



Barnstable County Economic Development Council (BCEDC)

Draft Minutes | September 14, 2022 at 5:00 pm.

Virtual via Zoom

The meeting was held virtually, with members of the Barnstable County Economic Development Council participating remotely, pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain Covid-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on June 16, 2021.

The Chair announced that because the meeting was being held virtually all votes and other actions would be done by roll call. He stated that the members participating remotely would be announced as roll call is taken.

Attendance/Roll Call

Member	Business Sector	Attendance
Rob Brennan	Construction/Engineering	Present
Chris Flanagan	Residential Construction	Absent
Kara Galvin	Workforce Development	Present
Lisa Guyon	Social Services	Present
Tammi Jacobsen	Higher Education	Present
Alisa Magnotta	Social Services	Present
Paul Niedzwiecki	Business Development	Present
Robert Talerman	Banking/Finance	Present
Julie Wake	Arts and Culture	Present
Vacant		
<i>Non-voting members</i>		
Mark Forest	BC Commissioner	Absent
Harold Mitchell	CCC Rep	Absent
John Ohman	Assembly of Delegates	Absent
Cape Cod Commission Staff:		
Kristy Senatori	Executive Director	
Erin Perry	Deputy Director	
Steven Tupper	Deputy Director	
David Still	Digital Communications	
Siobhan Cavacco	Administrative Assistant	

Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm with roll call.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion by Rob Brennan, seconded by Tammi Jacobson, the minutes from the June 8, 2022 BCEDC meeting were approved.

Roll Call Vote

Bert Talerman	Yes
Rob Brennan	Yes
Kara Galvin	Yes
Lisa Guyon	Yes
Tammi Jacobsen	Yes
Julie Wake	Yes
Alisa Magnotta	Yes
Paul Niedzwiecki	Yes

After the minutes were approved, Mr. Niedzwiecki informed members of his resignation from the BCEDC, effective today. He left the meeting at 5:05 pm. Vice-Chair Alisa Magnotta continued the meeting.

Election of Chair

Council members discussed and voted to appoint a Chair to the Council for the remainder of the calendar year 2022 (September 14 – December 31, 2022).

Upon a motion by Rob Brennan, seconded by Kara Galvin, the committee nominated Alisa Magnotta to serve as Chair and Bert Talerman to serve in the Vice-Chair role vacated by Ms. Magnotta for the remainder of the calendar year.

Roll Call Vote

Bert Talerman	Yes
Rob Brennan	Yes
Kara Galvin	Yes
Lisa Guyon	Yes
Tammi Jacobsen	Yes
Julie Wake	Yes
Alisa Magnotta	Yes

Nominating Committee

Council members discussed and voted to appoint a member to serve on the Nominating Committee, the subcommittee that makes recommendations to the Barnstable County Commissioners on Council membership.

Upon a motion by Alisa Magnotta, seconded by Tammi Jacobsen, Rob Brennan was nominated to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Roll Call Vote

Bert Talerman	Yes
Rob Brennan	Yes
Kara Galvin	Yes
Lisa Guyon	Yes
Tammi Jacobsen	Yes
Julie Wake	Yes
Alisa Magnotta	Yes

Cape Cod Canal Bridges

Steven Tupper, Deputy Director of the Cape Cod Commission, provided an update on the status of the Cape Cod Canal Area Transportation Improvement Program, a program that will include the eventual replacement of the Bourne and Sagamore bridges.

Mr. Tupper began his presentation by noting the Bourne and Sagamore bridges were built in 1935 and anticipated volume at that time was 40,000 vehicle crossings per month. He said needs for the region have changed over the past 87 years and escalating volume has created challenges with the existing structures. Mr. Tupper said 2021 was a record year for volume with 38.7 million vehicle crossings over the bridges.

