

# NEW RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Minutes of the Commission Meeting

held on

January 23, 2014

6:00 p.m. – New River Valley Business Center, Fairlawn

### I. CALL TO ORDER

**PRESENT:** Mr. M. Patton, Chair, Town of Floyd; Mr. K. Sullivan, Vice-Chair, Virginia Tech; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. J. Carpenter, Radford University; Mr. T. Cox, City of Radford; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. G. East, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Mr. F. Gerald, Floyd County; Dr. H. Harvey, City of Radford; Ms. H. Lesko, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. K. Marshall, City of Radford; Ms. C. Newcomb, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. H. Showalter, Town of Christiansburg; and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

**ABSENT:** Mr. S. Weaver, Treasurer, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. R. Chambers, Montgomery County; Mr. G. Eaton, Town of Rich Creek; Ms. E. Janney, Floyd County; Mr. L. Law, Giles County; Ms. A. Perkins, Montgomery County; Mr. J. Soileau, Virginia Tech; Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg and Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Elijah Sharp, Janet McNew and Julie Phillips.

### II. CONSENT AGENDA

#### A. Approval of Minutes for November

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Bopp moved for the approval of the minutes. Ms. Newcomb seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried; One abstention: Mr. Cox.

#### B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for November and December

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Ms. Lesko moved for the approval of the treasurer's report. Mr. Cox seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

#### A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. New River Valley Senior Services: Vehicle Purchase
2. New River Valley Community Services: Vehicle Purchase

#### B. Regular Project Review

None.

### C. Environmental Project Review

1. Virginia Tech Environmental Impact Review: Indoor Practice Facility

Motion: Mr. Marshall moved for the approval. Mr. Carpenter seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None.

### V. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Showalter reported the Town Council of Christiansburg appointed Sam Bishop to fill a vacant position on Council for the term of one year. Ms. Lesko noted that the second annual Dialogue on Race will be held Saturday January 25<sup>th</sup> at the Blacksburg Community Center from 10am until 2pm. Ms. Lesko also reported the unveiling of Pulaski Proud will take place on January 31<sup>st</sup> at Pulaski County Schools. Mr. Carpenter reported Radford University students volunteered in several communities including Pulaski County, the Town of Blacksburg, and the City of Radford over the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Mr. Carpenter also announced the University is looking forward to hosting the March 12, 2014 Commission Dinner. Mr. Gerald announced that Floyd County purchased the Dex Building in the industrial park and noted the Hotel Floyd expansion and the Innovation Center are currently under construction.

### VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Patton reported the Executive Committee discussed the Annual Commission Dinner Meeting details as well as tourism bills introduced in the General Assembly, both of which will be discussed further in Old Business. Mr. Patton announced to the Commission that Elijah Sharp has served on the Commission staff for five years. Ms. Lesko presented him with a certificate recognizing his service and dedication.

### VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. He reported the NRV Passenger Rail Committee held their first meeting and a second meeting should take place in February, but a date is not set. He also reported the Livability Initiative final reports are scheduled to be sent to the printers by the end of January and will be completed and distributed in March. He noted the VAPDC winter conference will take place February 6-7 and encouraged Commissioners to attend. Mr. Byrd explained staff has been working on a grant application with the Workforce Investment Board and Montgomery County and Floyd County Schools to connect local employers with students so they can experience current industrial environments. The Commission is in a position to be the grant applicant. Mr. Cox asked if private sector companies were invited to the Appalachian Spring strategic planning session, specifically Shawn Hash with Tangent Outfitters. Mr. Byrd replied Mr. Hash is on the invitation list. Mr. Byrd explained staff is updating the Personnel Manual based on recommendations from VML. When complete, it will be brought to the Commission for review and consideration of approval. He also discussed the NADO Pro publication distributed at the meeting; this provides a Federal legislative look from the regional organization perspective. The publication explains the fiscal impacts of regional organizations and overviews the omnibus spending bill. Mr. Byrd explained he nominated the NRV Livability Initiative for a best practices award for the VAPDC Annual Awards program. Award winners will be announced at the VAPDC winter conference in

February. Lastly, he sent a project memo soliciting requests for FY2015 projects with a 50/50 match and asked the Commissioners to think of projects within their community that may be a good fit for the Commission.

**X. REGIONAL FOCUS (this portion of the agenda was moved to allow for discussion time on other items)**

**A. New River Trail State Park presentation**

Mr. Sam Sweeney, New River Trail State Park Manager, gave an overview of the park. He began by describing the attractions, history, and special events. Mr. Sweeney noted some of the future development plans for the park as well as the how the trail plans to connect with other trails in the area, such as the Huckleberry Trail in Montgomery County and Randolph Park in Pulaski County, and eventually connect throughout the state. The New River State Trail is currently the third most visited State Park in Virginia out of 36 state parks with approximately one millions visitors each year. Mr. Sweeney explained the New River Trail State Park has a need to market the asset to the New River Valley as well as the Roanoke Valley. More information on the New River Trail State Park can be found at <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/new-river-trail.shtml>.

Discussion: Mr. Cox asked how many people are on staff at the New River Trail State Park and what types of vehicles are used to access the trail. Mr. Sweeney replied there are five law enforcement officers on staff and they drive large SUVs or trucks to access the trail. Mr. Cox stated the New River Trail State Park was originally funded with Rails to Trails funding and asked how they are funded now. Ms. Sweeney explained Government Obligation Bonds are used to fund projects. Mr. Patton asked if the Beaches to Bluegrass trail will touch the State Park. Mr. Sweeney explained it will intersect with the Galax end of the Trail, and explained how Virginia is working to connect all trails across the state. Mr. Patton also asked how long the New River Trail Challenge has been held and noted Mr. Sullivan has taken part in the Challenge. Mr. Sweeney stated the Challenge has happened ten times; however, not consecutively. Mr. Clevinger asked if there will be a museum at Foster Falls in the future. Mr. Sweeney expressed a museum is a future hope for the Trail. Lastly, Mr. Sullivan noted the New River Trail State Park is an easy draw to our area and expressed the need to expand the marketing of the asset. He stated how impressive it is that the Park is the third most visited in the state with one million visitors per year.

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Commission Annual Dinner Meeting**

Mr. Patton explained the dinner will be held Wednesday March 12, 2014 at Radford University in the College of Business and Economics Building. There will be a reception at 6pm followed by dinner at 7pm. Mr. Patton then reported to the Commissioners the nominations for the awards and noted there were not sufficient nominations for the Friend of the Valley award. At this point the commission decided to move forward with two awards, Champion of the Valley and Citizen of the Valley, and votes were cast for the recipients of each award. Lastly Mr. Patton announced the speaker for the annual dinner meeting will be Charles Fluharty, President of the Rural Policy Research Institute.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Review Key Legislative Items**

Mr. Byrd explained the purpose of this is to inform each other on legislation others may be working on. He then pointed out two key items of legislation for the Commission. The first is to get state funding restored to last year's level, at a minimum. The Governor's budget proposes a \$70,000 cut across the state, which is a \$3,000 cut for the Commission. When leveraged at a 12 to 1 rate this is equivalent to \$36,000. There is also legislation to support the Collaborative Governance Initiative, which the Commission voted to support

at the October meeting. This Initiative would bring \$500,000 to the PDCs and distributed across the state based on the current funding formula.

The second key item is a bill that would change the footprint for tourism marketing. Currently, the New River Valley is in the Blue Ridge Region which extends through the Mount Rogers Planning District area. The bill being introduced would move Roanoke into the Blue Ridge Region. Mr. Byrd asked for discussion on this item as there has not been a position expressed by many of the localities in the New River Valley on the bill. Mr. Sullivan noted Roanoke has an airport and visitors coming into the area by plane who want to experience the entire area. Mr. Patton explained he wants to be sure the New River Valley keeps its identity. Ms. Newcomb questioned if this bill could be delayed until New River Valley localities have a position for or against the bill. Dr. Harvey stated how important it is for the elected officials to understand the bill. Mr. Showalter suggested the tourism representatives from each locality inform the elected officials on implications of the change. Mr. Garrett explained how important it is to have specific details to how this will impact the New River Valley and what opportunities it presents. After discussion by the Commission it was suggested that the tourism representative from each locality report back to their Board or Council with their position on the bill.

## **XI. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Mr. Patton urged the Commissioners to attend the VAPDC winter Conference February 6-7, 2014.

Mr. Patton called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Ms. Newcomb motioned to adjourn. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

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Michael Patton, Chair  
New River Valley Planning District Commission

# NEW RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Minutes of the Commission Meeting

held on

February 27, 2014

6:00 p.m. – New River Valley Business Center, Fairlawn

### I. CALL TO ORDER

**PRESENT:** Mr. M. Patton, Chair, Town of Floyd; Mr. K. Sullivan, Vice-Chair, Virginia Tech; Mr. S. Weaver, Treasurer, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. J. Carpenter, Radford University; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. F. Gerald, Floyd County; Dr. H. Harvey, City of Radford; Ms. E. Janney, Floyd County; Mr. W. Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. L. Law, Giles County; Ms. H. Lesko, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. K. Marshall, City of Radford; Mr. J. Soileau, Virginia Tech and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

**ABSENT:** Mr. T. Cox, City of Radford; Mr. R. Chambers, Montgomery County; Mr. G. East, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Ms. A. Perkins, Montgomery County; Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County and Ms. C. Newcomb, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. H. Showalter, Town of Christiansburg.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Brad Mecham and Christy Straight.

### II. CONSENT AGENDA

#### A. Approval of Minutes for January

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Ms. Lesko moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Carpenter seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried.

#### B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for January

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes. Mr. Byrd explained the printing line item was above budget due to printing costs associated with the final reports for the NRV Livability Initiative. The Commission has funds in the current year budget to cover the cost and this will be addressed in the revised budget to be presented in late spring.

Motion: Mr. Bopp moved for the approval of the treasurer's report. Mr. Carpenter seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

#### A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan Revision Facilities – Virginia National Guard
2. Department of Corrections: Probation and Parole Office, Radford

#### B. Regular Project Review

None.

- C. Environmental Project Review
  - 1. Virginia Tech – Montgomery Executive Airport

**IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS**

None.

**V. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

Ms. Lesko announced a presentation will be given later in the evening at the Lyric Theater in Blacksburg by Mr. Benjamin Knapp, Director of the Institute for Creativity Arts and Technology (ICAT) at Virginia Tech. Mr. Carpenter informed the Commission about the recent announcement at Radford University to construct a 143,000 s.f., 52.8 million dollar academic building for the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences. This will help in consolidating the multitude of locations across campus in which the college is currently operating. The new building will also include an emergency management center which will be incorporated into the classroom space. The center is planned to be located next to Muse Hall and the library. The student fitness center is scheduled to be complete later this year and the new science building is scheduled for completion late next year.

**VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Sullivan reported on behalf of the Executive Committee. During their meeting on 2/19 the committee discussed final details of the annual dinner, the Virginia's First/Commerce Park Management RFP and the staff evaluation model changing from a checklist toward goals. All of these items are on the agenda for discussion this evening.

**VII. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Mr. Patton encouraged all the Board members to ask questions during the meeting, especially during the Regional Focus portion so they can learn and take information away from the meetings. He explained the Board exists to serve the New River Valley and reminded the Commissioners that the New River Valley localities are the owners of the Commission.

**VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. He reported the NRV Passenger Rail Committee will hold their second meeting on April 2; Mr. Cox will be attending as the alternate for Mr. Sullivan on behalf of the Commission. He also reported the Livability Initiative final report hard copies are scheduled to arrive March 19<sup>th</sup>. He noted the Appalachian Spring project will again have to reschedule their planning session; they hope to hold it in late March or early April. Mr. Byrd explained he changed the staff performance review process and implemented SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-related), these goals will be evaluated with staff annually. Mr. Byrd explained he will be facilitating a retreat for the Town of Christiansburg on April 4<sup>th</sup> where Town Council will be discussing their priorities over the next three years. Mr. Patton noted the Town of Floyd has talked about holding a retreat and Mr. Marshall explained the City of Radford holds an annual retreat. Lastly, Mr. Byrd reported the Commission hosted a regional meeting earlier in the day to discuss Rural Broadband opportunity and potential funds available from the FCC Community Connection Fund. The meeting

was well attended and it appears at least two providers in the region will submit an Expression of Interest by March 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **IX. REGIONAL FOCUS**

- A. Workforce Investment Board Skills Gap Analysis - Marty Holliday, Deputy Director - New River Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board and Patrick O'Brien, Economic Development Specialist – Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development

Ms. Holliday gave a brief overview of the Workforce Investment Board. She explained they currently have three main program areas; adult, dislocated worker, and youth. She also noted there are 15 Workforce Investment Boards in the state of Virginia. She explained the Workforce Investment Board contracted with Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development to complete the Skills Gap Analysis and briefly explained the main areas of the report. The Skills Gap Analysis identified the economic drivers within the region, the skill sets industries and companies need, the region's capacity to meet the needs of employers, and the pathways to reach these goals.

Mr. O'Brien explained how both labor market information and interviews with companies were used to gather information for the report. He overviewed the recommendations that the report identified as well as identifying the different sectors that were included in the analysis. Mr. O'Brien noted that both soft skills and technical skills were identified as lacking by employers. Lastly, he explained the four central strategies the report identified to improve the skills in demand by employers.

Discussion: Mr. Patton questioned what type of program is being started at New River Community College and mentioned the classroom being set up in the student center area. Ms. Holliday responded that she is unsure, but it may be an expansion of NRCC's machining program. Mr. Law questioned what role the vocational and high schools play in developing the skills. Mr. O'Brien replied the schools play an important role; however, he noted the roles are not consistent from county to county. Mr. Law asked about developing training within the school system. Mr. Marshall also noted that it is important to have local employers involved with the schools to develop the skill sets they are looking for. Mr. Byrd explained that it can be tough to engage the private sector and to get them involved with K-12. Mr. Marshall explained that employers looking to move into communities often ask which skills are predominant in the area. Ms. Holliday noted there is a group in Floyd looking into working with the K-12 system. Ms. Janney questioned what role agriculture played in the Skills Gap report. Mr. O'Brien replied that the report looked into the skills people gain working a farm as well as agritourism and the small business/entrepreneurial skills farming develops. Mr. Bopp noted that it takes discipline to work a farm. Lastly, Dr. Warren explained that many high school competitions include a problem solving aspect and he noted that problem solving is what most industries are looking for.

## **X. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

## **XI. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Community Development Block Grant Priorities for FY14-15

Mr. Byrd explained a memo was included in the packet identifying the suggested priorities. He noted the projects noted were identified by the local governments.

Mr. Patton called for approval of the 2014 Suggested Community Development Block Grant Priorities.

Motion: Ms. Lesko moved for the approval of the 2014 Suggested Community Development Block Grant Priorities. Ms. Janney seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Resolution of Support for Beaches to Bluegrass Trail

Mr. Patton called for a motion to support the resolution.

Motion: Mr. Gerald moved to support the resolution. Mr. Bopp seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously

C. Nomination Committee for FY15 slate of officers.

Mr. Patton explained that the By-laws call for a nomination committee when selecting a slate of officers, and that the committee will be made up of the current Chair, Treasurer, and an at-large member selected by the Commission. Mr. Patton then called for nominations of an at-large member. Ms. Janney nominated Mr. Bopp as the at-large member, Mr. Marshall seconded the motion.

Motion: Mr. Patton called for a vote to nominate Mr. Bopp by acclamation.

Action: Motion carried unanimously

D. Responding to Virginia's First/Commerce Park Management RFP

Mr. Byrd gave a presentation on the background information of Virginia's First Regional Industrial Facility and the Commerce Park as well as the current management roles. He began with Virginia's First, stating it was created in 1999 and currently has 15 members. Mr. Patton asked why Floyd and Blacksburg are not members. Ms. Lesko explained when Virginia's First was started the location of the Commerce Park was already decided so some localities did not join and others were not ready to market regionally at that time. She stated that Virginia's First was always designed so localities could join at any time. Mr. Byrd explained 11 of the 15 Virginia's First members are owners of the Commerce Park, which is a 1,000 acre industrial site. Mr. Byrd explained some of the attractions of the Commerce Park are the proximity to the airport, the Customs Office, the Port of Entry, and the Commerce Park is a Foreign Trade Zone and a Virginia Enterprise Zone. Next, he overviewed the scope of support the Commission staff provides Virginia's First and the Commerce Park. The Commission staff is currently providing Board organizational support, such as meeting scheduling and minutes preparation; Board Documentation; Insurance Procurement and Administration; and monthly bill payments and quarterly interim financial reports.

Discussion: Mr. Sullivan asked about the Commission's history of support and if there are other organizations who are responding to the RFP. Mr. Byrd replied the Commission has been providing support for Virginia's First since it started. He also explained the memo included in the packet gave examples of other organizations that may have the skills to support Virginia's First and the NRV Economic Development Alliance discussed responding to the RFP at their last Board meeting. Mr. Byrd also noted he has talked with some local government managers about how they would like to see the transition of Virginia's First and Commerce Park happen. Mr. Byrd expressed he would like to keep the NRVPCDC support levels at the current level, which will help keep the two programs regional. Mr. Sullivan explained he would like to see the NRVPCDC offer the services they are currently delivering and not respond to the RFP to offer a leadership role, unless asked to by the local government members. Mr. Gerald pointed out that Floyd



County has never been a part of Virginia's First and that they would not be involved in the RFP. Mr. Patton asked the Commissioners from Pulaski County about their thoughts on the project. Dr. Warren responded that the County has issued loans to Virginia's First for several projects at the Commerce Park. Mr. Bopp noted that Red Sun Farms coming into the Commerce Park is just the beginning of what is possible. Ms. Janney explained she was a part of the Commission when Virginia's First was created. Mr. Patton asked if any other Commissioners were on the Board when the original discussions took place. Dr. Warren explained he remembers one of the biggest issues being the landowner's convents group and their opposition to certain industries locating at the Commerce Park. Dr. Harvey explained she did not recall much discussion at the Commission meetings about the roles the Commission staff was providing when Virginia's First was created. Mr. Patton explained to the Commissioners that the decision is an important one and noted that all the information has been reported to the Commissioners.

Mr. Sullivan made a motion directing Mr. Byrd to respond to the RFP offering a support role as the Commission staff currently provides. Seconded by Dr. Warren.

Discussion: Ms. Lesko asked about the monetary side of the RFP. Mr. Byrd replied his response will suggest different ways to arrange services with monetary amounts assigned to the duties. Dr. Harvey asked if Mr. Sullivan's motion will lessen the PDC's current level. Mr. Sullivan stated the motion is intended to keep levels current and to support Virginia's First/Commerce Park, but not to be in the leadership role which is being vacated by Mr. Joe Morgan. Dr. Warren noted this is a critical time for the Commerce Park and suggested the structure of the Commerce Park may need to be adjusted from offering large tracts to offering smaller tracts. Mr. Bopp noted that now that water and power is available at the park everything else can be set in motion. Mr. Byrd clarified that the zoning at the park was addressed with Pulaski County and different size tracts may be available should Commerce Park leadership decide to offer smaller parcels to a prospect. Mr. Byrd asked if the Commission Board would consider providing a larger support role if the PDC was asked. Mr. Sullivan explained if the PDC was directly asked then the Commission should consider it, and that should be made clear in the response. Mr. Carpenter asked if the length of the contract was included in the RFP and suggested it be included in the response.

Motion: Mr. Sullivan amended his motion to have Mr. Byrd respond to the RFP in a supporting role offering PDC services as currently provided and willingness to serve in a leadership role if requested by the member governments and discussed by the Commission Board at a future meeting. Dr. Warren seconded the motion.

Action: Motion approved 14-1, Gerald opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

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Michael S. Patton, Chair  
New River Valley Planning District Commission

# NEW RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Minutes of the Commission Meeting

held on

March 27, 2014

6:00 p.m. – New River Valley Business Center, Fairlawn

### I. CALL TO ORDER

**PRESENT:** Mr. M. Patton, Chair, Town of Floyd; Mr. K. Sullivan, Vice-Chair, Virginia Tech; Mr. S. Weaver, Treasurer, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. J. Carpenter, Radford University; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Cox, City of Radford; Mr. R. Chambers, Montgomery County; Mr. G. East, Town of Pulaski; Mr. F. Gerald, Floyd County; Dr. H. Harvey, City of Radford; Mr. W. Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. L. Law, Giles County; Mr. K. Marshall, City of Radford; Ms. C. Newcomb, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. J. Soileau, Virginia Tech and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

**ABSENT:** Ms. E. Janney, Floyd County; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Ms. A. Perkins, Montgomery County; Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg; Ms. H. Lesko, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County and Mr. H. Showalter, Town of Christiansburg.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Patrick Burton, Elijah Sharp and Julie Phillips.

### II. CONSENT AGENDA

#### A. Approval of Minutes for February

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes. Mr. Byrd explained that a corrected version of the minutes was distributed at the meeting. Mr. Carpenter submitted corrections to the review of mutual concerns and commissioners' reports section from February.

Motion: Mr. Law moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Weaver seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried, one abstention; Mr. Cox.

#### B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for February

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Bopp moved for the approval of the treasurer's report. Mr. Cox seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

#### A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. Reissuance of VPDES Permit No. VA0089991 Federal-Mogul Montgomery County.

#### B. Regular Project Review

None.

- C. Environmental Project Review  
None.

**IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS**  
None.

**V. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

Mr. Law explained that the FCC is issuing more benchmarks which requires Pemtel to increase rates; this is a concern because Pemtel may lose customers if the rates continue to rise. Mr. Clevinger announced that a reenactment of the battle at Cloyd's Mountain will take place on April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> to recognize the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle. Mr. Cox announced that Radford will have a steam excursion train stopping in the city on April 5<sup>th</sup> from 12pm - 2:30pm the same weekend as the reenactment. Mr. Patton explained that a regional tourism calendar would help localities to not have events on the same dates. Mr. Bopp expressed the Commission's annual dinner went well and noted the staff from Radford University did a wonderful job.

**VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Sullivan reported on behalf of the Executive Committee. During their meeting the committee discussed the annual dinner and reviewed the agenda for the March Commission meeting.

**VII. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Mr. Patton encouraged all the Board members to think about the future and their role at the Commission; and asked everyone to think about what contribution they can make. He also thanked Mr. Bopp for his help getting a large turn out from Pulaski County at the annual dinner. Mr. Gerald complimented Mr. Patton on doing a great job at the annual dinner.

**VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. He reported a press release was sent out about the annual dinner; it was run in the Radford News Journal and will be in other papers soon. He noted the Appalachian Spring project will hold a meeting next Monday March 31<sup>st</sup>. He explained that he has made contact with Virginia Logos about getting New River Trail State Park signage along Interstates 81 and 77 and will continue to get information on costs and programs available to help accomplish this. He reported staff has started developing the work program for FY15 and will be responding to the requests from local governments for assistance in the next couple of days. Mr. Byrd noted the annual Planning Commissioner training will be held May 28<sup>th</sup> at 6pm; the topic will be Housing for an Aging Population. He reported the Secretary of Commerce may be able to attend the April Commission meeting, if he is able to attend it will be a good opportunity for others to attend and hear the Secretary speak. Lastly, he reported he attended the annual Washington Policy Conference for the National Association of Development Organizations in conjunction with the Appalachian Regional Commission and was able to meet with Senator Kaine, Congressman Griffith and Senator Warner's staff about issues and share the final Livability Initiative Reports with them. Mr. Patton noted he received a letter from Dr. Steger thanking the Commission for the award presented to him at the annual dinner.

