

GPCOG Executive Committee Minutes
January 14, 2009
12:00 p.m. at GPCOG

In attendance: Paul McKenney, President, Cape Elizabeth; Genie Beaulieu, Freeport; Gordon Billington, Standish; Tom Blake, South Portland; Cathy Breen, Falmouth; Dick Feeney, Cumberland County; Sumner Field, New Gloucester; Pat Finnigan, Portland; Derik Goodine, Naples; Shonn Moulton, Gorham; Anthony Plante, Windham; Mike Reynolds, Raymond; Dick Wood, RC&D

Members absent: Bridgton, Casco, Chebeague Island, Cumberland, Frye Island, Gray, Harrison, Long Island, North Yarmouth, Pownal, Scarborough, Sebago, West Bath, Westbrook, Yarmouth, PROP

GPCOG Staff: Neal Allen, Maddy Adams, Anne Holland, Rosi Kulow

Guests: Elizabeth Trice, Cumberland County

1. **Welcome and Introductions.** Paul McKenney opened the meeting at 12:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made. Neal announced that Rosi Kulow had accepted the City Manager position in Rockland and this would be her last week at COG.
2. **Minutes: Executive Committee meeting of January 14, 2009.** *Dick Wood moved approval of the January 14th minutes, with Genie Beaulieu seconding the motion. All were in favor.*
3. **Regional Sustainability Initiative – Continued Discussion.** Attachments included: the seven principles; “Another Approach” memo; DRCOG Mile High Compact and Metro Vision; and the Atlanta Regional Commission Green Communities Program. For the benefit of the new members, Neal provided background on the sustainability plan and the idea of integrating it into the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Neal felt we should also have a stand-alone document regarding policy options for sustainability. The DRCOG and ARC examples provide examples of how such a program might be structured. The question is how should we go about creating a stand-alone document that could be added as an appendix to our CEDS rather than trying to present the entire CEDS to our member communities. Paul briefly described what the CEDS document includes. In that context, it was left that we needed a set of principles to drive the process. We developed seven principles (originally 21) at a retreat in the fall. Paul also spoke about the Steering Committee’s trip to Nova Scotia.

We will look at the DRCOG and ARC models and compare and contrast them to come up with some ideas for our new plan. Anne Holland has prepared a comparison of the two plans. The DRCOG plan focuses on land use and transportation and regional cooperation. The ARC plan focuses on sustainability through energy efficiency and local efficiency and policies. Points are scored in various areas. Neal reviewed the comparison document. Tom B. brought up the point that goals are great but it doesn’t look like we are comparing apples to apples. Our region is a much different region than the two comparisons. Those regions are not resource dependent on natural resources such as the waterfront, lumber industry, etc. He suggested finding regions that are more aligned with our area and our demographics. Neal explained that we realize that we are a much different region than the two examples; we would establish our own criteria that would be relevant to our region. This is being shown as a template of something that has been done in other areas. Paul added that we also looked at Halifax. They are similar in size but politically they are very different. We are trying to avoid reinventing the wheel and that is why we are looking at other examples.

Genie said she liked the DRCOG process better than the ARC one. She found the ARC plan to be too environmentally focused. We need to figure out how to work together through complementary comp plans, etc. How does economic development integrate with this? Where are we going to save money? If we roll out the process, we should have some potential answers. Tony pointed out that the ARC plan is more voluntary. However, once you join the DRCOG plan, you're in. Use the model to encourage the kinds of behaviors we are looking for. COG is a great forum but towns still don't want to give up local control. Gordy added that we have talked about a comp plan for the area and the benefits of that. Comp plans need to be complementary to one another and this could be a method of getting there. ARC is a feel good plan; it is nice to reduce our carbon footprint but there has to be some value to the municipality. It was suggested that as part of the ReCOGNition awards, perhaps we could have a segment on the green sustainability issue and award those towns that are doing these types of things. Pat added that we are in a climate where people realize that sustainability is not only a nice thing but it is an important thing. Nobody wants to be mandated to do something. We do need to think regionally. Making the sustainability plan part of the CEDS and giving it some definition is also a good idea.