Mr. Tupper said the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) maintains and carefully monitors the bridges, including conducting complete inspections every two years. He said based on the National Bridge Inspection Standards Condition Ratings, the Sagamore bridge is considered to be in fair condition and the Bourne bridge is in poor condition. Both bridges, however, remain functional and can continue to be maintained by the USACE. Mr. Tupper reviewed the USACE condition ratings of structural components of the bridges that are used to help determine when maintenance is necessary. He said the data indicates a downward trajectory.

Mr. Tupper reviewed the impacts of bridge maintenance and construction, particularly for residents of Bourne who cross the Bourne bridge daily for various activities. These impacts include, emergency services, healthcare access, transportation of goods and services, delays for commuters, school access, retail/tourism, disaster management, recreation access, air quality, pedestrian access, safety, and perceptions that Cape Cod is a difficult place to get to.

Mr. Tupper reviewed the two most recent reports for the course of action for the bridges. He started with the USACE's *Cape Cod Canal Bridges Major Rehabilitation Evaluation Report*. He said they USACE conducted an alternatives analysis that considered a few different options before reaching the recommendation to replace both bridges with two four lane and 2 auxiliary lane structures. He said the USACE considered replacement of the bridges with the same lane configuration but with wider

lanes. However, their final consideration was to add an auxiliary lane in each direction for increased safety of people getting on and off the bridges.

Mr. Tupper said alternatives the USACE considered but did not carry forward were, a third bridge, a tunnel and filling the canal. He said the tunnel was deemed infeasible due to the high cost and filling in the canal was infeasible due to their charge of maintaining the canal. Mr. Tupper said they considered continuing with a “fix-as-fails” basis of bridge maintenance that would most likely lead to load limitations and impact freight for the region. He said major rehabilitations would require full bridge closure for six months each time and the end result would basically be the same structures.

Mr. Tupper reviewed the MassDOT *Cape Cod Canal Area Transportation Study* that addresses the surrounding infrastructure for each bridge. He said the study includes public engagement and recommends a major overhaul of all approaches to the bridges with the exception of the Sagamore flyover. Mr. Tupper said there will be full replacement of the Bourne rotatory, Belmont Circle, and relocation of Exit 55. He said the study also looks at improvements to intersections with safety issues in surrounding areas.

Mr. Tupper said at the conclusion of each study there is a memorandum of understanding between the two agencies, that they will cooperate with the replacement of the two bridges and MassDOT will take responsibility for the bridges once they are finished.

Mr. Tupper said MassDOT is ready to move into the scope phase of the program, which establishes it as an official project with a full team of staff and consultants conducting the necessary field work to bring the project to the construction phase. He said MassDOT is taking the lead, but they are working closely with USACE and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). He said they are conducting extensive public outreach and anyone interested in getting involved can visit www.mass.gov/cape-bridges for more information.

Mr. Tupper reviewed the timeline of the project up to this point. He said there were two rounds of public engagement with field investigations and discussion of the program scope and timeline in 2021. Mr. Tupper said recent focus has been on funding sources, including two federal grant applications with letters of support from the Cape Cod Commission. Mr. Tupper said securing the funding is necessary before establishing a detailed design as funding will impact permitting decisions. He said the hope is MassDOT will hold a third round of public engagement before the end of the calendar year.

Mr. Tupper reviewed the draft program needs and measures of effectiveness. The needs include structural condition, traffic safety, traffic operations, multimodal connectivity, and emergency traffic management. The measures of effectiveness include, mobility and operations, safety, constructability/staging, reliability, abutter impacts, environmental considerations, resiliency and sustainability, multimodal connectivity, and cost. Mr. Tupper said additional opinions can be suggested on the MassDOT website <https://www.mass.gov/cape-bridges>.

Mr. Tupper concluded his presentation with the next steps for the program. These include continued program development and public involvement. He said once the funding for the program is secured, the process will start to move forward more quickly.

Ms. Magnotta asked if the plan is to build the new bridges parallel to the existing structures. Mr. Tupper said his understanding of the plan is the new bridges will be built parallel and the existing bridges will be deconstructed upon completion of the new bridges. He said it is unclear if the bridges will be built at the same time. Mr. Tupper referenced the Whittier Bridge project on Route 95 heading to New Hampshire as a model for the plan.