## IX. OLD BUSINESS

None.

## X. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Rural Transportation Work Program for FY15

Mr. Sharp gave an overview of the work program and explained it utilizes state planning and research funds, it is administered by VDOT, and it is intended for non-urbanized areas. He then gave a budget overview and examples of specific projects completed by the Commission.

Mr. Patton called for approval of the resolution of support for the FY15 Transportation planning work program.

Motion: Mr. Cox moved for the approval of the resolution of support for the FY15 Transportation planning work program. Ms. Newcomb seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### B. Distribution of the NRV Livability Initiative Final Reports

Mr. Byrd explained the reports will be distributed to the local governments starting today with a memo that explains the partnership with the Community Foundation going forward and that there will be presentations made to each locality in the next couple months to overview the findings and have a discussion with the local elected officials. There will be 20 copies distributed to each locality; if there are individuals who would like a copy they will be \$30.00 per set to recover the cost. Electronic copies are available on line free of charge. Lastly, he gave examples of programs already started as a result of conversations within the Livability Initiative.

## IX. REGIONAL FOCUS

### A. Demonstrating Technology Applied to Commission Projects

Elijah Sharp, Director of Planning and Programming

Mr. Sharp gave a presentation overviewing some of the ways technology has been applied to Commission projects. He began by showing the Commissioners a trail counter that will be used in the future to provide data to localities on how many people are using the trails. The counters will also be able to differentiate between bicyclers, hikers, horseback riders, etc. Mr. Sharp explained some of the ways technology is currently being use by staff: creating attractive master plans with Photoshop and Publisher software, analyzing and sharing data with ArcGIS software, and creating information experiences with story maps or interactive maps. He then displayed the online maps and gave a quick overview of how they can be used.

Discussion: Ms. Newcomb asked if the maps were available on line. Mr. Sharp replied the interactive Existing Transportation System and Multimodal Planning maps are available on the NRVPCDC website, while the local food map is still in the draft stage. Mr. Byrd explained the PDC will be mapping assets as part of a project discussed at an ag-tourism meeting held last week and noted that the map should be live in a couple of months. Dr. Harvey asked if businesses have to give permission to have their business listed on the map. Mr. Byrd explained the original list of businesses came from a NRV Local Food Directory published in 2011. For a business to be added, the business should submit a form or contact the Commission to communicate their desire to be identified on the map. There will be an online form available for business owners to complete who want to be listed on the map, and then the request will be

verified by staff before publishing the information on the map. Mr. Sullivan asked how this map will compare to Google. Mr. Byrd replied the map will hopefully increase the search data Google uses and will elevate the local businesses when they are searched. Mr. Sullivan asked if the maps are being sold or if this is a service. Mr. Byrd explained this is part of the ag-tourism program funded by a DHCD planning grant and by the Governor's AFID program intended to support the development of agriculture based income. The maps will not be sold, but rather will be available online and possibly in print.

Before adjourning the meeting Mr. Patton took a moment to thank Mr. Carpenter for all his help with the annual dinner.

Mr. Patton called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Mr. Cox motioned to adjourn. Ms. Newcomb seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

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Michael S. Patton, Chair  
New River Valley Planning District Commission

# NEW RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Minutes of the Commission Meeting

held on

April 24, 2014

6:00 p.m. – New River Valley Business Center, Fairlawn

### I. CALL TO ORDER

**PRESENT:** Mr. M. Patton, Chair, Town of Floyd; Mr. S. Weaver, Treasurer, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. J. Carpenter, Radford University; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Cox, City of Radford; Mr. R. Chambers, Montgomery County; Mr. G. East, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Mr. F. Gerald, Floyd County; Dr. H. Harvey, City of Radford; Ms. E. Janney, Floyd County; Ms. S. Journell, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. W. Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. L. Law, Giles County; Ms. H. Lesko, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. K. Marshall, City of Radford; Mr. H. Showalter, Town of Christiansburg and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

**ABSENT:** Mr. K. Sullivan, Vice-Chair, Virginia Tech; Ms. A. Perkins, Montgomery County; Ms. C. Newcomb, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County and Mr. J. Soileau, Virginia Tech.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Brad Mecham, Janet McNew and Julie Phillips.

### II. CONSENT AGENDA

#### A. Approval of Minutes for March

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Cox moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Bopp seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried, three abstentions; Mr. Garrett, Ms. Janney, and Ms. Lesko.

#### B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for March

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Mr. Weaver questioned the overage on printing costs. Mr. Byrd explained this was due to the printing of the Livability reports which will be reimbursed by grant funds in part and Commission funds.

Motion: Ms. Janney moved for the approval of the treasurer's report. Ms. Lesko seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

#### A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. EDA Planning Assistance FY15

#### B. Regular Project Review

None.

C. Environmental Project Review

1. Reissuance of VPDES Permit No. VA0080837 - VA140414-016004000713

Rich Creek - Glen Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant

Motion: Ms. Lesko moved for the approval. Mr. Cox seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

2. 2014 Claytor Lake drawdown plan

Motion: Dr. Harvey moved for the approval. Mr. Cox seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None.

V. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Patton welcomed Ms. Journell, the Town of Pearisburg representative to the Commission. Ms. Journell overviewed some of the items the Town of Pearisburg council is currently working on. Mr. Garrett shared an article from the USA Today regarding rails to trails and who ultimately owns the property. In some cases the railroad company did not own the land so they were not in a position to give easements or ownership to another entity. The issue has relevancy in the region since the Commission recently discussed the New River Trail State Park. Mr. Law shared the Pembroke Ruritan club will be holding a 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on August 11<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Lesko announced the Moss Center for the Arts will hold their grand opening this weekend (4/26-4/27). Mr. East shared the Pulaski Farmers Market will open on May 6<sup>th</sup> at the Pulaski Train Station. Mr. Carpenter announced Radford University will hold its graduation May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>; Friday May 9<sup>th</sup> the University will have approximately 270 graduates in the Masters and Doctorates programs and Saturday May 10<sup>th</sup> there will be over 2,000 undergraduates. Mr. Carpenter also noted the speaker for the graduation ceremony will be the Secretary of Education, Anne Holton. Lastly, Mr. Clevinger announced the reenactment of the Battle at Cloyd's Mountain was a success and passed around a commemorative coin designed for the event.

VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Patton reported on behalf of the Executive Committee. During their meeting the committee discussed the FY15 budget and the ongoing developments with the management of Virginia's First and the Commerce Park.

VII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Patton shared several articles from the Roanoke Times, including articles about the annual dinner, tourism, and Ms. Lesko's son.

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This portion of the agenda was moved to the new business portion of the meeting.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None.

## X. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Review Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Ranking Criteria.

Mr. Mecham gave an overview of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update and explained this year will be a five year update which will include a major overhaul and incorporate Livability Initiative data received through the public outreach. He gave examples of some of the projects in the region identified in the CEDS document and ultimately received funding such as the Floyd Innovation Center, the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center, Commerce Park, TEMCI, and the Broadband network. He reviewed the goals, objectives and strategies document and explained the changes and major highlights for this year's review. At this time Mr. Mecham asked if there were comments or questions relating to the goals, objectives and strategies.

Discussion: Mr. Garrett asked for clarification on the last mile fiber optics project. Mr. Mecham explained the middle mile fiber project acts as an interstate and the last mile would act as the arterial roads and bring the fiber to homes. Mr. Marshall explained there are currently five or six wireless carriers in the New River Valley and questioned the need to increase the wireless network. Mr. Byrd explained the middle mile fiber is currently being used by some of the providers in the area to increase their own network and achieve greater signal strength at towers and increase bandwidth to customers. Mr. Marshall stated that many carriers in the New River Valley already had fiber and asked what else needs to be built. Mr. Byrd replied that nothing is currently being built, right now the question being explored is how to get the highest bandwidth to the homes and are the places that need increased bandwidth. Mr. Law noted there are new towers being installed in Giles County and explained that after they are installed there needs to be someone to service the areas. Mr. Marshall stated that in some areas the middle mile project installed new fiber over existing fiber provided by private sector companies. Mr. Patton questioned if the middle mile project added value. Mr. Marshall explained the project added fiber but limited private sector company's ability to charge for placing their own fiber. Mr. Byrd explained the fiber placed by the middle mile project was rural funded to increase access to bandwidth in areas that would not have had it otherwise. He also stated there may be areas where there is duplication of fiber; however there was no way to know that because in some circumstances private companies withheld the locations of their fiber. Without having the locations of fiber from the private companies it was considered absent in some areas. Government facilities were connected to increase bandwidth in schools and buildings such as the New River Valley Business Center and decrease the cost to the tax payer supporting those operations. Mr. Law explained that Pemtel hooked into the fiber from the middle mile fiber project and this enabled them to increase capacity and decrease cost to the customer. Mr. Byrd explained that at this point only research is being done to see what services are desired to get broadband to the home. Mr. Marshall stated more research needed to be done before fiber is installed to be sure there is a need and that it is not a duplicate fiber. Mr. East noted Pulaski is benefiting from the project and asked who manages the project. Mr. Byrd explained Citizens Cooperative out of Floyd manages the fiber and explained that because it was funded by federal money they have pricing structure they have to use and the fiber is open access, so any company can utilize it to serve their customers. Also, because the local governments provided match money the local government facilities receive a decreased rate in addition to the e-rate which is an education discount rate. He also noted there are private providers who competed and still have contracts with local governments in place. Mr. Byrd explained when a request for the locations of the fiber is put out and the private providers do not respond it is perceived that there is a gap in service. Dr. Harvey asked if it is possible to track the locations with the GIS system. Mr. Byrd replied that it could;



however, data would have to come from the private sector. Mr. Law explained that Pentel chose not to share their information. Mr. Garrett noted that the last mile fiber has to be commercially viable. Mr. Marshall explained that the industry is moving toward total wireless solutions.

Dr. Harvey asked for the definition of affordable housing. Mr. Mecham explained it is 80% of the area median income. Dr. Harvey noted that the City of Radford has a high rate of section eight housing units and noted that there needs to be a plan for the locality to sustain the services. Mr. Byrd explained that the housing report provided by the Livability Initiative provides different concepts of affordable housing as a resource to communities.

Mr. Law explained that high schools should be included in the strategy of expanded education, training, and research around clean energy; he noted that many people in Giles County and the New River Valley do not have a college degree and stated that high schools or middle schools should be included.

Mr. Mecham reviewed the project ranking criteria and explained that there was one priority and two ranking criteria added to this year's review. He also explained that there have been scoring changes based on the projects of regional significance. Mr. Patton explained that there will be sufficient time on next month's agenda to talk about the ranking.

At this time item VIII. Directors Report was given:

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. He reported the Executive Committee talked at length about the management of Virginia's First and the Commerce Park. He explained there were two responses and the Executive Committees of Virginia's First and the Commerce Park will be meeting to discuss the proposals. The Commission proposed to continue the services it currently provides; a decision should be made by May. He explained the passenger rail committee was presented a framework for a study; it will now go to the MPO to see if the study will be funded for next fiscal year. He reported the PDC is working with the Health District on a partnership for mapping services. The Commission is currently working on a grant application to the Center for Disease Control for funds to develop Health Impact Assessments. He also noted the agenda has been reformatted to include the mission of the Commission at the bottom. He reported there will be a meeting May 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss regional tourism, the meeting will be held in the City of Radford Council chambers since space was not available at the NRV Business Center and he thanked the City for their willingness to host. He also reported the spring Mayors and Chairs meeting will be May 28<sup>th</sup> at the NRV Business Center. Mr. Patton pointed out the tourism and Mayors and Chairs meetings were recommendations of the assessment that are currently being implemented.

