

GPCOG Executive Committee Minutes
May 13, 2009
12:00 p.m. at GPCOG

In attendance: Paul McKenney, President, Cape Elizabeth; Gordon Billington, Standish; Dick Brobst, North Yarmouth; Pat Finnigan, Portland; Shonn Moulton, Gorham; Mike Reynolds, Raymond; Matthew Sturgis, Gray; Dick Wood, RC&D

Members absent: Bridgton, Casco, Chebeague Island, Cumberland, Falmouth, Freeport, Frye Island, Harrison, Long Island, Naples, New Gloucester, Pownal, Scarborough, Sebago, South Portland, West Bath, Westbrook, Windham, Yarmouth, PROP

GPCOG Staff: Neal Allen, Maddy Adams, Dan Goodman, Eben Marsh, Ann Mazerolle

Guests: Lisa Adams, Debra Andrews, Eric DeChevalier, Tim Honey, Ed Suslovic, Laura Vial -- Members of the Global Community Task Force; Elizabeth Trice, Cumberland County

1. **Welcome and Introductions.** There being a quorum, Paul McKenney called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.
2. **Minutes: Executive Committee meeting of April 29, 2009.** *Dick Wood moved approval of the April 29th minutes, with Dick Brobst seconding the motion. All were in favor.*
3. **Global Communities Task Force Report.** Neal provided some background. Former Portland Mayor Ed Suslovic formed the volunteer Task Force in 2007. Tim Honey co-chaired the Task Force along with Robert Woodbury. The Task Force prepared the "Greater Portland Global Communities Task Force Report and Recommendations" which was unanimously endorsed by the Portland City Council. Tim described the Report as an "aspirational set of recommendations." This report is about unleashing our global assets in an organized fashion; it is also about community. One of the recommendations was that the Regional Center for Global Engagement be established through GPCOG. A paid individual would be needed to staff this project. In the interim, the group is prepared to work with COG on a volunteer basis.

Ed Suslovic thanked Tim Honey and Bob Woodbury for their work as Co-chairs. He also thanked Neal for his key role in this and also thanked the members of the task force. He also thanked GPCOG. This is where the action belongs. If we want to do this right, we will need to create additional capacity at GPCOG for another staff person.

Lisa pointed out the similarities between the Global Communities Task Force Report and the Governor's Report. She said that the group worked great together with great leaders and they are willing to continue with their efforts. Deb Andrews said their approach was to look at things through an integrated standpoint while also looking at a lot of different sectors. It was a fun task force. A handout was distributed. Eric thanked Ed Suslovic. He said this is an opportunity for Maine to shine -- to really grow. It will open its doors to the world outside. It can be done by the ambassadors in your own towns. Laura stated that being on the committee was a great experience.

Paul said it was a wonderful opportunity for COG and the region. Gordy asked what the future of the effort is. What products and initiatives would the task force like to see happen. Tim responded that the first step is action by COG. The second step is hiring a person to do the work; it will take a full-time staff person. Formation of a Steering Committee to bring together the key stakeholders would be another step. He mentioned as an example that the Chamber does not collect any information about where businesses in the Greater Portland area are doing business internationally. An annual or biannual conference could be held to examine the ways that we're globally engaged. The task force wants to stay engaged but this meeting will be the end of the original task force. Ed suggested that the center could be a place where the schools could tap into for a foreign language

program or studying other cultures, etc. A data base promoting the assets could be created and maintained.

Dick Brobst made a motion to accept the Global Communities Task Force Report and directed the GPCOG Executive Director to develop an implementation plan for the review and approval of the GPCOG Steering and Executive Committees. The motion was seconded and was approved.

4. **Southern Maine Economic Development Committee.** Neal provided some background. He explained that GPCOG's bylaws authorize the Executive Committee to (among other duties) "create and dissolve standing and temporary committees, create and dissolve special funds, approve regional policies, studies and plans where required." Paul provided some further background. He spoke about the work of the Metro Regional Coalition and how they have signed a resolution about forming an economic development corporation but the focus is only on the MRC communities. We are interested in focusing on the entire region regarding economic development. The MRC might work on one project at a time while "SMEDCO" would coordinate with other aspects of COG's functions such as the Global Task Force, the regional plan idea, etc.

Gordy stated that Paul has given us a great structure; we have been working on regional economic development for several years. However, right now there are so many economic development entities out there that we could be competing with one another. How would the other economic development directors feel about this corporation? The time to create this is when EDA makes COG a separate economic development district. That would give us a greater identifiable purpose. We should only do this if we think it will succeed. Paul said he thinks it is a matter of necessity to create the structure first; this will provide a mechanism for a coordinated strategy. Matt mentioned that this might help to eliminate some of the duplication among the towns. *Matt made a motion to establish the development of a standing committee on community and economic development to be referred to as the Southern Maine Economic Development Committee and that the GPCOG Steering Committee develop an implementation plan for the review and approval of the GPCOG Executive Committee.*

5. **Appointments: Threshold to Maine Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D).** *Dick Brobst moved approval of the appointment of Dick Wood to the RC&D Council for a term expiring December 31, 2011. The motion was approved.* It was suggested that we look to the Maine Street Marketplace group for a volunteer to serve as the second representative.
6. **FY 2010 GPCOG Operations Budget: Schedule.** Upcoming meetings:
Steering Committee - May 27th
Executive Committee - June 3rd
Annual Meeting of the General Assembly – June 18th.
7. **Other business.** GPCOG received a \$400,000 brownfields grant for an 18-month period. The first phase is an inventory phase. Neal recognized Caroline Paras for her excellent work on the grant application.

The Access to Capital Funding forum was a great success. The attendance was solid with an excellent panel of speakers.

8. **Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.