



NH Railroad Revitalization Association

April 28, 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
Winthrop Buswell	Loudon, NH
Sam Langley	Boscawen, NH
Lenny McGee	Manchester, NH
Mark Richardson	Bedford, NH

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

March Minutes

The March 24 meeting minutes were accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report

Steve Flanders reported the organization's account balance. He reported \$75 paid this month for printing costs, \$68 for annual Post Office box rental and a \$24 dues receipt.

Guest Speaker - Silas Archambault

Silas is currently an undergraduate student at UNH studying Sociology and has recently performed two ridership studies for the Amtrak Downeaster service.

The first study was a small "snapshot" capture of one weekday and one weekend day ridership in New Hampshire in the winter of 2006-07 that primarily looked at where people were coming from, going to and how they arrived/departed the stations. This ballooned into a big survey conducted in the summer of 2007 that interviewed 750 passengers in more depth on the train. The results found that the train has defined commuter patterns and is primarily used by people who drive to the stations and use the train as an extension of their cars. Massachusetts people live close to transit stations and travel north. The five daily round-trip trains are often packed, but it's a very small percentage of people taking those trips. 83% are travelers to Boston with 5-7% through-travelers going beyond. 22% of the ridership is comprised of students. The Downeaster well serves the people who can use it. His survey was unable to reach the people who cannot use it.

Paula commented that the Amtrak equipment makes it difficult to bring bicycles on the train.

Dennis commented that current transit systems are very good at Hub and Spoke configurations, but fail for those who live or commute to locations off the corridor.

Guest Speaker - Nicholas Coates

Working directly under the direction of former Massachusetts Governor Mike Dukakis and also at the Southern NH Regional Planning Commission, "Nik" is trying to help steer the NHRTA. He reported that the Authority needs broad based support from the ground up through organizations such as the NHRRA. It also needs to start talking about creating a regional coalition with the Maine based Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority. The NHRTA is entering into dialogue with MBTA officials to begin a regional system negotiations committee with Pan-Am Railway. Senator Burling wants to show that New Hampshire supports the Downeaster and wants to begin helping with the funding.

The liability insurance cap legislation is now in the Transportation Committee, which has committed to not step in the way of its passage despite two of its members being trial lawyers.

Senator Gregg has publicly dismissed rail as viable transportation option. Jeanne Shaheen, however, has indicated that if elected to the US Senate (to replace John Sununu), she will be a rail advocate in Washington. The NHRTA is planning an interview with Ms. Shaheen.

Phase 1 of the "Capitol Corridor" rail project is now Lowell to Manchester (originally only to Nashua). Funding concerns preclude going all the way to Concord initially, but this will be considered as Phase 2. Long term, Phase 3 might be to extend service north of Concord, at least on a seasonal basis to run snow trains to ski areas.

Nik's immediate action item is to develop pro-rail talking points and create a policy document. Discussions need to focus on how to be proactive with legislators and NHRTA members.

Mark suggested that the policy document must require the NHRTA to address the following:

- 1) Economic and Social Justification (Return on Investment)
- 2) Level of Proposed Service / Infrastructure
- 3) Business Support (Private Investment)
- 4) Political Support (Legislative, State, Federal)
- 5) Public Support / Marketing

NHRRA must develop 15-20 bullet points for each of the above and issue a press release. Discussions ensued about a working group meeting outside of the regular NHRRA meeting times for following up.

Other Business

- Gary submitted the survey questions in their current form for review and comments.
- Steve Piper gave a brief update on Downeaster ridership figures

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

Next meeting: **Wednesday**, May 21, 2008 at 7 PM
Safety & Health Council
163 Manchester Street, Concord

Minutes by: Stephen R. Piper, Secretary