Mr. Byrd distributed a resolution requesting VDOT to restore funding to the Route 460 Southgate Drive Interchange project. He explained that currently the interchange is at-grade and the project is to do a grade-separated interchange. Mr. Byrd noted that Virginia Tech has been working toward this project for several years, has completed the environmental work, and the project was funded. This year the funds were moved to a project on US 220. Mr. Patton questioned how this was discovered. Mr. Byrd replied the draft plan was released and when that happens the MPO and PDC review the projects on the list. Mr. Cox explained there were several projects that were ranked higher than the 460 interchange that have not been funded. Mr. Byrd explained there is different funding for urban and rural projects. Mr. Garrett questioned if the project was moved back a year or taken completely off the list. Mr. Byrd replied the priority list can change annually by the way the Commonwealth Transportation Board decides to allocate funding. However, once a project is started, it normally does not lose funding. Getting it started is the most crucial time. Ms. Lesko stated that

the funding for this project cannot go toward any rural project in the region meaning the funds can go toward this project or one not in our region. Mr. Garrett noted that we should ask about the logic utilized for moving funding from this project to the US 220 project.

Motion: Mr. Law moved for the approval of the resolution. Mr. Clevinger seconded the motion.

Action: Mr. Patton requested a roll call vote on the motion:

Mr. Bopp - yes

Mr. Carpenter - yes

Mr. Chambers - yes

Mr. Clevinger - yes

Mr. Cox - yes

Mr. Garrett - yes

Mr. Gerald - no

Dr. Harvey - yes

Ms. Janney - abstain

Ms. Journell - yes

Mr. Law - yes

Ms. Lesko - yes

Mr. Marshall - yes

Mr. Patton - yes

Ms. Showalter - yes

Dr. Warren - no

Mr. Weaver - yes

Motion carried.

Mr. East asked how rural areas can gain clout and obtain funds. Mr. Byrd responded getting a local government resolution and getting community and private sector support, and using data to support the projects will help establish the need for the project. Ms. Lesko asked if a rural project that has an impact on urban areas could use urban funds. Mr. Byrd replied that he has not seen it demonstrated, but also has not heard that question. Mr. Patton stated that he wants to have the VDOT representative, William Fralin, attend a meeting in the near future.

B. Review Southwest Virginia Economic Analysis Report

Mr. Byrd gave an overview of the SWVA Economic Analysis Report and explained the report is about building quality communities. The report illustrates the increase in tourism, industry changes, “anywhere” businesses, and employment changes in the NRV. The report compares the New River Trail State park to other state parks and shows its attendance is far greater than any other park; which is another reason there needs to be more signage to help the visitors recognize there are businesses that support trail users. Mr. Byrd explained a letter was submitted to Virginia Logos formally after last month’s meeting requesting guidance on how to proceed with the signage issue. Mr. Showalter asked how many signs are in question. Mr. Byrd explained there are seven exits along I-81 and I-77 where signage would be needed. Mr. Clevinger explained localities cannot put up signs on the interstate; signs have to be installed by the State since it is the state’s property. Mr. East noted the Pulaski County Chamber sign blew over and visits to the Visitor’s Center were down 20% without the sign, which shows the impact of the signage on the interstate.

## XI. REGIONAL FOCUS

None.

Mr. Patton called for any further questions. Mr. Law asked for clarification on the Stormwater regulations changes. Mr. Byrd explained legislation passed so local governments do not have to administer the stormwater programs; they can defer to the VA Department of Environmental Quality to operate the program. For the New River Valley region Giles, Floyd, and Pulaski Counties will not have to administer their programs.

Mr. Patton called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Mr. Cox motioned to adjourn. Ms. Janney seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

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Michael S. Patton, Chair  
New River Valley Planning District Commission

# NEW RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Minutes of the Commission Meeting

held on

May 22, 2014

6:00 p.m. – New River Valley Business Center, Fairlawn

### I. CALL TO ORDER

**PRESENT:** Mr. M. Patton, Chair, Town of Floyd; Mr. S. Weaver, Treasurer, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. K. Sullivan, Vice-Chair, Virginia Tech; Mr. T. Cox, City of Radford; Mr. R. Chambers, Montgomery County; Mr. F. Gerald, Floyd County; Dr. H. Harvey, City of Radford; Ms. E. Janney, Floyd County; Mr. W. Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. L. Law, Giles County; Mr. K. Marshall, City of Radford; Ms. C. Newcomb, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. J. Soileau, Virginia Tech; and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

**ABSENT:** Mr. J. Carpenter, Radford University; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. G. East, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Ms. S. Journell, Town of Pearisburg; Ms. H. Lesko, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. A. Perkins, Montgomery County; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County and Mr. H. Showalter, Town of Christiansburg.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Brad Mecham, Janet McNew, Eli Sharp, Jennifer Wilsie and Julie Phillips.

### II. CONSENT AGENDA

#### A. Approval of Minutes for April

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Bopp moved for the approval of the minutes. Ms. Newcomb seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

#### B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for April

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Ms. Newcomb moved for the approval of the treasurer's report. Mr. Chambers seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

#### A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. EDA Planning Assistance FY15

#### B. Regular Project Review

None.

#### C. Environmental Project Review

1. Reissuance of VPDES Permit No. VA0060844 Lower Stroubles Creek WWTP

Motion: Ms. Newcomb moved for the approval. Mr. Bopp seconded the motion.  
Action: Motion carried unanimously.

2. Reissuance of VPDES Permit No. VA0087084 APCo's Claytor Hydroelectric Plant  
Motion: Dr. Harvey moved for the approval. Mr. Chambers seconded the motion.  
Action: Motion carried unanimously.

3. Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Pesticide Performance Grant  
Application FY15-17  
Motion: Mr. Chambers moved for the approval. Ms. Newcomb seconded the motion.  
Action: Motion carried unanimously.

#### **IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS**

None.

#### **V. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

Mr. Law reported the Caterpillar plant in the Town of Pearisburg will be closing. Mr. Law also noted that Pemtel recently paid \$550,000 to its members in the form of capital credit bringing the total paid to \$10 million. Ms. Newcomb reported the Town of Blacksburg will be voting on their stormwater utility in June. Mr. Soileau explained the students are gone for the summer and there are a number of construction projects underway at Virginia Tech. Mr. Patton noted Mr. Marshall was re-elected to the City of Radford Council. Dr. Warren reported Pulaski County Public Service Authority is currently testing wells in Draper as an alternate water source. Dr. Warren also explained that Pulaski County received a gold award for their water treatment plant. Mr. Gerald explained the Floyd Innovation Center is well on its way toward completion and expressed concern over the transition of the old water treatment plant to a distillery. Mr. Patton noted that Floyd County is losing the Dex plant. Mr. Bopp reported the Future Farmers of America held a banquet and explained how impressed he was by the young members of that group.

#### **VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Sullivan reported on behalf of the Executive Committee. During their meeting the committee discussed the FY15 budget, the NRV tourism meeting, the FY14-15 slate of officers, the peer-to-peer visit, and forming a work program committee.

#### **VII. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Mr. Patton shared Ms. Janney was in many pictures in the Floyd Press. He also explained that he attended an event recently that gave him many ideas for next year's annual dinner. Mr. Patton reported that he was honored to attend New River Community College's (NRCC) graduation and also noted that Ms. Newcomb graduated. Dr. Warren noted that the grandson of the first chancellor of NRCC graduated this year and remarked it was an honor to have the chancellor in attendance at the graduation.

## VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd noted the framework of an agenda for the peer-to-peer visit was passed around at the meeting; he explained the committee created this framework and asked the Commissioners if there was anything they would like added or removed from the agenda. Mr. Patton noted he would like to visit some of the smaller more rural communities. Mr. Byrd also explained the visit is anticipated for late summer or early fall. Mr. Patton noted that he would like to see as many Commissioners as possible attend.

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. He reported the Executive Committees of Virginia's First and the Commerce Park elected to have the Economic Development Alliance fulfill the management services. A primary reason the Alliance was chosen was because they were willing fulfill the entire suite of duties. He also noted the VDOT Six-Year Improvement Plan public meeting was held May 19<sup>th</sup> at Northside High School, he explained the Secretary of Transportation announced funding is planned to be restored for the Southgate Interchange project and that the relocation of the park and ride in Christiansburg is anticipated for funding. He reported the NRV tourism meeting held on May 7<sup>th</sup> had great representation with 15 people in attendance and a second meeting is planned for July 31<sup>st</sup> in the NRV Business Center. Mr. Byrd announced that the Southwest Virginia Summit will be held May 29<sup>th</sup> in Abingdon with the focus on collective impact approach to community and economic development. He announced the annual local government Planning Commissioner Training event will be held May 28<sup>th</sup> at the NRV Business Center and will focus on aging in our communities; there will be three panelists to discuss home modifications that facilitate aging, land use and zoning ordinance provisions in relation to aging in place and new construction features sought by senior home buyers. The Spring Mayors and Chairs meeting will also take place on May 28<sup>th</sup> at the NRV Business Center.

## IX. OLD BUSINESS

None.

## X. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Project Package

Mr. Mecham gave an overview of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) projects completed in 2013-2014, projects near completion, and provided a list of the 2014-2015 highest ranking/priority projects for the New River Valley. Some of the projects completed in 2013-2014 are the Raymond F. Ratcliffe Memorial Transportation Museum, the Hethwood portion of the Huckleberry Trail, Phase 2 of the Corporate Research Center. Projects currently near completion are the Route 114 Bridge, which is now open, the Renva Knowles Bridge over Rt. 114 on the Huckleberry Trail and the Pulaski County Sheriff's office and a joint dispatch center. Mr. Mecham then gave an overview of the top ten projects identified for 2014-2015 and asked if there were comments or questions relating to the projects identified.

Discussion:

Dr. Harvey asked why shell buildings were included in the top ten projects list and explained they have not worked out well within the City of Radford, she suggested virtual buildings instead. Mr. Mecham explained this was identified by the Economic Development Alliance in order for communities to have inventory to show prospects and to stay competitive with other areas that offer new buildings. It was noted that virtual building plans have been developed for the Commerce Park and a few other sites in the region. Dr. Harvey noted that a shell building sat empty for years in the City of Radford but was recently sold. Mr. Marshall

added the building was sold well below its value. Mr. Sullivan questioned where a conference/civic center would be located and who identified it. Mr. Mecham explained this is a regional vision project and it was identified several years ago. Mr. Byrd explained this was included in the ranking list when the visioning for RU West took place, prior to the Inn at Virginia Tech being built. The vision was to create a cost-effective conference center for the region comparable to the Wytheville Conference center. Mr. Sullivan noted he would like to know how well the Wytheville Conference center is doing financially before spending too much time on a similar facility in the New River Valley. Mr. Patton asked Mr. Mecham to explain the next steps in the CEDS update. Mr. Mecham responded that the Commission will need to approve the full CEDS package in June. Dr. Harvey questioned if the project listed as Graded Building Site - NRV Commerce Park would also include maintenance of the site to keep it from being overgrown. Mr. Mecham explained maintenance has not been discussed, but will be in the future should the project happen.

B. Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for the NRV MPO

Mr. Sharp gave an overview of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and explained the purpose of the report and showed how local data was used to prepare the report, to develop long-range strategies, identify multimodal corridors, and to assist in local decision making. Mr. Sharp overviewed different maps within the plan and showed the Commissioners how the interactive maps located on the Commission's website can be used. Mr. Sharp noted that there will be a public meeting next Thursday May 29<sup>th</sup> at the Montgomery County Government Center from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m.

Discussion:

Ms. Newcomb asked if local planners are aware of these maps. Mr. Sharp explained he has presented to several groups including the Blacksburg Corridor Committee. Mr. Sullivan questioned if the PDC is charging for this plan. Mr. Sharp explained the MPO has paid \$30,000 split over two fiscal years.

C. Virginia Retirement System Contribution Rate Resolution

Mr. Byrd explained the Commission historically selects the certified rate option provided by VRS and noted that the 6.60% rate is a reduction from the current rate.

