



NH Railroad Revitalization Association

December 17, 2007

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

Attendees:

Name	Town
Peter Griffin	Windham, NH
Tom Noel	New Boston, NH
Dick Currier	Hopkinton, NH
Bill Remington	Concord, NH
Stephen Piper	Dover, NH

Name	Town
Gary Kerr	Chichester, NH
Sam Langley	Boscawen, NH
Lenny McGee	Manchester, NH
Mark Richardson	Bedford, NH

Guest:

Michael Smith – President of the Finger Lakes Railway Corp.

November Minutes

The November 26 meeting minutes were accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report

Steve Flanders was not present, but Bill Remington reported the organization's account balance and stated that no expenses were paid out last month. Also, no new members have joined.

Laconia Meeting

Peter and Bill reported on their recent meeting with the Laconia City Council. Peter gave a regional report on rail service, offered some creative funding ideas for passenger rail and recommended attracting influential organizations such as the Rotary, Kiwanis and the Board of NH Realtors to get behind rail initiatives. He stated that it is imperative to make transportation an issue. The Mayor of Laconia, who also chairs the City Council, was present at the meeting. Bill noted that there is an ongoing initiative to create trails next to rails on state-owned corridors and that draft language has been submitted that would create a law outlining the separation requirements and crossing criteria. This has been presented to Operation Lifesaver, the Department of Resources and Economic Development and Senator Burling. Mike Smith suggested that Rails with Trails could capitalize on federal Transportation Enhancement funding to help maintain a corridor's infrastructure intact.

MA/NH Transit Study

Two public meetings were held November 27 and 28 in Andover, MA and Salem, NH respectively to hear ideas and suggestions from the general public in Massachusetts and New Hampshire about the development of the strategic plan for transit investments in the I-93 corridor between Boston, Massachusetts and Manchester, New Hampshire.

The two-year study has identified possible transit service opportunities within the I-93 Corridor. The study team has analyzed a range of alternatives, including rail, bus, and ride-sharing. The study has reviewed local land use policies that impact on growth in the region and the potential for transit-friendly land use.

Restoration of the M&L is being considered as the best option as it could help to revitalize Lawrence, Methuen and Andover. While the initial capital investment cost of \$168m is scary, the return on investment must be considered. A final recommendation is scheduled to be forthcoming in April.

Downeaster Funding

Steve reported on the funding issue facing the Downeaster as it moves into its final year of using federal CMAQ money to help cover operational costs. The State of Maine has passed a bill that contains language that supports funding the service, but it doesn't state exactly how. A rail funding task force gave its recommendations to Maine's legislature several months ago, but no action has been taken to date that would identify a dedicated funding source. Peter suggested that NHRRA should come up with a proposal for how this organization could help influence the State of NH and/or the NH Rail Authority to start contributing financially to the Downeaster.

Other Business

Peter Leishman has been asked by Arnie Arneson to be interviewed along with Peter Griffin, NH State Representative Neal Kirk and Nashua's Community Development Director Kathy Hersh. Peter Griffin mentioned that he has already been interviewed by the Christian Science Monitor and noted that the Eagle Tribune would be receptive to running Op Ed pieces on rail.

Tom will mail the completed 501(c)(3) package to Peter for his signature and submission to the Dept. of Justice by March of 2008.

Michael Smith

Mike introduced himself as a resident of Gilmanton, NH and the President of the Finger Lakes Railway of Syracuse, NY (www.FGLKRail.com). The railway provided 5600 carloads in 1995 and this year it will provide about 18,000. The company pays close attention to customer needs and their customers' needs. They interchange with CSX at Lyons and Syracuse, NY; with the New York Susquehanna and Western Ry at Syracuse, NY; with Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific at Geneva, NY. They run a very successful operation in central/western New York state.

Guardian Glass is a big receiver of shipments and the railway responds with a high level of service by typically providing two switches per day, sometimes three or four. Seneca Foods, a large canned goods facility, will ship 1800 carloads this year.

Freight railroads don't always see the benefits of passenger operations on their tracks, but as money is a scarce commodity it needs to be spent wisely with the maximum returns and the maximum level of service as a result. If a governmental agency wishes to upgrade a corridor for passenger operations, it will only act to enhance the freight service.

The Northern in NH has much potential for Canadian markets in and out. Interchanging with the New England Central would provide many opportunities.

Mike submitted a draft public/private partnership proposal to Nashua for consideration.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Next meeting: Monday, January 28, 2008 at 7 PM
Safety & Health Council
163 Manchester Street, Concord

Minutes by: Stephen R. Piper, Secretary