Ms. Wake asked if aesthetics is being considered as it is not mentioned in the measures of effectiveness. She said the bridges are a great opportunity to welcome people across the globe and asked if design and cultural reflection are being considered. Ms. Wake suggested using public art or involving an artist to help with the design process. Mr. Tupper said there has been discussion regarding the importance of aesthetics as the bridges are a symbol of the region. He suggested Ms. Wake access the MassDOT website to add her suggestion to include aesthetics in the measures of effectiveness and for her to attend the next public meeting with her suggestions.

Mr. Talerma asked if abutters will have the ability to prevent the new bridges from happening, even after funding is secured. Mr. Tupper said there are legal recourses for abutters and would not be surprised if there were some legal challenges. He said the hope is the early public engagement with the project will help with the process as commercial and residential property owners are aware of the areas of impact.

Mr. Tupper stressed the importance of BCEDC input for the project, including providing letters of support for funding. He said they will discuss opportunities with the council as they arise, and suggested members view project updates at www.capecodcommission.org/canal.

There were no other questions or comments.

Early Education and Childcare Needs Assessment

Erin Perry, Deputy Director of the Cape Cod Commission, provided an overview of the results and recommendations from the Early Education and Childcare Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy.

Ms. Perry began her presentation by reminding members the purpose of the assessment was to better understand early education and childcare challenges on the Cape and Islands and to develop recommendations for improving access. She said it was supported by state funding and the final report can be reviewed in more detail on the Cape Cod Commission website at <https://capecodcommission.org/our-work/childcare>.

Ms. Perry said the assessment confirmed that a quarter of children in the county are in need of care but unable to access it. She said the data indicates there are 6,540 children under the age of five

with parents in the labor work force and only 5,200 childcare seats. Ms. Perry said Massachusetts has the second highest childcare cost in the country, with infant care costing 45% more than the average annual housing cost and annual childcare costs for a 4-year-old is 18% more than in-state college tuition. She said respondents to the survey confirmed it is difficult to find childcare within their budget, with costs at \$1,000 to \$2,000 per month for one child. Ms. Perry said many of the respondents also indicated they earn too much to qualify for childcare subsidies and, of the respondents eligible for subsidies, only 13% indicated they are accessing the assistance.

Ms. Perry said according to the study, low wages and lack of affordable housing make it difficult to hire and retain childcare providers, particularly with early education. She said the median salary in Massachusetts is \$50,000 but two-thirds of the provider survey respondents reported an average annual salary of \$35,000 or less. Prior to the pandemic, 12% of childcare providers indicated frequent staff turnover, compared to 23% as of March 2020.

Ms. Perry said the Rennie Center identified areas for high impact investment, including expanding access to affordable care, particularly to families who earn over the income limits but are still financially strained. They also suggest strengthening salaries and benefits for early education staff. She said they addressed the importance of professional development opportunities to ensure the workforce currently in the field and those interested in entering childcare and early education feel prepared to succeed in their positions.

Ms. Perry reviewed the Rennie Center's regional recommendations. She said they suggest providing residents with childcare scholarships, providing affordable housing options for childcare workers, recruiting new talent within the community of people that already live in the area so finding housing is not an issue, and bringing employers into the mix to help parents return to the workforce.

Ms. Perry said Eastham and Chatham voted at their town meetings to support programs that provide residents with childcare scholarships, regardless of income. She said Cape Cod Community College offers professional development and continuing education for early education and childcare providers, which could be helpful for recruiting new talent. Finally, Ms. Perry suggested businesses can implement best practices and explore incentives that support access to early education and care benefits.

Ms. Perry said state level recommendations include continuing to offer subsidies and to engage organizations to connect parents to funding, to use data to connect eligible families to childcare vouchers and to expand voucher programs that take into consideration the high cost of living on the Cape and Islands, to offer grant and relief programs for providers so they can return to full capacity, and to increase benefits for educators.

