

**GPCOG Steering Committee Minutes**  
**April 7, 2010**  
**12:00 p.m. at GPCOG**

**In attendance:** Cathy Breen, Vice-President, Falmouth; Tom Blake, South Portland; Pat Finnigan, Portland; Tony Plante, Windham; Mike Reynolds, Raymond; Matthew Sturgis, Gray

**Staff:** Neal Allen, Maddy Adams, Steve Linnell, Eben Marsh, Ann Thompson

1. **Welcome and Introductions.** Cathy Breen, Vice-President, opened the meeting at 12:07.
2. **Minutes of February 24, 2010.** On item 4, second paragraph, Matt pointed out that there will be no salary increase for nonunion employees in Cape, and there will be a 3% increase in Gray because they didn't get any raises last year; the information was reversed in the minutes. *With that correction, Matt moved approval of the minutes with Tom Blake seconding the motion. All were in favor of the motion.*
3. **Portland Trails.** At the February 24<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting, Neal reported that Portland Trails was interested in becoming an Associate Member of GPCOG. After hearing favorably from the Steering Committee, Neal had further discussions with Portland Trails and they have formally requested becoming an Associate Member. In exchange for their membership, GPCOG would appoint a representative to the Portland Trails Board of Trustees. *Matt Sturgis made a motion to approve Portland Trails as an Associate Member of GPCOG. Pat Finnigan seconded the motion.* Tom Blake spoke about Land Trusts and how it would be nice to have Portland Trails represent the trails network for the Greater Portland region because we may see other land conservation trusts wanting to become members. Cathy said she didn't see Portland Trails as the same thing as a Land Conservation Trust. Tom said their mission statements are quite similar. The South Portland Land Trust has been around longer than Portland Trails. We would be remiss to accept a membership from Portland Trails but not the others. Neal explained that Portland Trails approached COG to become an Associate Member. Tom said he would like to see them represent more than just Portland because they connect with so many other areas. The South Portland Land Trust works on the West End Trails which is a network around the Maine Mall. Tony said if there are other land trusts that would be interested in joining, he would hope we would treat them in the same way. We will extend the invitation to Portland Trails and we would say informally that there may be an opportunity for other land trusts to interact with COG. Tom felt that it would be good if Portland Trails acted as a liaison with the other land trusts. Portland Trails should provide an opportunity to communicate with the other land trust groups. *The motion was seconded and all were in favor of approving Portland Trails as an Associate Member. We will suggest that they act as a liaison with the other land trusts.* Neal suggested that if we had a number of requests from land trusts that we would recommend they get together and select one person to represent them.
4. **HUD Sustainability Communities Planning Grant Program.** Neal provided some background and an informational piece that describes this new initiative led by U.S. HUD partnering with U.S. DOT and the EPA. There are three funding categories available: (1) preparation of Regional Plans for Sustainable Development; (2) Preparation of more detailed execution plans and programs to implement existing regional sustainable development plans; (3) Implementation of regional sustainable development plans. We will focus on #1. We have convened meetings with some of the planners and other stakeholders to determine how to best plan for the application. We already have a lot of the pieces in place. CEDS can be another

component of this. The *Destination Tomorrow* plan could also be a part of it, as well as the east/west corridor study, and the Lakes Region planning effort. We will want to integrate them into a whole package. These could all be integrated into the application. HUD considers “region” as a very large area. We are talking to our counterparts in York County as well as Brunswick. The plan would have to define how it would be implemented perhaps similar to the Denver Mile High Compact.

There are two population/funding thresholds: small metropolitan or rural areas with a population of not more than 499,999 – not to exceed \$2 million; and large metropolitan areas with a population of 500,000 or more – not to exceed \$5 million. With Cumberland and York Counties combined, we might reach 499,999. There is some danger in extending the circle too large. It was suggested that we contact AVCOG to see if they are interested. If so, we could go for the \$5 million grant. Neal has also talked to Jeff Jordan at the Brunswick Naval Station. The problem with going for the \$5 million is that it may be tough to come up with the match (\$400,000 versus \$1 million). Neal will keep the Committee apprised, as the final Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) has not been published by HUD.