Genie asked if we should be talking to the SPO about complementary comp plans. Cathy suggested finding some money from foundations (Ortman Foundation) that give money for sustainability planning. Use the carrot and the stick approach – it all comes down to dollars. How do we bring it together in a technical assistance kind of way? Regional comp plans could show some cost savings. Mike suggested continuing on that line. The Raymond comp plan implementation committee will finish their work in May. A mandate could make us all get our schedules in line so that we could work together. As it stands, we are all on different schedules with our comp plans. We could start with a small group of towns.

Paul concluded that it appears that most people liked the DRCOG plan with elements of the ARC plan in terms of recognition. We should work with the SPO to get some traction on possibly working on a regional comp plan. We need to somehow get on a more unified schedule. When Standish worked on their comp plan, they worked with GrowSmart Maine with money from a foundation.

The idea of wrapping the sustainability principles into the CEDS was agreeable to the Committee. We will need to define a role for our municipalities through something that is more defined than the CEDS. Neal suggested that a regional comp plan should be explored with the State Planning Office. We should investigate whether or not the SPO would allow us to develop a regional comp plan that they would review and endorse. When towns do their comp plans, they would develop them in a way that is compatible with the regional plan. It was suggested that a two-page summary be prepared that incorporates the principles and gives some bullet points about the concept. Tom B said he liked the idea of tying it into a regional plan but South Portland, for instance, will be starting their plan in the next 4-6 months. We will need to work fast. We should also make sure that we are connecting to the new transportation TIFs. Cathy and Genie both said they would be interested in going to the SPO with Neal.

We also plan on developing a regional Energy Plan focused on municipal, school and other buildings.

4. Reports and Briefings.

- a. GPCOG Bi-monthly report.** Neal distributed the January 2009 bi-monthly report. The links to the GPCOG member towns on the front page link directly to each municipality's web site. The idea is to do a report like this every other month and to e-mail it to our members and other interested parties. The report was well-received.

- b.* **March 27th Sustainability Forum on the Economy.** The Forum will be held at Hannaford Hall at USM. Michael Shuman will be the keynote speaker. Neal reviewed the details of the forum. Some of the panelists we are exploring include Backyard Beauties – a business out of Madison that grows hydroponic tomatoes; Apothecary by Design – Mark McAuliffe’s business in Bayside. Final details of the Forum will be developed in the coming weeks and shared with the Committee.
- c.* **“Road Show” Outline.** Neal reviewed the outline.
- d.* **County Partners Legislative Breakfast.** The legislative breakfast was well attended (about 70 people) and it was a good information-gathering session. Commissioner Feeney reported that a follow-up meeting was held with the organizers of the breakfast and they have decided to hold another session with Senator Diamond in Augusta in either February or March. If we do this, we need to have something very firm to bring to them; specifics need to be tied to the ideas. Bill Whitten has been assigned to spend more time in Augusta to develop relationships with the legislature. Dick W. stressed the importance of the Cumberland County Delegation working together so that they are all on the same page. Gordy noted that ideas of commonality did come out of the legislative breakfast; it was well done.
- e.* **Maine Street Marketplace.** This is an idea to reinvent the infrastructure that supports our local food system to meet our demands. By working together, we can create a delivery system where Maine producers can connect directly with Maine consumers, wholesalers and retailers. The event will be held on February 10 from 9:00 to 2:00 at the Glickman Library at USM. More information is provided in the GPCOG Activity Report.
- f.* **PL 699 Statewide Building Energy and Rehabilitation Code.** PL 699 institutes a statewide and uniform building code to be used by all municipalities with populations exceeding 2,000. Municipalities that previously adopted a building code must begin enforcing this state code by June 2010. Municipalities that have not adopted a building code must begin enforcing this law by January 1, 2010. Rosi provided a handout on this issue. The towns have not been inventoried yet.
- g.* **Staffing.** As mentioned earlier in the meeting, Rosi Kulow will be leaving COG; she has accepted the City Manager position in Rockland.
- h.* **Tabor II and Excise Tax.** A Managers meeting has been scheduled for January 21st at 12:00 noon on this topic; Chris Lockwood from MMA will be the guest speaker.
- i.* **ASCE Report Card for Maine’s Future.** Informational.

5. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.