increasing the number of trains running on this route from one train per day, one train north and one train south, to two additional trains in the morning and two more trains in the afternoon. Mr. Brennan commented that the State seems to be favorably inclined toward this project, provided that it starts out as a pilot service in order to prove that ridership will merit ongoing public funding support.

Mr. Brennan next explained that with the help of Connecticut North-South, 12 Connecticut's commuter trains will be coming to Springfield's Union Station in January 2018. Mr. Brennan added that next effort will be to get east-west service. Mr. Brennan explained that the report on east-west service has been released and recommendations are strong and favorable. Specifically, Mr. Brennan noted that the report recommends eight round trips per day between Boston, Worcester, Palmer, Springfield, Hartford and New Haven; one additional train Boston to Montreal via Springfield; and one additional train New Haven to Montreal via Springfield. Mr. Brennan then remarked that the next challenge will be to get the plan for east-west service into the State Rail Plan which has been scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2017. Mr. Brennan underscored that if this project does not make it into the State Rail Plan the east-west rail link will not likely get funded. Mr. Brennan consequently noted that there needs to be a strong advocacy campaign to get this project into the State Rail Plan in order for funding to be committed to it. Mr. Brennan then noted that U.S. Congressman Richard Neal has taken a keen interest in this project and he added that the next step will be to build a congressional advocacy campaign in neighboring Connecticut.

There being no community reports from Commission members, Mr. Gunn moved to take up the last agenda item.

8. Other Business Including the Schedule of the Commission and Executive Committee Meeting Dates for the First Half of 2017

Mr. Gunn explained that the schedule of the Commission and Executive Committee meeting dates for the first half of 2017 had been previously reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee. There being no further business to conduct, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to adjourn the Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY LYNN ARNOLD, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup> COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:28 P.M. THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Respectfully Submitted,

Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at this Meeting

- Agenda and Suggested Motions for the Thursday, December 8, 2016 Commission Meeting
- Meeting Minutes of the Thursday, October 13, 2016 Commission Meeting
- Handout from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) on Chapter 40R 2016 Changes
- Draft PVPC Top Ten Resolves for 2017
- Draft PVPC 2016 Major Accomplishments
- Schedule of the Commission and Executive Committee Meeting Dates for the First Half of 2017