



Region B - Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee Minutes

Date/Time: October 16, 2017 – 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Place: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 State Street, 2nd Fl., Springfield

Members Present:	Jill Payne, Chair Rick Sullivan Marc Strange Steven Marantz Kate Kane Denise Menard	Carmina Fernandes Greg Chiecko Kim Lee Timothy Brennan Andrew Smith Judith Theocles	Attendees: Lloyd Macdonald John Ziemba Joseph Delaney Mary Thurlow
Members Absent:	Stephen Foley, Sean Powers		

Call to Order

Jill McCarthy Payne, the Chair, called the meeting to order and introduced herself. She then asked each member to introduce themselves for the benefit of new members. A new member, Kim Lee, gave a brief description of her background. The Chair then requested for an approval of minutes from the September 25, 2017 meeting. With corrections noted, the minutes were unanimously approved. The Chair then turned the meeting to John Ziemba.

Vote on Chair and Representative to the Subcommittee

Mr. Ziemba then asked members to vote on the position of Chair for this Committee and the Subcommittee Member. He noted that both incumbent members had agreed to continue in their positions, Jill McCarthy Payne as Chair and Carmina Fernandes the member to the Subcommittee. Mr. Sullivan moved that the vote be taken, it was duly seconded and a unanimous vote was taken.

Mr. Ziemba mentioned to the members that the discussion draft was going in front of the Commission at the October 26, 2017 meeting. He noted the calendar of meetings for the development of the final Guidelines to the 2018 Community Mitigation Fund and asked if members had any specific concerns.

A discussion ensued regarding whether or not the Commission should allow for actual transportation construction cost to be paid for with Community Mitigation Fund (“CMF”) and not just planning to design as currently allowed. It was noted that the eastern part of the state could easily eat up the entire fund if construction was paid for by the Community Mitigation Fund. Another issue is how the Commission evaluates transportation mitigation. Mr. Ziemba noted that the Gaming Economic Development Fund is not funded until the casinos are operational and how that fund is utilized is important and could be used for long-term projects.

Mr. Brennan mentioned that there are far more projects than funds and he does not recommend taking on construction. Yes, for planning and design, as that funding could be constrained. The surrounding community agreements individually monitor problematic areas within communities. The CMF will help to pay for unanticipated mitigation.

Mr. Ziemba noted that as part of the environmental processes for the Wynn Boston Harbor project, communities established the LMRWG.

The next discussion concerned the splitting of funds by region. Mr. Chieko advocated for splitting the funds. Mr. Ziemba asked members when the splitting of funds should occur. Should the Commission wait until the casinos are operational and generating tax revenues?

Mr. Sullivan asked the question “Why can’t the funds be separated now?” Mr. Ziemba mentioned that to date the spending has been from one fund. Mr. Sullivan advised that the funding be separated out and that the rest of money should stay in the region. He preferred that any monies generated out in the western part of the state stay there.

Mr. Ziemba explained the complexity of the issue. He mentioned that there is a question as to how the financing system would work. He noted that funding needs to be allocated to the Region C/Tribal casino and there are a lot of issues that need to be worked out first. Additional questions arose regarding what would happen if the money is not spent in the region. Does it accumulate? Does it revert back to the main fund? The Commission would need to develop a system.

Mr. Marantz mentioned that in Longmeadow transportation is a major concern of the community and he also indicated that he would also like money to stay in western Massachusetts.

Mr. Chieko mentioned that funds should be placed in some sort of preservation account.

Mr. Ziemba then went on to discuss workforce development and the amount of workforce development needs in the state. He noted that this year the Commission doubled the amount awarded to western Massachusetts compared to the planned budget. He asked the question about how much of the mitigation funds should be used to catch-up with overall workforce development needs? Additionally, he noted that host community agreements mentions workforce development. The question arose about how much workforce funding would be needed to catch-up with overall needs.

Ms. Lee asked whether the funding was for certain demographics or developing certain skills; or supporting other needs. Mr. Ziemba noted that the workforce pilots did not focus on daycare. This is another issue of where would the Commission should put resources.

Commissioner Macdonald noted that Springfield Public School didn’t have daycare but did provide transportation vouchers to promote the workforce training program.

Ms. Kane emphasized the need of workforce development projects and how to allocate those funds efficiently to suit the needs of the communities is a priority.

Mr. Smith asked, “How did the Workforce applicants determine the educational needs of the area?” Mr. Ziemba mentioned that based on the accomplishment of a GED which is required to work at the casinos. Mr. Delaney also mentioned the workforce development is to be used for backfilling jobs also. Ms. Kane advocated for more funds available for workforce development.

