



NH Railroad Revitalization Association

May 21, 2008

Tonight's meeting was called to order by President Peter Griffin @ 7:00 PM at the Health and Safety Council in Concord.

Attendees:

Name	Town
Peter Griffin	Windham, NH
Bill Remington	Concord, NH
Mark Richardson	Bedford, NH
Tom Noel	New Boston, NH
Lenny McGee	Manchester, NH

Name	Town
Dennis Grimes	Bedford, NH
Gary Kerr	Chichester, NH
Stephen Piper	Dover, NH
Steve Flanders	Weare, NH

Visitors:

Name	Town
Nicholas Coates	SNHRPC – Henniker, NH
Sharon Wason	SNHRPC
John Law	SNHRPC - Farmington, NH
Rick Hardy	Hooksett, NH
Anthony Dominicis	Salem, MA

April Minutes

The April 28 meeting minutes were accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report

Steve Flanders reported the organization's account balance. He reported no debits paid this month.

NHRTA

Opening discussions took place regarding the April NHRTA meeting. The May NHRTA meeting has been postponed to the 30th. Mark is still developing a policy document to act as a press release to answer frequently asked questions of the Authority regarding the proposed rail service.

Sharon Wason - The Southern NH Regional Planning Commission is not a municipal planning organization, but rather a separate entity that maintains a two-year, \$200,000 contract through the NH Dept of Transportation to assess road conditions. By definition, an MPO must represent at least 50,000 people. As of the 2000 census, the SNHRPC was just shy of that threshold, but probably has met that minimum by now. Unfortunately, only \$50,000 of the Commission's budget can be dedicated toward rail initiatives. SNHRPC just completed the regional transportation plan and voted unanimously to support bringing the proposed train service from Lowell to Concord. Most destinations in Concord are within a one-mile walk from the railroad. The city's transportation committee must support the restoration of rail. In her opinion, the NHRTA's role should be to help with statewide issues such as assisting with the costs

of platform insurance premiums. John Law agreed that the reconstruction of the rail line to Concord would make more sense – do all the rehabilitation, including signaling, all at once. He also suggested that feeder buses should be used to bring passengers to the rail stations (hubs).

6000 people commute between Concord and Manchester, but no bus service exists.

Peter mentioned that NH's principal economy is tourism, which would be more affordable if people could go by train.

Rick asked about rail access to the Manchester Airport. Answer: Mark Brewer is a member of the NHRTA and is including rail access in his airport master plan.

Liability Cap Legislation

Liability insurance cap bill passed the Senate unamended and is going to the Governor's desk for his signature.

Pan-Am Southern

Bill Remington reported on the recent merger between Pan-Am Ry and Norfolk Southern. This is a 3-year project intended to combine operations between the two railroads from Ayer, MA to Mechanicville, NY. NS purchased 50% of the line from Fitchburg to Mechanicville with trackage rights up to White River Junction. MBTA owns the corridor from Ayer to Fitchburg and is planning to double track. More information can be found at www.nscorp.com. Anthony studies Essex County rail corridors and has found a big void in rail service. MBTA also owns abandoned corridors and his hope is to see service revived from Salem to Lawrence and Salem to Haverhill. Essex County communities need alternative transportation.

Marketing Report

Mark discussed the need to put together a compelling report to support rail. It must make economic sense, the project can be sold using an \$8-\$12 economic return for every dollar spent, \$20-\$40 million spent could return \$2-4 billion, Downeaster ridership statistics could be used as an example of success, show how freight companies benefit.

Other Business

- Gary is still looking for comments on his survey and hopes to see it linked on our website and other places.
- Steve Piper gave a brief update on Downeaster ridership figures – April saw a record ridership at 42,810 for the month with a record 19,837 of those crossing NH platforms. Revenue generated by ticket sales also set a record.
- Memberships are due for renewal. Steve Piper will send a reminder letter out.
- Nik informed that he and the SNHRPC would be holding a rail forum at the NH Institute of Politics at St. Anselm College in Manchester in mid-July from 6-9 PM. Former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis will be the keynote speaker. NHRRA could support the event by funding a portion of the refreshments and/or printing brochures with bullet points. [Note: the event date has since been set for Monday, July 14. Visit <http://www.anselm.edu/nhiop/news+and+events/events/2008-07-14-govdukakis.htm> for more information]. All are welcome to attend.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

Next meeting: Monday, June 23, 2008 at 7 PM
Safety & Health Council
163 Manchester Street, Concord

Minutes by: Stephen R. Piper, Secretary