Discussion:

Mr. Cox questioned if the Commission is fully funded. Mr. Byrd responded the PDC has not seen communication from VRS to indicate if the Commission is not fully funded, but it is something staff will check on.

Action:

Motion: Mr. Cox moved for the approval of the resolution. Mr. Bopp seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

D. Establishing Commission Work Program Committee

Mr. Byrd explained one of the recommendations from the SERDI assessment process was the establishment of a Work Program Committee. The purpose of this committee will be to review the upcoming projects scheduled for the Commission and help provide direction when requests for services are greater than staff time available. Mr. Patton explained he would like the Commissioners to volunteer for this committee and noted that Mr. Clevinger has been chosen to be the chair.

Action:

Motion: Mr. Soileau moved to establish the committee. Mr. Chambers seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

E. Proposed FY15 Commission Budget

Mr. Byrd noted the proposed budget was included in the packet and explained a revised anticipated revenue spreadsheet was distributed. He also noted Commission staff prepares a budget each year for the Commission to review and adopt for the upcoming fiscal year. He then called for any questions related to the proposed budget.

Action:

Motion: Mr. Weaver moved to approve the budget. Mr. Chambers seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

F. Commission Officers for FY15 -Slate

Mr. Patton reported the Nominating Committee, as prescribed in the Commission bylaws, made up of the chair, himself; the treasurer, Mr. Weaver; and one appointed member, Mr. Bopp, have proposed the slate of officers for FY15 to be:

Chair: Mr. Sullivan

Vice-Chair: Mr. East

Treasurer: Mr. Weaver

At-Large Member: Mr. Carpenter

Mr. Patton then explained the Commission will vote on the slate at next month's meeting.

Mr. Patton called for the Commission to approve the slate of officers brought to the Commission by the Nominating Committee.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

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Michael S. Patton, Chair  
New River Valley Planning District Commission



# NEW RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Minutes of the Commission Meeting

held on

June 26, 2014

6:00 p.m. – New River Valley Business Center, Fairlawn

### I. CALL TO ORDER

**PRESENT:** Mr. M. Patton, Chair, Town of Floyd; Mr. S. Weaver, Treasurer, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. K. Sullivan, Vice-Chair, Virginia Tech; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Cox, City of Radford; Mr. R. Chambers, Montgomery County; Mr. G. East, Town of Pulaski; Mr. F. Gerald, Floyd County; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Dr. H. Harvey, City of Radford; Ms. E. Janney, Floyd County; Ms. S. Journell, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. W. Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. L. Law, Giles County; Ms. H. Lesko, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. K. Marshall, City of Radford and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

**ABSENT:** Mr. J. Carpenter, Radford University; Ms. A. Perkins, Montgomery County; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Ms. C. Newcomb, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. J. Soileau, Virginia Tech and Mr. H. Showalter, Town of Christiansburg.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Brad Mecham, Janet McNew, Elijah Sharp, Jennifer Wilsie, Christy Straight and Julie Phillips.

### II. CONSENT AGENDA

#### A. Approval of Minutes for May

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Cox moved for the approval of the minutes. Ms. Janney seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried; two abstentions, Ms. Lesko and Mr. Garrett.

#### B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for May

Mr. Patton called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Bopp moved for the approval of the treasurer's report. Ms. Janney seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

#### A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. RD Loan Application for Pulaski Adult Day Services & Fall Prevention
2. Town of Pulaski's 2014 EPA Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant

#### B. Regular Project Review

None.

C. Environmental Project Review

1. [14-14] - Sec 103 for NATT Air Monitoring Site Program
2. [14-14] - Virginia DEQ DER3 Project
3. Reissuance of VPDES Permit No. VA0062685 Pepper's Ferry Wastewater Treatment Authority

Mr. Patton called for approval of the all three environmental project reviews.

Discussion: Mr. Cox asked if the air monitoring site program was for a site location within the New River Valley. Mr. Byrd explained there is not an air monitoring station in the New River Valley; however, the air monitored moves throughout the state so the New River Valley is included in the review process.

Motion: Mr. Marshall moved for the approval. Ms. Lesko seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None.

V. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Patton noted that there will be several changes in Commission members coming next fiscal year and thanked those who will be leaving the Commission. Mr. East reported the Town of Pulaski was able to include a few key capital improvements in next year's budget. Ms. Journell reported the Town of Pearisburg also finalized next year's budget and was able to include in car cameras for law enforcement. Ms. Journell also invited everyone to the Relay for Life event in Pearisburg Friday June 27, 2014 and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration. Ms. Lesko noted the Blacksburg High School girls' soccer won the state championship and the boys' soccer team took second place at state. Ms. Janney shared she is proud to have the opportunity to play either the piano or organ with both her daughter and granddaughter. Mr. Law shared updates from Giles County; the gas line at Celanese is going in and a shop has opened in Pearisburg for hikers. Mr. Marshall asked if Celanese was shut down recently. Mr. Garrett explained there was a power outage that the plant has since recovered from.

VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Sullivan reported on behalf of the Executive Committee. During their meeting the committee discussed the Personnel Manual update and the Peer to Peer visit which will take place either September 18-19 or October 9-10. Mr. Sullivan then presented Mr. Cox with a thank you gift for his service to the Commission as well as Ms. Lesko and Mr. Patton with a thank you gift for their service as Chair. He also pointed out two plaques honoring the Citizen of the Valley and Champion of the Valley awards and presented a commemorative plaque with all the Commission Chairs since the founding in 1969.

VII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Patton shared a thank you to the Commission for allowing him to serve as Chair. He expressed how much each Commissioner and staff member means to him and applauded the progress made by the Commission during the last two years.

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. He reported the Commission is providing grant administration and staffing support to a local food project in the reuse of the decommissioned Prices Fork

Elementary School. Courtney Grohs who is providing part-time planning for the Commission will be working on this project to facilitate the process, engage the community and find out what will work well in the site. Mr. Byrd also explained a tri-county agritourism program between Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski recently requested the Commission to assist with project management over the next fiscal year. Elijah Sharp will be working on this project. Mr. Byrd reported the second Mayors and Chairs meeting was held in May and was well attended. Mr. Byrd explained that at the last meeting it was reported that Virginia's First and the Commerce Park selected the Alliance to provide management/administrative support; however, he wanted the Commission to be aware the Alliance has since stepped away from their proposal and the local government members will need to take action soon. The Commission received a copy of a letter to Senator Edwards from DRPT in support of the MPO's passenger rail study. Mr. Byrd noted the Secretary of Commerce will be at the August meeting. He also noted he will have an orientation for the FY15 officers in July/August and reminded the Commissioners of the VAPDC conference in July.

Mr. Cox asked when there will be a time for public interest regarding Appalachian Spring project listed on the Director's report. Mr. Byrd responded the staff of the PDC and the Appalachian Spring project met and are looking toward an August date for a stakeholder input meeting.

## **IX. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Project Package and Report**

Mr. Mecham gave an overview of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), explained the draft Economic Development Administration guidelines were applied to the updated document, explained the top five sectors identified and the top seven priority areas, and overviewed the top five projects identified for 2014-2015.

Discussion: Mr. Garrett noted that the CEDS report shows the New River Valley at 67% of the states average in income; however, he would like to see how that income level corresponds to the cost of living in our area to have the standard of living better reflected. Mr. Garrett also explained the report states there is not currently a natural gas line in Giles County which is not correct. Service currently exists in Narrows and in Pearisburg. Mr. Mecham explained that Ms. Kidd, the Narrows Assistant Town Manager, provided that correction and the document has been updated.

Mr. Patton called for approval of the CEDS report if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Ms. Lesko moved for the approval. Mr. Chambers seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### **B. FY14 Revised Budget**

Mr. Byrd explained that any adjustments made in the FY14 budget are reflected in the Treasurer's report.

Mr. Patton called for approval of the revised budget if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Cox moved for the approval. Mr. Bopp seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. Update of Commission Personnel Manual

Mr. Byrd explained a correction in the paid time off accrual table was distributed at the meeting; this correction makes it clear that the increase in accrual takes place after 60 months of service and then after 120 months of service. Mr. Garrett asked why jury duty is listed as both administrative and civil leave. Mr. Byrd explained if jury duty pay is accepted then it qualifies as administrative leave without pay and if the employee returns the jury duty pay to the Commission and accepts Commission pay it is civil leave.

Mr. Patton called for approval of the personnel manual if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Chambers moved for the approval. Mr. Garrett seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

D. FY15 Commission Work Program

Mr. Patton called for approval of the FY15 Commission Work Program if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Cox moved for approval of the FY15 Commission Work Program. Mr. Gerald seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

E. Commission Officers for FY15 - Election

Mr. Patton called for the election of the officers as follows; Mr. Sullivan, Chair; Mr. East, Vice-Chair; Mr. Weaver, Treasurer, Mr. Carpenter, Member-at-Large; Mr. Patton, Past-Chair.

Motion: Ms. Lesko moved to elect the officers as nominated. Ms. Janney seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Patton took a moment to thank Mr. Sullivan for his service as Vice-Chair and congratulate him on becoming Chair.

F. July Commission Meeting (Historically it is cancelled due to conflict with VAPDC)

Mr. Sullivan called for the July meeting to be cancelled due to its conflict with the VAPDC conference.

Motion: Ms. Janney moved to cancel the meeting. Mr. Bopp seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

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Michael S. Patton, Chair  
New River Valley Planning District Commission

# NEW RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Minutes of the Commission Meeting

held on

August 28, 2014

6:00 p.m. – New River Valley Business Center, Fairlawn

### I. CALL TO ORDER

**PRESENT:** Mr. K. Sullivan, Chair, Virginia Tech; Mr. G. East, Town of Pulaski, Vice-Chair; Mr. S. Weaver, Treasurer, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. J. Carpenter, Radford University; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. F. Gerald, Floyd County; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Dr. H. Harvey, City of Radford; Ms. S. Journell, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. L. Law, Giles County; Ms. H. Lesko, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. C. Newcomb, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd; Ms. A. Perkins, Montgomery County; Mr. J. Soileau, Virginia Tech; Mr. M. Sutphin, Town of Blacksburg and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

**ABSENT:** Mr. R. Chambers, Montgomery County; Ms. E. Janney, Floyd County; Mr. W. Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Mr. M. Turk, City of Radford; and Mr. H. Showalter, Town of Christiansburg.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Patrick Burton, Janet McNew, Christy Straight and Julie Phillips.

### II. SPECIAL GUESTS

This portion of the agenda was moved to the new business portion of the meeting.

### III. CONSENT AGENDA

#### A. Approval of Minutes for June

Mr. Sullivan called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Ms. Newcomb moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Bopp seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

#### B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for June and July

Mr. Sullivan called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Bopp moved for the approval of the treasurer's report. Ms. Newcomb seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### IV. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

#### A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

None.

#### B. Regular Project Review

None.

C. Environmental Project Review  
None.

V. PUBLIC ADDRESS  
None.

**VI. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

Mr. Carpenter thanked the Commissioners and the local communities for their patience with the influx of Radford University students and noted that the university began discussing the 5% budget cuts that will go into effect this fiscal year and the 7% cuts that will go into effect in FY16. Mr. Sullivan welcomed the new Commission Board members; Mr. Michael Sutphin from the Town of Blacksburg and Mr. Michael Turk from the City of Radford. Mr. East reported that Secretary Jones announced a \$1.5 million investment in the Town of Pulaski. Ms. Newcomb asked who made the investment. Mr. East explained it was made by investors in the region under the name of West Main Development group. Mr. East also reported Pulaski Baseball LLC was purchased by David Hagan of Shelor Motor Mile and he approached the Town about purchasing Calfee Park. Mr. Bopp Reported Blue Bird Resins and Project Stamping have purchased existing buildings in Pulaski which helps the positive economic trend in town.

