

**GPCOG Executive Committee Minutes**  
**October 29, 2008**  
**12:00 p.m. at GPCOG**

**In attendance:** Gordon Billington, Vice-Chair, Standish; Genie Beaulieu, Freeport; Dick Brobst, North Yarmouth; Jim Gailey, South Portland; Suzanne McCormick, PROP; Anthony Plante, Windham; Mike Reynolds, Raymond; Bill Schaffer, Yarmouth; Matthew Sturgis, Gray; Bill Schaffer, Yarmouth; Ed Suslovic, Portland; Bill Whitten, Cumberland County; Dick Wood, RC&D

**Members absent:** Bridgton, Cape Elizabeth, Casco, Chebeague Island, Cumberland, Falmouth, Frye Island, Gorham, Harrison, Long Island, Naples, New Gloucester, Pownal, Scarborough, Sebago, West Bath, Westbrook

**Guests:** Elizabeth Trice, Cumberland County

**Staff:** Neal Allen, Maddy Adams, Anne Holland, Rosi Kulow, Ann Mazerolle

1. **Welcome and Call to Order.** Gordy Billington, Vice-Chair, opened the meeting at 12:05. Introductions were made.
2. **Minutes. Executive Committee meeting of July 31, 2008.** *Ed Suslovic moved approval of the July 31, 2008 minutes, seconded by Dick Brobst. All were in favor.*
3. **Sustainability Task Forces Report on Principles.** Neal provided some background on the Sustainability Retreat and reviewed the principles that were developed as a result of the Retreat. This meeting will be dedicated to discussion of the principles, a plan, etc. The Steering Committee had a lengthy discussion about the principles and refined them to the seven presented today. *Tony made a motion to adopt the seven principles developed to be used as a foundation for developing a regional sustainability plan. Ed Suslovic seconded the motion.* Ed noted that development of the seven principles is a significant accomplishment from the 21+ that were developed at the retreat. What is the next product of our work? Passing a resolution by the municipalities is a nice idea but we need a plan for the next step. Jim Gailey suggested using the ICLEI software to determine our carbon footprint. His recycling committee is pushing him to use the ICLEI software. Neal explained that ICLEI is currently updating the software so we haven't been able to begin the work with our membership yet. Jim mentioned that Portland and South Portland are members of Cool Cities and wondered if a region could join Cool Cities.

Gordy explained that the plan was to lead to some type of pact or compact such as the Denver Mike High Compact. Neal distributed a memorandum to the Committee, entitled "Another Approach" that outlines his ideas for a sustainability plan or a direction to go to further the process. He explained that the political process of adopting a plan that is enforceable is highly unlikely because we are dealing with 26 municipalities. He offered the following suggestions:

- Continue with the Forum Series on Sustainability. That should be an annual program.
- Best Practices. Work through the Corridor Coalitions and hold workshops on best practices in sustainability and growth management.
- Regional Sustainability Plan. Rather than creating a separate document, integrate sustainability principles and objectives into the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Neal cited the following reasons for doing this:
  - The CEDS gets updated annually and periodically a major revision is conducted.
  - We annually receive EDA planning funds to update and/or review the CEDS. Developing a separate regional plan will be costly.
  - The CEDS can serve as the one regionally based plan that integrates all of the public and private sector interests and needs and do so with full respect for the differences within our region.
  - The CEDS includes ten broad goals that are relevant or potentially can be relevant and consistent with sustainability goals. They are: economic growth, economic prosperity,

economic diversification, active leadership, education, tourism, affordable housing, healthy environment, transportation choice, and health and wellness.

- We have a CEDS Committee in place that is made up of public and private sector representatives.

If we decide to integrate our sustainability initiative into the CEDS, following are some of the things that we will need to do: (1) Strengthen and expand the public process; (2) expand the CEDS Committee; (3) revise the goals and strategies of CEDS; and (4) establish the link with sustainability.

- We should also consider developing a Regional Energy Plan.

Gordy questioned if we would be under serving the three task forces of community, environment, and economy if we put this under an economic development umbrella. A plus is that the principles would be folded into an adopted document. Is this a direction that makes sense? Suzanne thought that it made sense and PROP would fit the sustainable community piece. There was a concern that if we loaded the CEDS Committee with people who have a narrow focus on economic development that we could undermine the pieces of the other two categories. The challenge to our members is how to make the link to regional planning with what is still local execution. There needs to be a buy-in at the local level. Matthew said he liked Neal's idea – the seven principles are what should underwrite what the goals should be. There should be some measurability. Economic development touches all three categories whether it is intended that way or not. Genie added that she has always thought that economic development was more than bringing businesses to a community. It affects social services and how we live. We just want to make sure that it really does fit and that it does tie in all groups. The Committee would need to be expanded to include all of the interests.