Ms. Perry said in addition to the recommendations, the report provides case studies to see how other regions have structured programs. She said the BCEDC members have access to the full report and suggested continuing the conversation at future BCEDC meetings. Ms. Perry said Senator Moran and Representative Peake were involved in securing funding for the needs assessment and Senator

Moran plans to attend the meeting to discuss next steps to support access to early education and childcare.

Ms. Magnotta commented on the importance of the assessment and suggested Jacqui Beebe from Eastham be included in future discussions to share Eastham's childcare efforts.

Ms. Guyon asked if there is regional data regarding the gap between the different regions of the Cape. Ms. Perry said one-fifth of the outer Cape respondents said they are traveling 21-30 minutes for childcare, which is a significant distance, especially when considering drop off and pick up on a daily basis. She said the report has similar data for all the Cape subregions. Ms. Magnotta suggested this discussion for a future agenda item so everyone can understand the gap and discuss what can be done about it.

Ms. Guyon asked if the loss of access pertains to loss in childcare businesses or if there is the same number of businesses with fewer staff. She also asked about the number of private, home-based care facilities vs childcare centers. Ms. Perry said it appears there are fewer providers overall and those that have continued are not at capacity and may find participating in subsidized programs challenging because of reimbursement rates.

Ms. Galvin said the childcare topic is an important issue across the state and has been discussed at the conference she is currently attending.

Mr. Talerma said childcare is an important issue that disproportionately impacts women and the advancement of their careers. He said local schools have also been impacted by lack of staffing, which further adds to the discussion.

Ms. Wake agreed with Mr. Talerma and said the lack of before and after school providers is an issue that needs to be addressed.

There were no additional questions or comments.

Cape Cod Commission Executive Director Update

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Member Reports

Julie Wake provided an update for the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod. Ms. Wake said they gave out \$139,000 to fourteen local arts organizations that qualified for federal funding through the National Endowment of the Arts. She said the Capacity Building Grant Program for individual artists received 40 applications so far and the deadline is tomorrow. Ms. Wake said she thinks their partnership with Mass MoCA and the \$1,000 stipend contributed to the number of applications. She said state

funding will allow them to increase the number of awards to include everyone who qualifies for the program.

Kara Galvin provided an update for MassHire. Ms. Galvin said she is currently attending a Mass Forward conference and one of her colleagues was nominated for a MassHire award, which is the first time anyone from the Cape region has been nominated. Ms. Galvin said MassHire received funding for two STEM grants for a total of \$225,000 to pay high school students for internships.

Tammi Jacobsen provided an update for Cape Cod Community College. Ms. Jacobsen said there is a ribbon cutting ceremony for new science building scheduled for September 29th at 4:00 pm. She said the building is impressive and encouraged council members to attend.

Lisa Guyon provided an update for WeCan. Ms. Guyon said WeCan is opening new office in Hyannis, which will be helpful since 40% of their clients live in the mid-Cape. She said they should have staff by the end of 2022 and it will open in 2023.

Alisa Magnotta provided an update for Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC). Ms. Magnotta said HAC launched their Thrive program last month, which provides rental subsidies for childcare workers. She said they have 40 spots to fund rental assistance for two years. She said they have funding for the first three years and are starting to fundraise for year four and beyond.

New Business

There was no new business.

Next Meeting

Ms. Perry reminded members the next meeting is scheduled for October 12th and will be held in person.

Adjourn

Upon a motion by Bert Talerman, seconded by Tammi Jacobsen, the meeting adjourned at 5:56 pm.

Roll Call Vote

Bert Talerman	Yes
Rob Brennan	Left at 5:13
Kara Galvin	Left at 5:50
Lisa Guyon	Yes
Tammi Jacobsen	Yes
Julie Wake	Yes
Alisa Magnotta	Yes

List of Materials Used/Presented



- Cape Cod Canal Area Transportation Improvement Program Presentation
 - Early Education and Childcare Needs Assessment Presentation
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