Mr. Chieko was interested in the economic development expectations and Mr. Ziemba noted that it would not be known until Springfield opens. He noted that there is generally a dramatic turnover in personnel in the first 6 months of operations. Mr. Chieko also mentioned the high priority in hiring on a regional basis.

Mr. Ziemba continued with Question 1 of the Policy memo.

Mr. Ziemba mentioned that applications are on a per year funding. The applications must be based on the demonstration of needs.

Ms. Kane noted that the CMF did not hit the limit on funding in 2017. Mr. Ziemba noted that the Sheriff's office did not submit an application for more funding this past round although the Commission initially approved supplemental rent assistance. He anticipates that the Sheriff's Office will apply this year. Ms. Kane asked the amount of the Sheriff's office appropriation. Mr. Ziemba stated \$400,000 per grant. The Commission did not place a limit on how many grants per year, which could enable them to be reimbursed for the 2018 lease costs.

Ms. Payne asked if the grant limits were problematic for the communities. Mr. Delaney mentioned a cap per community.

Ms. Menard asked the committee whether they thought the \$150,000 for transportation planning was enough. Ms. Fernandes asked whether transportation grants have to be casino related. Mr. Ziemba mentioned that all grants have to be casino related.

Mr. Brennan suggested that the committee consider looking for a way to incentivize multiple community applications. (Chair Payne asked whether there presently existed any overall coordination between the communities.) Commissioner Macdonald noted the Revere/Saugus application. Mr. Ziemba mentioned that the joint application was not specifically authorized in the Guidelines and the two communities did not say how they were splitting the reserve funding. He noted that the joint Revere/Saugus effort is laudable and asked the committee whether joint application in 2018 should be allowed. Ms. Lee asked whether the Guidelines currently require collaboration. Mr. Ziemba stated that the Guidelines do not. The Chair mentioned that without collaboration there could be waste.

Several members advocated combined funding and suggested a box to check yes or no on the applications regarding collaborative efforts.

Mr. Ziemba then mentioned that currently there is no scoring of applications. Applications are so varied and the needs different for each community that it is difficult to determine how one can score one application against another.

The discussion then turned to question 4, regarding non-transportation planning grants and whether they should be allowed. The cap would be not more than \$50,000 per community.

Mr. Smith asked what the match would be for the new Non-transportation planning grants. Mr. Ziemba mentioned that it would not be a hard match, but instead some type of in-kind match.

5. No Comments from the Committee.

Mr. Ziemba continued the discussion focusing on Question 6, grants to non-governmental entities such as a non-profit within community. Communities can apply funding for such organizations but need to follow the anti-aid provisions of the Massachusetts Constitution. Mr. Ziemba explained grants must be for a public purpose. Applicants which met this requirement of a public purpose were required last year to provide match/significant match from either the community or license or both. Mr. Ziemba noted that in general it can be hard to evaluate. If pay public entity a match or significant match by community so the community is investing in same purpose. Mr. Brennan noted that there should be some level of flexibility for applications involving private entities.

There was a discussion regarding the structure of such grants. Mr. Ziembra asked Mary Thurlow to send out anti-aid provisions to the members.

7. The next item for discussion was question 7 which is “How should the 2018 CMF Guidelines treat multi-year grant requests?” An example was the Hampden County Sheriff’s Department application. Mr. Ziembra mentioned that the HCSD was required to re-apply every year.

8. Mr. Ziembra noted that there were concerns over Region C, as that region’s casino development has been stalled and that region is not under license by the state of Massachusetts. Under the Compact there are no surrounding community mitigation agreements required. The Tribal casino’s status is still pending and no resolution is anticipated shortly.

Mr. Ziembra noted that the Commission has been very flexible on the grants. However all grants require that the mitigation must be connected to a specific issues relating to the casino. Applicants will be asked how the mitigation request relates to the casino development.

Mr. Ziembra mentioned that more issues will need to be examined as the facilities become operational.

The Chair asked if the Hampden County Sheriff’s Department can catch up on their lease funding. Mr. Ziembra replied in the affirmative.

The Chair asked if there was any further discussion. There being none, the Chair motioned to adjourn the meeting and it being duly seconded the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

/s/ Mary S. Thurlow
Mary S. Thurlow, Secretary

List of Documents and Other Items Used on October 16, 2017

1. Notice of Meeting and Agenda
2. Draft minutes from the September 25, 2017 meeting
3. 2018 Memorandum on Policy Questions
4. 2018 Community Mitigation Fund Guidelines