**VII. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. East reported on behalf of the Executive Committee. During their meeting the committee discussed the Peer to Peer visit; they received a tourism update; they also discussed the New River Valley passenger rail study and the Commerce Park management. Mr. East noted there will be an Appalachian Spring meeting in the New River Valley Business Center on September 15<sup>th</sup> from 10am -12pm.

**VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Mr. Sullivan reported on new items happening within the New River Valley, such as tourism and the passenger rail study and how the Planning District Commission has been at the forefront of these items.

**IX. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. He reported on the state budget cut and how that may impact the Planning District Commission. Mr. Byrd noted that the MPO adopted the Bike/Ped Master Plan prepared by the Commission and explained the Commission received an Innovation Award from NADO for the online mapping tool. He also reported the MPO will fund the Passenger Rail study which will begin in January of 2015. Mr. Byrd explained the Commission submitted a grant to the Virginia Tourism Corporation to develop a trail guide for the region including the counties of Montgomery, Pulaski, Giles and the City of Radford. He also reported DHCD announced funding availability for a Building Collaborative Communities grant. He reported Brad Mecham's last day with the Commission was August 13<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Mecham accepted a position with Central Arizona Governments. He also explained the Commission will continue providing the existing administrative role for the Commerce Park. Lastly, Mr. Byrd reported the Commission received the 2014 Outstanding Public Outreach Award from the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association for the public engagement process for the NRV Livability Initiative.

**X. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

## X. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Consumer Version

Mr. Byrd explained the consumer version was included in the packet and noted it is a slimmed down version of the full report.

Discussion: Dr. Harvey overviewed an editorial in the Roanoke Times regarding internet speeds and noted Virginia has the fastest speed in the USA. She then explained the importance of high speed internet to the NRV and how it can support many of the goals identified within the CEDS report. Mr. Sullivan pointed out the Broadband Infrastructure identified in the CEDS report is currently being explored. Mr. Byrd noted there is a need for second generation broadband planning since the middle mile project was complete; now attention is due to identify solutions for the end user.

### **At this time Item II. Special Guests were introduced:**

Mr. Sullivan introduced the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Mr. Maurice Jones and Special Advisor for Rural Partnerships, Ms. Mary Rae Carter. Mr. Jones gave a few brief remarks; including thoughts on broadband and economic development. He noted the Governor wants a new economic development plan for the state that solves the problem of dependence on the public sector. The state is focusing on five themes including, infrastructure, entrepreneurship, workforce, keeping the business climate healthy, and knowing the growth sectors for each region. He then explained a recent investment in Virginia was made from a Chinese paper production company and noted the reason this company chose Virginia was because of the teamwork Virginia displayed.

Discussion: Ms. Newcomb asked why the environment was not reported as a part of economic development. Secretary Jones replied the environment is always a part of economic development and noted natural resources are one of the more important assets. Mr. Patton asked the Secretary what he thought the western side of the state needs to market tourism. Secretary Jones explained while the natural assets are attractive in this area, the history of folk craft, art, and music have the strongest pull and are the most unique. Mr. Patton also noted this area needs help from the state marketing our state parks such as highway signage. Lastly, Dr. Warren noted the customs office at the NRV airport needs to be staffed and he explained how important the office is to industries in and around the New River Valley. Mr. Sullivan then thanked the Secretary for coming and speaking to the Commission.

### B. Peer to Peer Visit with Land of Sky Regional Council

Mr. Byrd reported the visit has been scheduled for September 18-19, 2014. He explained there was a tentative agenda included in the packet and asked for volunteers to attend the trip. Six Commissioners expressed a desire to attend; Mr. Sullivan, Mr. East, Mr. Patton, Mr. Clevinger, Dr. Harvey and Dr. Warren.

### C. Virginia Tourism Corporation Marketing Geography

Mr. Byrd gave a brief presentation on the current geography utilized to promote tourism. He overviewed a regional meeting that took place in late July to consider changing the name of the marketing geography in the western part of the state to Virginia's Mountain region. He framed the questions to the Commissioners; does the Commission support consideration of the name change, and if so, should the local governments recommend to Virginia Tourism Corporation to consider the name change?

Discussion: Mr. Sullivan noted he attended the regional tourism meeting and there was no one against the name change. Mr. Garrett remarked marketing by geographical regions would make it easier for people to find what they are looking for. Mr. Byrd explained the state wants this to be from the communities up and the local governments can only influence the New River Valley region. What happens beyond the New River Valley is up to the local governments in those communities. Mr. Sullivan noted that this was discussed in the past with a different approach and the Commission did not support it at that time. He explained this approach is much more reasonable since it promotes mountains rather than Blue Ridge. Ms. Lesko asked if the proposal would allow for the existing names to be sub-branded. Mr. Byrd replied that it could be marketed that way, such as Mountain Region - Blue Ridge Highlands. Mr. Garrett commented marketing by geography is more descriptive and it is a better way to index the information. Mr. Patton explained the group is asking for support of regional categories.

Mr. Patton moved to recommend the state consider changing the New River Valley marketing name from Blue Ridge Highlands to Virginia's Mountain Region.

Mr. Carpenter seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. East and Mr. Patton asked the Commission staff to prepare an information packet to share with the local governments following direction from the Virginia Tourism Corporation regarding process of how to pursue the change.

D. NRVPCD FY14 Annual Report

Mr. Byrd announced the FY 14 Annual Report was distributed and indicated a mailing list is being compiled to send the reports in hardcopy. Mr. Sullivan suggested in the future the photos in reports be identified so people not familiar with the assets can learn where they are located.

Mr. Sullivan asked if there were any additional remarks before adjourning the meeting. Dr. Warren noted that it is importation not to overlook the staffing of the customs office. Dr. Harvey announced the Development Corporation received a \$7,000 grant from Wells Fargo Bank Foundation. Mr. Bopp suggested everyone visit the Ratcliff museum in Pulaski and Ms. Lesko noted the Black House in Blacksburg is now open.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

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Kevin Sullivan, Chair  
New River Valley Planning District Commission



# NEW RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Minutes of the Commission Meeting

held on

September 25, 2014

6:00 p.m. – New River Valley Business Center, Fairlawn

### I. CALL TO ORDER

**PRESENT:** Mr. K. Sullivan, Chair, Virginia Tech; Mr. G. East, Town of Pulaski, Vice-Chair; Mr. S. Weaver, Treasurer, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. J. Carpenter, Radford University; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. F. Gerald, Floyd County; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Dr. H. Harvey, City of Radford; Ms. S. Journell, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. W. Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. L. Law, Giles County; Ms. C. Newcomb, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd; Ms. A. Perkins, Montgomery County; Mr. J. Soileau, Virginia Tech; Mr. M. Sutphin, Town of Blacksburg and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

**ABSENT:** Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. R. Chambers, Montgomery County; Ms. E. Janney, Floyd County; Ms. H. Lesko, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Mr. M. Turk, City of Radford; and Mr. H. Showalter, Town of Christiansburg.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Janet McNew, Jennifer Wilsie and Julie Phillips.

### IX. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Roanoke Outside Program Overview Presentation

The new business portion of the agenda was moved to the second item of the agenda following Call to Order.

Mr. Sullivan introduced Mr. Pete Eshelman, Director of Roanoke Outside for the Roanoke Regional Partnership. Mr. Eshelman gave a presentation on the Roanoke Outside program and explained how the outdoors and natural assets are used as economic drivers to attract people, businesses, and investments to the area. He explained the Roanoke Outside program was started by having conversations to make people aware of what is going on in the local communities. Steps were then taken to develop the regions outdoor brand. The first step was to inventory the assets, next the gaps were identified, followed by building local support, and lastly a national image is being established. Mr. Eshelman explained the outdoor industry is currently a \$646 billion industry in the United States and there are 138,000 outdoor industry jobs in Virginia. He shared a new publication that came off the press earlier in the week, Life Outside, a lifestyle magazine focused on outdoor recreation from the New River Valley through Roanoke Valley up to Lexington. Lastly, he discussed the Soul of the Community project from the Knight Foundation which examined the connection between people's attachment to their community and how that contributes to economic growth.

Discussion: Mr. Sullivan noted that businesses locating in the region do not see the difference from one community to another, they see the entire region. He explained how this benefits the entire region and noted the concept of regionalism is the core of tourism.

### II. CONSENT AGENDA

#### A. Approval of Minutes for August

Mr. Sullivan called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Patton moved for the approval of the minutes. Ms. Newcomb seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for August

Mr. Byrd explained there was an expanded Treasurer's Report included in the packet and gave a brief presentation to explain the changes. He noted the revised report includes revenues as well as expenses, shows the monthly activity, the year to date, the budgeted amount, and how the activity compares to the budget. There will also be a balance sheet included with the treasurer's report to show the Commissions' overall financial position.

Discussion: Mr. Garrett asked when the revenue will balance with the expenses. Mr. Byrd explained the budget will balance late in the fiscal year and noted a revised budget is typically presented to the Commission in May. Mr. Patton reminded the Commissioners that the investment to convert to the GMS software several years ago allows the Commission to easily provide this information. Mr. Sullivan noted that the revised reports will be included in the packet going forward.

Mr. Sullivan called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Carpenter moved for the approval of the treasurer's report. Dr. Warren seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

**III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS**

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

None.

B. Regular Project Review

None.

C. Environmental Project Review

1. Construction of Cabins at Claytor Lake State Park - ENV14-144S

Mr. Sullivan called for approval of the environmental project review.

Discussion: Dr. Warren noted there should be more than two cabins constructed.

Motion: Dr. Warren moved for the approval. Mr. Soileau seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

**IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS**

None.

**V. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

Ms. Newcomb reported the Town of Blacksburg Council toured the new Brownstone condos on Main Street. Mr. Gerald announced that the Floyd Innovation Center had a ribbon cutting. Dr. Warren reported the Matt Hagan Outdoors store will be relocating to the old Food Lion space in Fairlawn and noted there will be an indoor archery range. Mr. Patton reported Floyd County deeded an easement to the Town so the Town can construct a trail; he then thanked Mr. Gerald and the County for their cooperation in working with the Town. Dr. Warren explained

the Raymond Ratcliffe Train Museum in Pulaski County is receiving recognition. Mr. Clevinger noted the museum received an award from VML and explained the train display is the nation's largest scale model of its kind. Mr. Sullivan reported the New River Challenge was held September 20, 2014. Mr. Clevinger noted Pulaski Fest will be held this weekend at Jackson Park. Mr. Carpenter announced the Highlander Festival will be held October 4<sup>th</sup> at Bissett Park in Radford.

## **VI. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Mr. Sullivan announced to the Commission that Janet McNew has served on the Commission staff for 15 years and presented her with a certificate of appreciation. Mr. Sullivan also announced Kevin Byrd has served on the Commission staff for eight years total, five of which have been as Executive Director. Mr. Byrd was also presented with a certificate of appreciation from the Commission for five years of service as Executive Director.

