

GPCOG Executive Committee Minutes
April 14, 2010 Meeting
12:00 p.m. at GPCOG

In attendance: Gordon Billington, President, Standish; Roger Bondeson, PROP; Dick Brobst, North Yarmouth; Pat Finnigan, Portland; Colleen Hilton, Westbrook; Tony Plante, Windham; Mike Reynolds, Raymond; Matthew Sturgis, Gray; Elizabeth Trice, Cumberland County; Jim Walsh, Cape Elizabeth; Dick Wood, RC&D

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

Guests and GPCOG Staff: Neal Allen; Maddy Adams; Ben Lake; Rebecca Lambert; Eben Marsh; Ann Thompson; Dana Totman, AVESTA Housing

1. **Welcome and Introductions.** Gordy Billington, President, called the meeting to order at 12:02. Introductions were made around the room.
2. **Minutes: Executive Committee meeting of January 20, 2010.** *Dick Brobst made a motion to approve the January 20th minutes. Dick Wood seconded the motion and all were in favor.*
3. **Presentation: AVESTA Housing.** Neal introduced Dana Totman, the Director of AVESTA Housing. Neal serves as the Vice Chair on the AVESTA Board. Dana walked through a PowerPoint presentation. He explained that our housing availability doesn't line up well with our housing needs. AVESTA Housing provides 1633 housing units in 58 developments. There are two types of housing types that they deal with: project based and tenant based. There are extensive waiting lists for all developments. Many of the various housing developments were shown in the PowerPoint. Subsidized and affordable housing is offered. Florence House and Logan Place, both in Portland, are residences for chronically homeless people. Numerous schools have been revamped into housing. Some of the schools that have been revamped into housing include Adams School, Cousens School and Shailer School. Recent developments are LEED certified.

Gordy thanked Dana for the presentation. Many Executive Committee members were interested in having a copy of the PowerPoint, so Dana will make it available; it is also posted on GPCOG's web site. Responding to comments and observations, Dana stated that we do need to get over the stigma that affordable housing looks bad. People who live in these developments are not undesirable people. AVESTA has encountered NIMBY battles throughout the years but it is becoming less. They typically do not have mixed use development because it is hard to work out the financing mechanism. AVESTA is currently doing a project on Oak Street in Portland that will have studio space downstairs. Properties with water and sewer systems in place are targeted; schools are always good as well. Regarding paying taxes on these developments, anything going forward they will have to pay taxes on. Currently it is about half and half. Some of the elderly developments are owned by nonprofit corporations. Regarding the waiting lists, AVESTA tries to get people on as many waiting lists as possible so that there will be a better chance of something becoming available. The foreclosure crisis has been a wake-up call. Now owning a home is not necessarily the American dream; it is becoming the American nightmare for some. Renters are a little more mobile so they are able to move to where the jobs are, and they are migrating away from home ownership. Shared living arrangements have been looked at, but the funders are not as flexible about this idea. There are opportunities for municipalities to partner with AVESTA but they've found that most municipalities have enough on their plates. Renovating an old school would be a good municipal/AVESTA venture. AVESTA is highly focused on locations to facilitate energy efficiency and transportation costs. Dana is available to talk to any groups that are interested.

4. **Portland Trails: Associate Member Request.** Portland Trails has formally requested membership in GPCOG as an Associate Member. The Steering Committee discussed this item

and felt that Portland Trails would be a good fit. Tom Blake had a concern that Land Conservation Trusts might also be interested in joining COG and suggested that Portland Trails work with them as a unit and act as a liaison with the land trusts. Neal spoke with Portland Trails and they were agreeable to this idea. ***Dick Brobst made a motion to accept Portland Trails as an Associate Member of GPCOG. Matt Sturgis seconded the motion and all were in favor.***