## 5. Updates.

- **SMEDD Restructuring.** Since the last Steering Committee meeting, another meeting was held in Augusta with DECD and all of the economic development districts in the state. There are some wrinkles that need to be smoothed out regarding boundaries. The request of SMEDD will be more favorably accepted if all the boundary lines in the state are addressed. The Maine EDD’s met in PA with EDA and presented a letter from the Governor in support of the effort. It appears that we are all in agreement regarding the boundary lines. We are continuing to refine the boundaries. The goal is to get this done this summer or fall.
- Augusta has decided to decentralize DECD. We will get \$75,000/year at least through 2011 to help fund economic development staff in our region. The \$75,000 gets shared with SMRPC. For the next three months, we will be supporting Brian Doyle, DECD’s Southern Maine field representative, through a contract. Beginning July 1 we would like to have the flexibility to use those funds as we choose. We can decide to retain Brian, hire new staff or use the money to strengthen our current economic development efforts. Some of Brian’s time will be spent answering requests from the state or governor, etc. The other 50% will be under our direction.
- Lakes Region Regional Planning Initiative. Neal and Rebeccah Schaffner-Tousignant went to Harrison last night. They have now been to most of the Lakes Region towns. They will be in Standish at the end of the month at a workshop meeting. They will also be going to Windham. The response has been very good. In the first six months of the project (Phase I), we will be designing the process through a “design team” appointed by the participating towns. There is no financial commitment. We are asking that a representative be selected from each community. Overall, the reception has been favorable. Harrison did not take any formal action. Casco is having a formal vote next week
- Energy Planning. We have been working with two pilot communities – Yarmouth and Cape Elizabeth; they are just about done. We have also been working with four towns on the Energy Efficiency CDBG. We will be doing inventory work with North Yarmouth, Harrison, Gray and Windham. Ben Lake will be working with the towns through an internship with Clean Air/Cool Planet. We will also be housing a fellow (a Colby graduate) through Clean Air/Cool Planet who will be doing work on an energy plan. Ben will also be a fellow for the summer.

- With Clean Air/Cool Planet we have had two meetings on the local energy working group. The primary intent is for them to be a resource for towns who are working on these types of issues. The short term goal will be to develop a handbook. The long term goal is a regional energy plan. Community outreach will also be a piece. We will also be receiving money from the County through the EECDBG.
- Clean Cities did their annual survey regarding what's going on with alternative fuels, idling, etc.
- A Cooperative Services Survey was sent out to our members and bid participants. We are looking for suggestions on other bids or services. The survey was sent to Managers, Public Works Directors, Finance Directors, Schools, bid participants, etc. The survey addressed "green" items as well as an evaluation of current bids. We have received good constructive feedback. Eben Marsh is also asking the towns to provide us with the dollar value of what they are spending on cooperative purchasing services.
- 2010-11 Operations Budget. Neal asked for input on salary adjustments and dues as we are beginning to develop our budget for FY 2011. He expressed that we want to be sensitive to our members but also need to consider what is best for the agency. GPCOG staff salaries were frozen last year so we ought to build in some salary adjustments in this year's budget. Last year we reduced member dues by 10% but we would like to go back to our regular dues rate this year. The dues reduction hurts us more than it helps the communities given that it is used for member services and as local match for certain grants and programs. Matt agreed that two years of a wage freeze is one year too many. You need to take care of your people. Tony stated that this is the third year that Windham is staying with the same rate of pay; however he didn't feel that COG has to march in step with the municipalities. South Portland is recommending a 1% increase for nonunion. In Falmouth, it is the second year in a row with no mil rate increase; nonunion is either 1% or flat. Cathy didn't feel that COG has to do the same thing. COG has a lot of federal grants that most towns don't. Tom asked if the towns had been notified about the 10% dues reduction not occurring this year.
- Review Meeting Schedule. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for May 26<sup>th</sup> at lunch time. The Executive Committee is scheduled to meet on April 14<sup>th</sup> and then again on May 12<sup>th</sup>. The Steering Committee will meet on April 28<sup>th</sup> to review the budget. We hope to have the Steering Committee retreat in June rather than August.
- The MOVE Program, formerly the Kids and Transportation Program, was first shifted to SMRPC and now MaineDOT is pulling the plug on the funding.

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