## **VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. He reported the Floyd Innovation Center held a Ribbon Cutting and encouraged the Commissioners to visit the center. He reported there is high demand for the trail counters across the region and a schedule for deployment will be established soon. He explained staff installed counters at two test sites on the New River Trail State Park and will be providing a one page synopsis of trail use after the trail counters are removed. He also explained the staff will be working with a graduate student from the Virginia Tech Department of Public Health who is utilizing trail count data from downtown Blacksburg and downtown Pulaski to determine how downtown trail use ties into the community. The Appalachian Spring project held a meeting to discuss major assets in the region and will have a follow up meeting soon. Mr. Byrd announced the Commission will have a new employee starting October 20, 2014; Patrick O'Brien will fill the Economic and Community Development Planner position.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Debrief on Peer Exchange with Land of Sky Regional Council**

Mr. Sullivan explained the Peer Exchange, which was a recommendation of the SERDI Assessment, took place September 18-19, 2014. An agenda from the peer exchange was passed around at the meeting and the Board members who attended talked about the different meetings and conversations that took place. Mr. Sullivan talked about the tour of Hendersonville and gave examples of how the town has fundraised and invested in improving the downtown. Mr. Patton noted that the Hendersonville downtown area has a variety of retail shops. Mr. Byrd explained that the City of Hendersonville has a specific staff person who works with the downtown area exclusively. Mr. Sullivan noted the Land of Sky Regional Council worked to create a brand, and while on the trip a presentation was given regarding the importance of creating a brand. Mr. Clevinger explained the conversation about cloud computing and how it works. He suggested the Commission have the speaker come to offer a session in the region because it is a substantial technology investment that needs to be planned. Mr. Sullivan explained Land of Sky's role in front-end planning/visioning efforts and how they leveraged the resources available to help their communities thrive economically. Mr. Clevinger noted that the City of Asheville does not have many of the taxes that our region relies on; however, they are a highly competitive community in terms of economic vitality. Mr. Byrd noted that the regional council started conversations which lead to creating a non-profit organization, River Link, which supports the French Broad River. Dr. Harvey noted that the Land of Sky Regional Council is much larger than our Commission. Mr. Patton explained that one reason they are larger is they are structured

differently and contain more agencies within the regional council such as the Area Agency on Aging, the Workforce Investment Board and transportation programs as well. Mr. Sullivan thanked the Commission members who took the time to attend and staff for arranging the Peer Exchange.

B. Review and Grade Progress on Agency Assessment Implementation

Mr. Sullivan explained due to time constraints this portion of the agenda will be moved to next month's meeting.

Mr. Sullivan asked if there were any additional remarks before adjourning the meeting. Dr. Warren noted that it is important for our localities to keep their webpages current. He explained that people and companies looking to move into the area maybe viewing these webpages. Mr. East agreed with Dr. Warren and noted the webpages are an interface with the communities. Mr. Garrett expressed what he observed from the Roanoke Outside presentation and the Peer Exchange to Asheville; tourism in and of itself is not the end game, rather showcasing communities as outdoor destinations and quality communities helps attract businesses and retains population, which then generates industry and high paying jobs. Ms. Wilsie announced that a follow up Aging in Place workshop will be held Wednesday, October 22, at the Event Center in Christiansburg and she distributed a flier for the event.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

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Kevin Sullivan, Chair  
New River Valley Planning District Commission

# NEW RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Minutes of the Commission Meeting

held on

October 23, 2014

6:00 p.m. – New River Valley Business Center, Fairlawn

### I. CALL TO ORDER

**PRESENT:** Mr. K. Sullivan, Chair, Virginia Tech; Mr. G. East, Town of Pulaski, Vice-Chair; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. J. Carpenter, Radford University; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. F. Gerald, Floyd County; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Dr. H. Harvey, City of Radford; Mr. W. Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd; Ms. A. Perkins, Montgomery County; Mr. H. Showalter, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. J. Soileau, Virginia Tech; Mr. M. Sutphin, Town of Blacksburg and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

**ABSENT:** Mr. S. Weaver, Treasurer, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. R. Chambers, Montgomery County (resigned); Ms. E. Janney, Floyd County; Ms. S. Journell, Town of Pearisburg; Ms. H. Lesko, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. L. Law, Giles County; Ms. C. Newcomb, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; and Mr. M. Turk, City of Radford.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd and Julie Phillips.

### II. CONSENT AGENDA

#### A. Approval of Minutes for September

Mr. Sullivan called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Carpenter moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Patton seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried; one abstention, Mr. Bopp.

#### B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for September

Mr. Sullivan called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Carpenter moved for the approval of the treasurer's report. Mr. Kantsios seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

#### A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

None.

#### B. Regular Project Review

None.

#### C. Environmental Project Review

1. South Recreation Fields Artificial Turf Installation- Virginia Tech ENV14-168S

Mr. Sullivan called for approval of the environmental project review.

Discussion: Mr. Garrett asked if the report contained a stormwater plan. Mr. Byrd replied the report does contain a section relating to watersheds of significant importance and explained that the site is located within the watershed of Stroubles Creek. The application cited less stormwater impacts due to fertilizers no longer being necessary, although a stormwater specific plan does not appear to be included in the environmental review document. Dr. Warren noted there are some recent health concerns with using recycled tires as fill in artificial turf and suggested that an environmentally friendly and safe type of fill should be used.

Motion: Ms. Perkins moved for the approval with comments submitted to DEQ to use environmentally friendly and safe fill materials and add stormwater runoff information. Mr. Carpenter seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

#### IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None.

#### V. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. East reported the Town of Pulaski has put together a committee to study Gatewood Reservoir from a recreation standpoint. He explained the Town hopes to fill a shortage in the budget by taking advantage of all that Gatewood can offer residents and visitors.

#### VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Sullivan noted an invitation went out to all Commissioners to attend the New Virginia Economic Plan meeting and asked Mr. Carpenter to explain further. Mr. Carpenter explained the meeting will be a virtual round table held at eight locations within the state; one in Richmond and seven at different higher education campuses. He noted an invitation has been extended to community leaders and it will take place on October 31 in the College of Business and Economics (COBE) building on campus at Radford University. Mr. Carpenter asked that anyone who wants to attend please contact him or the point of contact to ensure space and parking is available. Mr. Sullivan reminded the Commissioners the Annual Dinner is tentatively scheduled for May 2015 and asked that they be thinking of nominees for the three award categories; Citizen of the Valley, Champion of the Valley (elected official), Friend of the Valley (outside NRV).

#### VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. He reported there will be a rail town hall meeting at the O. Winston Link Museum in Roanoke on 11/10 5:30-7:00 and extended an invitation to all the Commissioners. Mr. Sullivan noted that the Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transit was in attendance at the last NRV Passenger Rail meeting and explained that there was great attendance and encouraged attendance at this meeting, noting that the goal of this meeting is to get passenger service to the New River Valley. Mr. Patton suggested several Commissioners travel together, and it was decided that those who want to attend let Mr. Byrd know and he will arrange to have the Commission vehicles available. He reported there was a VDOT Six-Year Improvement public hearing held and the priority projects from the NRV were submitted with the Route 8 and I-81 interchange improvements separated out to call more attention to this project and to show that more than bridge replacement is needed. He explained the Commission is hosting the Commonwealth Transportation Board

(CTB) members representing the Salem District on November 4<sup>th</sup> and noted there has been good response from local governments to participate. He also explained the Aging in Place workshop was well attended with 150 people and noted that approximately 15-20 percent of those in attendance were from outside of the New River Valley who want to learn about what our region is doing. He reported staff coordinated a group meeting for Geographic Information System (GIS) users in the region and explained they will meet biannually to share ideas and network. Mr. Byrd noted Smart Beginnings of the NRV will be hosting a Business Leaders breakfast on November 12<sup>th</sup> at the Inn at Virginia Tech and asked that anyone interested in attending let him know.

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS

### A. Review and Grade Progress on Agency Assessment Implementation

Mr. Youngquist, who conducted the assessment in 2012 called into the meeting and gave feedback on the progress made to date. Mr. Youngquist noted that the PDC has become a convening point for local elected officials, has identified ways to assist individual communities that need help with Geographic Information System (GIS); and was glad to hear the Commission went to visit the Land of Sky Regional Council. He also encouraged the Commission to engage a committee structure, not only within the Board but also involving local governments and the private sector. Lastly, he encouraged the Commission name change to the New River Valley Regional Commission, which better represents the work completed by the Commission. Mr. Sullivan asked if there are any new trends that the Commission should be aware of that other regional councils are doing. Mr. Youngquist explained that including Virginia Tech and Radford University in the Commission is a trend that was started by the NRVPC and other regional councils are following. He also explained that becoming a regional convening point is important to help the local governments pool resources when needed and will allow the local governments to use the Commission as it was intended. Mr. Sullivan explained that the committee formed to bring recommendations of the assessment to the full Commission wanted to prioritize some of the recommendations that seemed easier first to keep the momentum going which then allows the Commission to accomplish the larger goals. He explained he wanted Mr. Youngquist to call in to show the great progress the Commission has made.

Mr. Sullivan explained he wanted the Commission to go through the priorities and grade the progress made thus far. Each of the eight goals was then discussed, evaluated and graded on a scale of 1 to 10 by the Commission.

Priority 1: To continue the regularly scheduled City/Town/County Manager and Administrator Meetings and create a similar type of meeting arrangement for NRV Chief Elected Officials Forum for Mayors and Board Chairs. Mr. Byrd explained that the Managers Meetings have continued on a quarterly basis and the Commission started the Mayors and Chairs meetings in FY 14; the group decided to meet twice annually. Mr. Patton began the discussion by noting he was impressed with the turnout from the localities. Mr. Patton explained some of the regional issues that have been discussed in the mayors and chairs meetings, such as the park and ride lot in Christiansburg. Mr. Byrd added the first regional discussion about passenger rail took place at the first Mayors and Chairs meeting. Mr. Sullivan explained that after the meetings there were many comments about how great it was to have a forum for all the localities to get together. Mr. Showalter stated the discussion about the park and ride helped Christiansburg find a solution and move the lot to a better location. Mr. Garrett asked what percentages of localities are in attendance at the Mayors and Chairs meetings. Mr. Byrd noted 80 percent of the localities have been in attendance and most of those who were not at the first meeting did attend the second meeting. The Commission gave a grade of 8.

Priority 2: Inaugurate a New River Valley Annual Summit and hold in lieu of the Annual NRV Planning Commission dinner. Mr. Byrd explained in FY14 the Commission overhauled the annual dinner approach. It shifted from Planning Commission members serving the local governments to the elected officials at local, state and federal governments as well as Planning Commission Chairs from the local governments and chief administrative officials and instituted an awards program. The afternoon education session was not instituted with the annual dinner; however the Commission hosts other training events throughout the year. Mr. Patton noted that one of the greatest things to come from the annual dinner was the cooperation of Radford University and thanked Mr. Carpenter for all that he did to help with hosting the event at Radford University. Mr. Patton also noted that the cooperation shows how important the representatives from Radford University and Virginia Tech are to the Commission and what they bring to the table. Dr. Harvey explained that she was very pleased with the turnout and noted that she is really excited about this year's dinner. Mr. Sullivan explained that it would be nice to take a signature issue and combine a day event with the dinner. The Commission gave a grade of 8.

Priority 3: Encourage the creation of a subcommittee to study and provide recommendations about adding a committee structure to the NRVPDC Board. Mr. Byrd explained the first committee established was the Work Program Review committee and Mr. Clevinger was appointed chair in FY14. The committee is expected to take shape in 2015 to advise and learn about the Commission work program. A finance committee is also planned to be established. Mr. Sullivan explained that taking part in a committee will help the board members to be more engaged with the Commission. Mr. Patton explained that he thinks it is important to establish a finance committee and noted that the Board should be more involved in the budget process. Mr. Garrett asked if the right committees are being formed. Mr. Sullivan asked Mr. Byrd to recommend committees that may be a greater need to the Commission. Because a committee has not yet started the Commission gave a grade of 4.

Priority 4: Expand informal discussions with Councils, Boards and Institutions. Mr. Byrd explained all localities receive an annual presentation from the Executive Director on projects serving the specific local government as well as key regional programs and Commission Board members are attending regional project meetings. He also noted the draft minutes are now distributed to all local governments and interested parties within one week of the Commission meeting; the same group receives the agenda packets electronically before each meeting. The Commission staff audited the Newsletter and Annual Report recipient list to make sure it was up to date and the correct people were receiving the information. Mr. Sullivan asked if the Board is forwarding on the minutes to their localities and noted that it is important for Mr. Byrd to meet with the localities and let them know about the work the PDC is doing. Mr. East explained that the presentation to the Town of Pulaski really helped them to understand what the PDC is capable of. Mr. Patton noted that in addition to the discussions the localities know they can contact the PDC and be put in touch with the appropriate person. Mr. Showalter suggested that Mr. Byrd attend work sessions with council rather than do presentations in formal meetings so there is more opportunity for open dialogue. The Commission gave a grade of 8.