5. **HUD Sustainability Communities Planning Grant.** This is a new federal initiative that brings together HUD, DOT and EPA in an effort to support multi-jurisdictional regional planning efforts that seek to integrate housing, economic development and transportation decision-making. We have not yet received the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and it will not be out until at least May. We as a region are well positioned to submit a very competitive proposal. "Region" could include a rather large area. There are three funding categories: we will seek the Planning Initiative (preparation of Regional Plans for Sustainable Development). There are also two categories for funding: Populations of not more than 499,999 could apply for up to \$2 million. Populations of 500,000 or more could apply for up to \$5 million. However, there is a 20% match but the specifics of that are not known at this time. Meetings have been held with the County, housing districts, planners, and others including the Muskie School. We are reaching out to areas in the north and south. Originally the applications were due in early June but that date may have changed since the NOFA will not be out until May. Neal will keep the Committee apprised.
6. **Nominating Committee.** The GPCOG Annual Meeting is scheduled for May 26th this year so a Nominating Committee will need to be formed. Matt Sturgis, Mike Reynolds and Gordy Billington will serve as this year's Nominating Committee. If anyone else is interested in serving on the Nominating Committee, please let us know.
7. **Appointment: Cumberland County Public Health Council.** GPCOG has three seats on the Cumberland County Public Health Council and one is currently vacant. Currently Eben Marsh and Lisa Villa serve as GPCOG's representatives. Colleen Hilton provided some background on the work of the Public Health Council. They have been instrumental in getting the H1N1 vaccine out to the public. They also deal with needle and drug disposal. They would be interested in having an elected or appointed representative serve on the Council. If you are interested or know someone that might be, please let Neal know.
8. **Status Reports. Neal reviewed the items on the Status Report.**
 - Regional Planning Initiative (Lakes Region). Presentations have been made to Naples, Bridgton, Sebago, Raymond, Casco and Harrison. The response has been positive and a formal request will now be made for those towns to formally appoint a representative to conduct the Phase I planning design process. Standish is scheduled for April 27 and Windham is in the process of being scheduled. Frye Island has informally responded favorably. It will be a bottoms-up, citizen-based process.
 - Regional Public Safety Feasibility Study. Two consultants are being interviewed to conduct a feasibility study for the development of a regional public safety department serving Casco, Naples and Raymond. Eben has been assisting the towns with coordination and facilitation of the process.
 - Energy. Cumberland County has awarded GPCOG \$46,000 in energy efficiency funds to assist with the Regional Energy reduction Initiative. Neal thanked the County Commissioner, the County Manager and Elizabeth Trice for their assistance.
 - Brownfields Advisory Committee. Projects have been identified in Portland, Gray, Bridgton and Windham. We plan to submit an application for continued Brownfields funding this fall and probably will submit an application for an EPA revolving loan fund to assist with remediation efforts. Caroline Paras has devoted much time and energy to this project.
 - Community Development Block Grant. GPCOG has received the support for a \$27,500 grant from the Municipal Oversight Committee under the Cumberland County CDBG program for a planning project "Capitalizing on the Global Assets in Greater Portland." These funds will be matched with \$5,500 in anonymous contributions received by GPCOG to design a data

gathering process/web site to identify and link the regional's global assets. This initiative will help move forward in a substantive way the GPCOG Center for Global Engagement.

- Department of Economic & Community Development. DECD is providing funding to the economic development districts in an effort to save state dollars and in recognition of the need to strengthen the regional delivery of economic development services. As a three month transition to this new level of support, Brian Doyle, formerly DECD's Business Development Specialist, will be working with GPCOG and SMRPC. In July we will receive \$37,500 that we can use to fund economic development services through a number of staffing support options.
 - Cooperative Services. A survey was recently sent out to our membership to determine interest in expanding services to include a number of "green" products and services and to assess our current services. The results of the survey are under study.
 - Aerial Orthoimagery Project. A meeting has been scheduled for April 20th from 12:00-1:30-p.m. at the Raymond Public Safety Building to explore the level of interest in non-PACTS communities participating with PACTS communities in a spring 2011 aerial orthoimagery project. We are trying to come up with a common specification. This data is very important for planning purposes. We are trying to identify other funding sources. The Maine Office of GIS, Bradstreet Consultants and Sebago Technics will be participating in the April 20th session.
 - Meeting Schedule. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for May 26th from 11:30-1:30 p.m. at the USM Glickman Library Community Events Room on the 7th Floor. Lunch will be provided. The Steering Committee will meet on April 28th to review the budget and then the Executive Committee will meet on May 12th to review the budget and forward it to the General Assembly.
9. **Other Business.** Revolving Loan Funds. Ann Thompson explained that we would like to move some revolving loan funds to Bangor Savings Bank so that all the funds are not housed in one place. ***Colleen Hilton made a motion to authorize the GPCOG Executive Director and Finance Director to open two accounts with Bangor Savings Bank for the purpose of depositing GPCOG and SMEDD Revolving Loan Funds into the respective accounts. The motion was seconded by Dick Brobst and was approved by the Committee.***
10. **Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.