It was asked if the CEDS group or staff of CEDS get to the point of writing sample ordinances of how this would work. We will need something that has teeth to back up the principles. Neal explained that the strategies are a major part of CEDS; one of the strategies could be to develop local ordinances. Mike pointed out that it would be up to people on the regional boards to push the idea. Neal suggested developing a major "road show" and going out community by community or coalition by coalition to present the goals to inform people what we are trying to do. That would be part of our public outreach effort. There is a major emphasis in the CEDS on bringing regions together. Gordy asked if the CEDS group is one that could take these principles and incorporate them. Bill responded that the business world is concerned with the environment, community, etc. It makes sense and he thinks it's a good idea. It was suggested that we also involve the schools in all of the things that we are trying to do. We will need to emphasize the idea of the regional aspect versus the local aspect. We will need to heighten awareness and get people to buy in to the idea. Jim G. agreed that the CEDS is the right way to go. We need to adapt our policies to the needs of businesses. He mentioned that Fairchild's administrative offices are moving from South Portland to Scarborough to a greener office.

Regarding the road show, Neal explained that it would take about a month to put it together. We would like to do a trial run with the Steering Committee for their thoughts and guidance. We could put something together for the beginning of the year. Ed mentioned that economic development gets shortchanged in comp plans. By using the CEDS as our driving point, it gets sustainable economic development front and center. Ed thought the seven principles were better than the 10 SPO requirements for Comprehensive Plans. If we use the seven principles for a regional comp plan for each coalition, there could be a benefit as each coalition could work as a group and come up with one plan rather than coming up with 26 individual plans. This would result in five or six plans versus 26. Genie added that as part of the road show, we should try to educate the towns that plans and ordinances need to be complimentary to one another. Some towns such as Pownal may not want economic development for example. We need to think complementary. ***All were in favor of accepting the seven sustainability principles. The Executive Committee voted to support having the Steering Committee flesh out the details of using the CEDS to further the sustainability initiative and returning the details for approval at the next meeting.*** There was consensus to move forward with the "road show" idea.

#### **4. Reports and Updates.**

- Fall Forum Planning – The Economic Sustainability Forum has been scheduled for December 10<sup>th</sup> from 3:00-6:30 p.m. at USM. Michael Shuman will be the keynote speaker. There will be a small panel to complement Shuman's presentation. One or two local businesses will be invited to tell their local stories. We may have someone from the financing community as well. There will be a reception after the program. The focus of the forum is on the economy; the spring forum will be on the subject of community.
- Right to Know Training was held on October 26. Jensen Baird presented the program. About 25-30 people attended and all received certificates. We will probably continue to hold sessions as necessary.
- A Revolving Loan Fund Economic Development Breakfast is being planned to try to make the banking community more aware of our program. We had hoped to do it in November but we do have a commitment from a Federal Reserve Bank of Boston for a speaker in January. Economic development people, managers, bankers, etc. will be invited to attend.
- Regional Public Safety Department – Lakes Region – Neal Allen and Rosi Kulow have been working with Naples, Casco, Gray and Raymond on a possible regional public safety department. They are exploring the feasibility of it.
- Regional Assessing Report – there was a presentation to the Executive Committee and two meetings have been held with the Managers Association. There seems to be a fair amount of support for the initiative. Gordy explained that the Managers liked the idea and wanted the County to be the one to do it. The Managers want to see tax bills and collection as well as the assessing to be included. Some towns said they would do it if all the towns did it while others thought that a few towns should try it first. Matt and Jim Gailey left the Managers meeting early and both thought the idea was dead. Last week's meeting seemed like it was a complete reversal of the June meeting. A lot of things were brought up that they thought had been resolved. Elizabeth explained that they need to have enough interest in order to build a model. Naples might be happy with one level of service but it would be different than what Cape would want. Should different levels of service be developed? It was also suggested that realtors should be involved. Matt added that there was definitely good work that came from it; things need to be fleshed out. The towns that have full-time assessors and those that have a part-time person make it even more difficult to reconcile. Jim G. said that South Portland is open to further discussion; they are still willing to come to the table. Ed said that from an elected official's standpoint, regional assessing could save money in the long run but it is highly unlikely that all communities are going to make the switch. He suggested developing a model like the regional crime lab where a start-up fee is charged to those towns that sign on later. Elizabeth said that what they heard is that if the details were fleshed out more, towns would be interested. However, without the commitment from the towns, the details cannot be fleshed out. The Subcommittee will meet again to try to determine what the next steps will be.
- Possible Legislative Information Breakfast with Cumberland County. COG may be partnering with the County to hold a legislative breakfast in December. The idea is to develop a common agenda and stronger relationship with our legislative delegation in Augusta. The program with the legislators should contain an informational component about what COG provides, what the County provides and what the Chambers provide, etc. It will be an integrated effort for stronger cohesion with the legislature. Ed suggested that it would be great to share a short presentation on what we are doing on sustainability.

#### **5. Other Business.** None

#### **6. Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.