

GPCOG Steering Committee Minutes
November 12, 2008
12:00 p.m. at GPCOG

In attendance: Paul McKenney, President, Cape Elizabeth; Genie Beaulieu, Freeport; Gordon Billington, Standish; Ed Suslovic, Portland

Staff: Neal Allen, Maddy Adams, Rosi Kulow, Steve Linnell, Caroline Paras

- (1) **Welcome:** Paul McKenney welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 12:10 p.m. Paul thanked Ed Suslovic for his service on the Committee and said he will be missed.
- (2) **Approval of September 17, 2008 Minutes.** *Ed Suslovic moved approval of the September 17th minutes and Genie Beaulieu seconded the motion.* Gordy asked about a reference to additional staff for the GO Maine program and Neal explained that the program has expanded and we are expecting additional funding. GPCOG staff members Erik West and Sue McIntyre will be assisting with the additional workload. *All were in favor of the motion to approve the minutes.*
- (3) **Regional Sustainability Initiative: Continued Discussion.** The seven principles were adopted by the Executive Committee. Neal shared his "Another Approach" memo and brought the Committee up to date. The Executive Committee discussion was very favorable and there was a strong level of support for the idea. Part of the idea is to use the CEDS as a way to integrate the sustainability principles. The challenge of adopting a regional sustainability plan would be great, whereas the CEDS covers the entire region and we receive EDA funds to annually update the document. Why have two separate regional documents? Gordy asked if the CEDS process and Committee would be given a different role and if more people would be added to the committee. If so, it could make the committee less flexible.

There were many questions as to where to go from here, how the CEDS document would be used and if we would still be able to get the results we were originally looking for. Neal explained that the CEDS document includes strategies which can be measured and one strategy, for example, could be to develop common ordinances. The strategies will be important but would not necessarily be mandates. The CEDS Committee could be broadened to bring more private sector participation into the process. There was discussion as to other players that should be involved including the Chamber of Commerce. Staff will come back with recommendations regarding others that should be added to the CEDS committee. It was suggested that the Executive Committee members also be involved. We could expand on the whole process and we could have a resolution similar to the Denver Mile High Compact; the Mile High compact is similar to a comprehensive plan. Sustainability principles could be adopted by all of the municipalities and reflected in the CEDS.

We have to try to figure out how to bring all the various pieces together into the CEDS – land use, economic development, sustainability. We'll have to get planners involved and we should try to get planning boards involved as well.

Genie was confused as to where the County fits in. How does COG make sure that the County is at the table but get the message to them that COG is the place to do economic development? COG cooperated very closely with the County with the CDBG Entitlement Program and in assisting the Metro Regional Coalition with the Regional Crime Lab. Our relationship with the County has improved. The COG Officers should meet with the County Manager and the three commissioners to discuss roles and responsibilities and determine where it is appropriate to work together, but we should wait for the new County Board of Commissioners to get in place. It was suggested that the full Steering Committee be included in this meeting to show the diversity of COG. It was suggested that a January workshop meeting with the County be scheduled and that a workshop meeting such as this should be scheduled annually.

Regarding the sustainability principles, Paul thought they were outstanding. We need to get our member communities to bring them back to their councils for adoption. Once they are adopted then we would want to bring them to the Planning Boards. The seven principles should be incorporated into the CEDS document. The CEDS document would be brought to the Executive Committee for adoption; the CEDS is adopted annually. The first step is to get the councils to adopt the principles. Ed reported that Portland is bringing their sustainability report to their planning board and they are asking them to include it in their comprehensive plan. He thought we were going to come up with something that we would bring to the municipalities; he was concerned about not having specifics. The “road show” would help to explain the process and it should involve the Councils, Planning Boards and the planners. After the road show, we would then put a resolution forward for their adoption. It was suggested that the road show be done by corridor rather than doing 26 different presentations. It would probably be a two-year process. In the first year we would go out to the corridor coalitions; it is important to include planning boards and planners. We would want to have the principles endorsed in the context of our larger objectives. The road show should talk about COG – who we are and what we do and it should include a regional profile with some of the key issues. Explain how COG is organized to respond to our membership and how COG can help municipalities one-on-one and through the Corridor Coalitions. Then we would work in the idea of the CEDS.

The idea of a regionwide energy plan was also addressed. The energy plan should start with an energy inventory. The plan should be focused on municipal buildings (including schools) and vehicles. It could be started through the corridor coalitions to get their feedback. It was suggested that a timeline be created. Charlie Colgan has offered his grad students as a resource to help with the field work.

Next Steps:

- Incorporate the sustainability principles into the CEDS;
 - Focus on the road show;
 - Schedule a January workshop with the commissioners;
 - Create a moveable timeline;
 - Work on an energy plan/energy inventory;
- and somehow tie it all to the CEDS.

Neal mentioned that the Metro Regional Coalition is working with the Chamber on an economic development authority. The authority would initially start through the Metro Regional Coalition but in time it could encompass the larger region. There was confusion as to how the CEDS would tie into the economic development authority and the possibility of other Authority’s being formed. Neal explained that the CEDS is a regional economic development plan which serves as the plan for the entire region and as such can be integrated with the MRC economic development authority. Neal explained that the Chamber “white paper” was presented to the MRC – it was focused on Portland. The MRC thought it should be expanded to include more municipalities. Paul explained how the process with the Chamber came about. Neal, Paul and some people from the Chamber met about a year ago to talk about what they were up to. A representative from the Chamber joined the team that went to Halifax. The Chamber is now working with COG and the municipalities of the MRC.

After more discussion, Neal suggested that the next steps would be to expand the CEDS Committee, update the CEDS incorporating the principles, and make the regional energy plan a focus. We won’t walk away from the principles but we should focus on the energy plan.

4. **GPCOG Fall Forum – Toward a Sustainable Regional Economy.** Michael Shuman will be the keynote speaker. Richard Barringer may be serving as the moderator. We are hoping to have Oakhurst Dairy on the panel. Ed mentioned that Bridgton and Gray are struggling with trying to

have an economic center in their downtown and asked if we should have something about that on the panel. Paul said he would prefer to have a success story. Caroline gave an update on Bridgton's economic development prospects. Neal will look further into this idea.

5. **Updates and Other Business.** Not addressed.
6. **Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.