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Chairman

BENJAMIN L. SPINELLI, ESQ.
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: RMP Amendment Committee

FROM: Benjamin L. Spinelli, Esq., Executive Director

DATE: April 8, 2026

SUBJECT: RMP Amendment Committee Meeting Minutes of April 1, 2026

The RMP Amendment Committee met on Tuesday, April 1, 2026 at 2:00pm via Zoom.

RMP Amendment Committee Members present: Council Chair Richko, Committee Chair Alstede, Members Kibler, Oswald, Smith and Van Abs.

Highlands Council Staff Members present: Ben Spinelli, Gabrielle Gallagher, James Humphries, Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Kelley Curran, Neda Hartman, Corey Piasecki, Carole Ann Dicton, Diana Swiderski and Annette Tagliareni.

Governor's Authority Unit (GAU): Michael Eleneski, Associate Counsel and Azeem Chaudry, Associate Counsel.

Corey Piasecki, Principal Planner, opened the meeting at 2:01pm. Committee Chair Alstede was not present at the start of the meeting, but joined later.

Mr. Piasecki noted that after the committee's last meeting on March 10, 2026, three (3) Monitoring Program Recommendation Report (MPRR) chapters were provided to the committee members on March 19, 2026 for their review, as well as two (2) additional chapters sent prior to this afternoon's meeting:

- Economic Sustainability
- Transportation & Air Quality
- Agricultural Resources
- Historic Resources
- Water Resources

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Mr. Piasecki then gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the above chapters and the recommendations in each.

Economic Sustainability

Mr. Piasecki reviewed the recommendations included in the Economic Sustainability chapter of the MPRR.

- Sustainable Regional Economy – Planning Initiatives
- Sustainable Regional Economy – Monitoring Activities

Member Van Abs commented on the establishment of a dedicated position to guide economic sustainability initiatives throughout the region. Member Van Abs suggested that a Regional Planner with a strong sustainable economic focus could be an option.

Transportation & Air Quality

Mr. Piasecki reviewed the recommendations included in the Transportation & Air Quality chapter of the MPRR

- Transportation Safety and Mobility
- Freight Access
- Air Quality

Member Kibler commented on planning for linear development projects. After some discussion, Mr. Humphries suggested that this development may be emphasized in the Natural Resources section of the MPRR.

Committee Chair Alstede was present at 2:16pm.

Agriculture Resources

Mr. Piasecki reviewed the recommendations included in the Agricultural Resources chapter of the MPRR.

- Agricultural Sustainability, Viability, and Stewardship

Member Smith commented on including the Agricultural Viability index. Mr. Piasecki noted that the index is discussed in the Science and Research Agenda section of the MPRR.

Member Van Abs asked to what extent staff works with Rutgers Extension. Member Van Abs suggested leveraging their work in the Highlands. There was then discussion regarding funding.

Committee Chair Alstede gave an overview of county, state and federal funding, as well as SADC funding to define right-to-farm protection.

At this time there was discussion regarding future and more sustainable agriculture and the challenges farmers face. Committee Chair Alstede commented that stable funding is needed for first-generation farmers. Member Van Abs suggested the Council develop a mechanism to financially assist new farmers.

Chair Richko left the meeting at 2:44pm.

Historic Resources

Mr. Piasecki reviewed the recommendations included in the Historic Resources chapter of the MPRR.

- Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resource Protection
- Scenic Resource Protection

Mr. Piasecki noted that the committee will review the Water Resources section of the MPRR at its next meeting.

It was also noted that the committee will receive an email to schedule the next two committee meetings and the following chapters will be provided for committee review and for discussion at the upcoming meetings.

- Future Land Use
- Waste and Wastewater Utilities
- Implementation

Mr. Piasecki noted that the committee will receive edited chapters before its next meeting and asked the committee members to send their comments by:

April 14 for:

- Economic Sustainability
- Transportation & Air Quality
- Agricultural Resources

April 21 for:

- Historic Resources
- Water Resources

Member Van Abs requested that when the chapters are edited and sent back they be marked up to clearly to note the edits. Mr. Piasecki concurred.

Lastly, it was noted that the next two committee meetings will be scheduled for the end of April/beginning of May and end of May/beginning of June.

The RMP Amendment Committee adjourned at 2:57pm.