

## Nashua Rail Transit Committee Meeting, 26-Jul-19

**Location:** Nashua Regional Planning Commission, 30 Temple St.

**Members present:** Chair Steve Michon, Representative Carl Seidel, Alderman Rick Dowd, NRPC Director Jay Minkarah, Director Tim Cummings, Chris Dawe, Dan Kelly, Komba Lamina, Paul Patti.

**Guests present:** Jack Madden – Erdman Anthony, Matthew Plamondon – Nashua Telegraph

**Minutes:** Meeting opened at 8:38am by Chair Steve Michon

Update on passage of SB241 without Governor Sununu's signature.

Committee discusses how to support NH DOT and help them find the right information – contact ASAP and set up a meeting, the process could start as early as October. Jay's program with the busses has to tie in: where are all the people that are going to use it. How many needs can be serviced by the rail?

Chair Michon suggests getting the facts out, what are the pieces and finding out how we may help? Dan Kelly mentions that there may be multiple (financial/engineering/support) RFPs.

Committee discusses inviting Pat Herlihy (NH DOT Director of Aeronautics, Rail and Transit) to a meeting, as he has the steps - there are multiple pieces, how are they going to be sequenced & when will the RFPs for each be issued? Suggest getting clarity around when dollars are able to be spent.

Chair Michon outlines aspects of the Project Development Phase:

- 1) Our State working with State of MA
- 2) Engineering (i.e., tracks)
- 3) Financial – funding what kind of investments would be needed.
- 4) Once the above are complete, RFPs would be issued.

Committee discusses next steps: In September there is another piece of legislation. What are our roles and responsibilities, for example – handoff? It's a state project, not a city project, so we need to look for those intersections where our input will make sense.

Dan Kelly submits a handout with the following suggestions for "What to do next":

- Do nothing without the expressed consent of NHDOT
  - They are the prime contractor
  - Do not interface with the MBTA, Pan Am, or contractors
- Get concurrence on the approach NHDOT will be using with the FTA
  - Small Starts has been the approach suggested in the past
  - Determine "turnkey" vs. individual RFP's
  - Understand the *process* NHDOT will be using
- Determine who has the responsibility for stations
  - If each city/town, organize a group whose responsibility is to finalize the design and secure funding (private, government, bonding, financing, etc.)
  - Meet with land owners/developers
- Keep the project sold
  - Write articles on the status of the project

- o Forward articles to various organizations on the benefits of passenger rail
- o Meet with key legislators/Aldermen frequently
- o Interface with neighboring cities/towns

Rep. Seidel suggests also considering Public Private Partnership (PPP) programs – maybe for the station? Since DOT is the key, we need to understand their approach. Similarly, Chair Michon mentions helping to shape the RFP, if possible - how do we bring our delegation in? Jack Madden asks if there is a way to get input into the process beyond public meetings?

Committee discusses the Mayor’s role. Rep. Seidel suggests getting his concerns, and has a meeting scheduled with the Governor in September – find out how he feels about key items:

- 1) MBTA relationship/role?
- 2) Money?
- 3) Do we have a need, and how to justify it will help the economy?
- 4) How will the components work?

Paul Patti suggests that just because the bill passed, doesn’t mean we can let down our guard. Forces that oppose rail are still present. Continue to generate public support and get the message out. Alderman Dowd also suggests keeping enthusiasm for rail going.

Regarding NH DOT, Committee discusses taking a “how can we assist?” rather than a “here’s what we want” approach. it’s important that DOT be seen as running the project in order to have confidence in the project. Also we should identify those who might detract from the project – determine what their motivation is, and how we could help them overcome their objections?

Committee discusses MBTA’s upcoming expansion - with billions of dollars coming into their transportation system.

Jack Madden mentions 1) Next week Governor’s State of the State address, is there something we want to ask? 2) Tom Giancola – Rep. Kuster’s NRPC roundtable to be held on August 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm.

Rep. Seidel mentions hearing of a half-dozen programs similar to ours that were turned down – for our next meeting, we need to find out why. Also how to keep Rail in the picture, ethos.

Steve also mentioned that the Committee welcomes where the process is at the moment and we look forward to the results of the study. He also warned that we should be prepared to accept the outcome of the findings derived by the study.

Chair Michon summarizes:

- 1) In meeting with the Mayor next week, we should ask “what concerns do you have, what role do we need to play?”
- 2) Get report back from Rep. Kuster’s NRPC meeting
- 3) Jay & Dan to meet with Pat Herlihy for lunch?

\*\* Meeting adjourned at 9:30am \*\*