Priority 5: Host and facilitate applicable regional groups to engage in dialogue regarding specific challenges, opportunities, and issues that can best be addressed on a regional basis. Mr. Byrd explained the Commission currently serves as a regional convener for such groups as tourism and Appalachian Spring. Mr. Patton explained the Commission served as a regional convener during the Livability Initiative. Mr. Sullivan added passenger rail and the stormwater discussions were also areas where the



Commission served as the regional convener and explained that the Commission should be exploring what the next big issue for the region will be. The Commission gave a grade of 9.

Priority 6: Conduct fact-finding field trips. Mr. Byrd explained the Commission traveled to Ashville to visit the Land of Sky Regional Council and noted it was a positive experience. Mr. Patton explained that he would like to see the Board interact with the Land of Sky Board when they visit our region. Mr. Byrd explained the reason the Board was encouraged to visit the Land of Sky Regional Council was to see the structure of the agency and the type of programs they provide their members. The Commission gave a grade of 10.

Priority 7: Encourage the creation of a subcommittee to study and provide recommendations about providing value added GIS services to the region. Mr. Byrd explained that it was determined the Commission is best positioned to provide analytical work rather than parcel mapping, which a lot of local governments provide. The past year the Commission expanded GIS offerings significantly by branching out into ArcGIS online and establishing a GIS users group for the NRV which will meet biannually. The Commission gave a grade of 9.

Priority 8: Consider changing the name of the New River Valley Planning District Commission to the New River Valley Regional Commission. Mr. Byrd explained the current name is confusing which makes it hard for people to understand what work the Commission provides. Mr. Sullivan noted that the Commission previously agreed to change the name to the New River Valley Regional Commission and explained after visiting the Land of Sky Regional Council he understands the name and mission statement need to be concise. Dr. Harvey asked if there has been a cost analysis on completing a name change. Mr. Byrd replied it cost Land of Sky less than \$20,000.00 and noted that amount included all the print materials. Mr. Patton suggested that the Commission move forward with the name change. Mr. Carpenter explained that the branding is something that needs to come after mission and vision. Mr. Byrd explained that this will be a charter change and the first step needed is to have a majority of the member (8 out of 14) agree to the name change. Mr. Sullivan asked Mr. Byrd to provide more information for the next meeting regarding process and what the communication to the members would be regarding the name change request for support. The Commission gave a grade of 5 because work remains.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. FY16 Per Capita Assessment Rate**

Mr. Sullivan explained the Executive Committee recommended the rate remain at \$1.27 per capita for FY16 and called for approval.

Motion: Mr. Patton moved for the approval the rate remain \$1.27. Mr. Soileau seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Patton noted the Commission should not keep the rate the same for too many years into the future because when it is increased it will need to be a larger jump than if the rate is increased more often in smaller amounts.

### **B. Commission Staffing Level; consider adding Planner I**

Mr. Byrd explained that the staff is spread somewhat thin this year based on project volume and in order to be responsive to the member requests, it is appropriate to add an entry level planner position. He also noted

that this is a position the Commission has had in the past, but decided not to fill based on sequestration impacts. He explained that the reason this issue was brought to the Board was to make them aware that there may be a need to fund part of this position with reserves in FY16, although the FY15 budget certainly supports the position. He asked for feedback from the Commission. Mr. Sullivan noted that this position would give the Commission the opportunity to take on future projects while creating new opportunities for the region to pursue. Mr. Patton explained that adding to the staff reflects the New River Valley as a whole and shows that there is activity to create the need for this position. The Board agreed to add another staff member.

C. Set November Meeting

Mr. Sullivan explained that the November meeting falls on Thanksgiving and noted that the Executive Committee talked about combining the November and December meeting and having it on the third Thursday of November which will be November 20<sup>th</sup>.

Motion: Mr. Patton moved to cancel December's meeting and amend November's meeting to the third Thursday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of November. Dr. Warren seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Patton moved to rename the Commission to the New River Valley Regional Commission by May 1, 2015. Mr. Clevinger seconded the motion.

Action: the meeting carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

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Kevin Sullivan, Chair  
New River Valley Planning District Commission

# NEW RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Minutes of the Commission Meeting

held on

November 20, 2014

6:00 p.m. – New River Valley Business Center, Fairlawn

### I. CALL TO ORDER

**PRESENT:** Mr. K. Sullivan, Chair, Virginia Tech; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. F. Gerald, Floyd County; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Dr. H. Harvey, City of Radford; Ms. C. Newcomb, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd; Ms. A. Perkins, Montgomery County; Mr. H. Showalter, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. J. Soileau, Virginia Tech; Mr. M. Sutphin, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. M. Turk, City of Radford and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

**ABSENT:** Mr. G. East, Town of Pulaski, Vice-Chair; Mr. S. Weaver, Treasurer, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. J. Carpenter, Radford University; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Ms. E. Janney, Floyd County; Mr. W. Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Ms. S. Journell, Town of Pearisburg; Ms. H. Lesko, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. L. Law, Giles County; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; and Vacant, Montgomery County.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Patrick Burton, Janet McNew, Jonnell Sanciangco, Christy Straight, Jennifer Wilsie, Patrick O'Brien and Julie Phillips.

### II. CONSENT AGENDA

#### A. Approval of Minutes for October

Mr. Sullivan called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Patton moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Bopp seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

#### B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for October

Mr. Sullivan called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Ms. Perkins moved for the approval of the treasurer's report. Ms. Newcomb seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

### III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

#### A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. VA141105-00500400121 - NEPA Info Request Route 639-Elliott Creek - Montgomery County
2. VA141029-00400400063 - NEPA Info Request Route 750-Alum Ridge Road - Floyd County

Mr. Byrd explained the staff signed off on these two projects and pointed out that they are not in the 2035 Rural Long-Range Transportation plan however they will improve the operation of the regional transportation system.

B. Regular Project Review  
None.

C. Environmental Project Review

1. ENV14-174S - Future Bovine Extension Teaching & Research Facility - Virginia Tech
2. ENV14-175S - Future Applied Reproduction Facility - Virginia Tech
3. ENV14-183S Multi-Modal Transit Facility - Virginia Tech

Discussion: Mr. Soileau explained the first two projects are known as Kentland Farm improvements, although the projects are located on campus, not at Kentland Farm. He also noted both projects are in the design phase and have not been funded. He overviewed the Multi-Modal facility project, a joint effort between the Town of Blacksburg and Virginia Tech. It will have 2 bus hubs, a conditioned waiting area, office area for both Blacksburg Transit and Virginia Tech's alternative transportation office, bicycle lockers and a bicycle maintenance space.

Mr. Sullivan called for approval of all three environmental reviews.

Motion: Mr. Showalter moved for the approval of all three environmental reviews. Ms. Newcomb seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Soileau also reported on the artificial turf field discussed at the October meeting; he explained that he reached out to Dr. Lance Franklin, Director of Environmental Safety at Virginia Tech to discuss the Commission's concern over the safety of the fill material. Dr. Franklin explained the University consulted the EPA and their findings are that the recycled tire fill materials are not associated with any health risks. Mr. Soileau also noted that the University is exploring the use of organic fill materials.

#### IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None.

#### V. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Gerald reported Hollingsworth & Vose signed a lease to expand in Floyd County and announced they will be creating nine additional jobs. Mr. Bopp reported there was a ribbon cutting at Red Sun Farms. Mr. Sullivan asked how the tomato plants are pollinated. Mr. Byrd explained that there is an entomologist on staff and noted they have honeybees in the facility. Dr. Warren said the facility will produce 180,000 - 200,000 lbs. of tomatoes per week and explained the current facility is only one-third of the planned operation. Dr. Harvey reported she and Mr. Sullivan attended the virtual state-wide economic development plan roundtable meeting held at Radford University and she was impressed with Virginia Tech's discussion on broadband, computer technology, and innovation. Dr. Harvey observed there was no focus on entrepreneurship or tourism in the discussion. Mr. Sullivan noted that it is interesting that the State is looking toward higher education for economic development and pointed out higher education focused the meeting on the areas they are familiar with. Mr. Clevinger reported he attended the Governor's Rural Prosperity conference in Roanoke. He explained entrepreneurship and broadband were the main topics discussed at the conference. Mr. Patton reported the planning of the Annual Dinner which will be held in Floyd in May is coming along well. Ms. Perkins reported on the pipeline issues and announced Montgomery County will hold a public meeting on December 18<sup>th</sup> for citizens to get more information about the project. Mr. Bopp asked how large the proposed pipe will be. Ms. Perkins explained it will be 42". Mr. Sullivan asked if the

pipeline does go through Montgomery County, does the County plan to tap into it. Mr. Byrd explained a finding of the Livability Energy Report was that there is limited access to alternative energy, particularly in rural areas. With electricity as the only source available in many places, access to another source of energy may be worthwhile, only if the pipeline is permitted. Dr. Harvey noted the cost of oil is going down and explained it is important to determine what the future of the pipeline will hold.

## **VI. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Mr. Sullivan explained the Annual Dinner Meeting will be a food truck rodeo held at Hotel Floyd on May 7, 2015. He noted this will be a unique event that will support the local economy by showcasing a local venue as well as local food truck businesses.

## **VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. He reported 572 people have taken the internet speed test associated with the Blacksburg Broadband project and noted that this data will help pinpoint areas of need. Mr. Byrd explained three cyclists volunteered to help assess the needs of Bike Route 76; they reported back the need for signage and issues with sight distance in specific locations. These findings were shared with VDOT; they plan to add signage and make other improvements in the coming years. Mr. Byrd reported that during the passenger rail meeting the question was raised if the New River Valley will need to partner with Bristol, Virginia to support the extension of passenger service. The Bristol group raised awareness to the NRV to think about their legislative presence at both the state and federal levels. Mr. Byrd explained the Commission partnered with the Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council on an EDA grant for seed capital for small business growth. Mr. Sullivan noted that he attended a passenger rail meeting in Roanoke and the New River Valley was well represented. He also explained there is not just the need for people in this area to travel by rail to other destinations; there is a desire for people in other areas to travel to our area. Mr. Clevinger noted that the Governor mentioned passenger rail at the rural conference as an important component for rural economies.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Committee Composition for Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**

Mr. Byrd explained a list of the FY15 CEDS committee members was included in the packet and noted some members have been added and some have been removed from last year's list. Mr. O'Brien also noted he has talked with Jonathan Witt from the Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council about joining the group.

### **B. FY14 Audit Report**

Mr. Byrd explained the audit report came back with no issues and thanked Janet McNew for her diligence throughout the year in working with the auditor to ensure sound financial practices.

Mr. Sullivan called for a motion to approve the audit.

Motion: Mr. Patton moved to approve. Mr. Bopp seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. Commission Name Change Process

Mr. Byrd explained that a timeline for the name change process was included in the packet and noted that the goal is to complete the name change by May 2015 to be unveiled at the annual dinner. Mr. Byrd explained the Commission issued an RFP to provide branding services and received three proposals. The Executive Committee selected Allison Development Group who completed the rebranding work for the Land of Sky Regional Council. Mr. Byrd indicated, if approved, the memos included in the packet can go out to the localities requesting support of the name change promptly to move the process forward. Mr. Byrd then overviewed the process laid out by the Allison Development Group which would begin in January with a focus group meeting open to all Board members and staff. Mr. Sullivan encouraged everyone to participate in the focus group meetings. Mr. Byrd explained the March meeting would likely be when Allison Development Group will make a presentation with three options for the rebranded materials. Mr. Patton noted it is important for everyone to take a part in the process. Mr. Sutphin asked who at the Universities would approve the resolution that requests support for the name change. Mr. Byrd explained that the Vice President responsible for making appointments to the Commission from both universities would be suitable and noted they should provide a letter of support rather than a resolution.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

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Kevin Sullivan, Chair  
New River Valley Planning District Commission