



SWRPC

Commission Highlights

January 2016

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Winter Commission Meeting February 16, 2016

The Planning Commission's Winter Meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2016 at Papagallos Restaurant in Swanzey, NH. The topic of discussion will be New Hampshire's 2016 legislative session with Judy Silva and Cordell Johnston of the NH Municipal Association as guest speakers. The program includes a social beginning at 5:00 p.m. which will be followed by a dinner buffet and the program. Advanced registration is required. For additional information or to register, please contact Becky Baldwin of Commission staff or visit www.swrpc.org/files/Inv0216.pdf.

Planning Assistance Opportunity

Plan New Hampshire, in partnership with New Hampshire Housing, has announced the creation of a new initiative - the NH Municipal Technical Assistance Program. Its purpose is to support municipalities who wish to create or amend their zoning ordinances to encourage more housing choices to meet the changing and diverse needs of their citizens. Grants of \$2,500 to \$10,000 are available for developing new or revised regulations to improve choices in types and locations of places to live. Examples of projects that may qualify under this program include, but are not limited to: mixed-use zoning, infill development, Neighborhood Heritage Districts, building codes for energy-efficient rehabilitation of older structures, and regulatory reviews (of Zoning Ordinance, Site Plan Review and Subdivision Regulations). This support can also be used for surveys to gather information related to housing, economic development, and transportation needs. The grants will be awarded from a competitive application process, which will include a requirement to raise twenty-five per cent of the award as a cash match. Applications must be submitted by April 4, 2016 and awards will be announced in May. Additional information about this opportunity can be found at www.plannh.org. To discuss potential proposals that might qualify under this grant, please contact Lisa Murphy of Commission staff.

Pedestrian Infrastructure Assessments Completed

SWRPC recently completed sidewalk, curb ramp, and crosswalk data collection in both Hinsdale and Troy to facilitate "complete streets" planning initiatives. This latest data collection activity follows a similar effort in North Walpole. A total of 32,000+ feet of sidewalk, 32 crosswalks, and 34 curb ramps were digitally mapped and evaluated. Until recently there was no standardized way of collecting this data, which resulted in little being available for local planning initiatives or regional metrics that measure access to alternative modes of transportation. In conducting this work, surface type, condition, curbing, width, slope, and many other attributes are photographed, documented, and mapped. In conjunction with other data, the new datasets have proved valuable in identifying gaps in the connectivity of people walking and biking in communities. For more information, please contact Henry Underwood of Commission staff.

Community Development Block Grant Opportunity

For towns and organizations thinking about applying for the April round of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) planning/feasibility studies, now is the time to start the process. Planning/Feasibility Study CDBG funding is available to municipally-sponsored projects in April and October of each year. Eligible projects can receive grants of up to \$12,000 to determine whether or not a potential CDBG project is feasible and to determine that at least 51% of the intended beneficiaries will be of low or moderate income. Eligible activities include income surveys, preliminary architectural and engineering design, cost estimates, and market analysis. For more information, please visit the NH Community Development Finance Authority's website at www.nhcdfa.org and contact Rebeckah Bullock of Commission staff.

Benchmarking Energy Use: Do You Know Where Your Energy Use Is?

Is your community interested in tracking energy and water use in its buildings or trying to prioritize efficiency improvements? You can't manage what you don't measure. EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager is a free and online tool that allows schools, municipalities, and others to keep track of energy use and expenses, water consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions. To view a recent webinar about how to use and benefit from this application, please visit www.nhenergy.org/les-webinars.html. Consider joining the webinar host's Benchmark NH initiative to compare municipal facilities to similar ones all across New Hampshire. For more information, please contact Henry Underwood of Commission staff.

Northeast Energy Direct Update

During January, SWRPC filed with the Federal Regulatory Commission for intervenor status regarding the Northeast Energy Direct proposal. Intervenors are provided the option to continue a more active role in the proceedings. For additional information, please visit www.swrpc.org/pipeline.



NH Wildlife Action Plan 2015 Workshop March 8, 2016

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department updated the NH Wildlife Action Plan in 2015. The plan contains new data and information as well as Wildlife Habitat Maps. A workshop will be held on March 8, 2016 from 6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. at the Keene Public Library (Heberton Hall). It will focus on ways in which towns can use the information for wildlife and conservation efforts. The SWRPC Natural Resources Advisory Committee hosted a similar session in November. The event is free, but registration is required. For more information, please contact Lisa Murphy or Commission staff. To register, please visit: <http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/wildlife/wap-events.html>.

Southwest Region Planning Commission

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