

1 **NRPC Board of Commissioners Meeting**
2 **July 31, 2024 at 7:00 PM**
3 **Hybrid Meeting (Zoom and NRPC Office)**
4 **Northwest Regional Planning Commission**
5 **75 Fairfield Street, St. Albans, VT 05478**
6

7 **Attendance**

8 Commissioners: *See attached*. A quorum was present to conduct business.

9 Staff: Catherine Dimitruk, Bethany Remmers, Dean Pierce, Greta Brunswick, Shaun Coleman

10
11 Chair Peter Zamore began the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

12
13 **Adjustments to the Agenda**

14 None.

15
16 **Welcome, Introductions, Opening remarks**

17 The Chair welcomed everyone to the NRPC's July board meeting followed by introductions.

18
19 **Opportunity for Public Comment**

20 No public comments were made.

21
22 **NRPC Regional Plan Amendment Hearing**

23 C. Dimitruk explained that this was originally scheduled as the Final Hearing prior to a vote on adopting the
24 Energy Plan as an Amendment to the Regional Plan. Since the hearing was warned, the Department of
25 Public Service identified a few technical issues that prevented the plan to receive a positive determination
26 of energy compliance. None of the issues changed the meaning or intent of the plan. A new hearing has
27 been warned for the September board meeting. There have been no additional comments since.

28
29 **Minutes from the June Meeting**

30 B. Morris suggested that a list of who was elected for each position be entered as part of the minutes.
31 *Barclay Morris motioned to approve the June Board of Commissioners meeting minutes. E. Nance seconded.*
32 E. Nance noted there were several grammatical corrections she sent to the Director.
33 *Motion carried.*

34
35 **Commissioner Reports**

36 Peter asked members to just provide any new information to what is in the written report.

37
38 Finance/Operations – No additions.

39 Personnel – No additions.

40 Executive Committee – No additions.

41 Project Review Committee – K. Waite asked for clarification on both Georgia's Sandy Birch sidewalk
42 extension and the recommendation for signage and striping. H. Garrett explained the applicant and
43 town determined they would not construct the extension due to the drop off and the amount of fill
44 that would be required in the wetlands. The committee was not aware that signage and road
45 striping were not something the town typically uses. The signage and striping were included out of
46 concern for pedestrian safety on a well-travelled road. Although committee members are in favor of

1 sidewalks, the committee voted with the town’s concerns to remove the sidewalk extension and
2 recommended striping and signage.

3 Transportation Advisory Committee – No additions.

4 Brownfields Committee – No additions.

5 Regional Plan and Policy Committee – No additions.

6 Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC) – No additions.

7 Green Mountain Transit – No additions.

8 Healthy Roots Advisory Committee – C. Dimitruk reported the program has transitioned to CVOEO.
9 They are working on an asset transfer. H. Garrett noted he was sorry to see the program go.

10 Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation – No report.

11 Staff Announcements - B. Morris asked for information on the condition of the rail trail following
12 the July storms. Bethany provided a link in the chat for the state of rail trails in Vermont.

13 <https://railtrails.vermont.gov/trail-updates/>

14 S. Coleman provided a quick overview of flooding damages in NEK from Monday’s storms.

15 **Legislative Overview: Act 250, Regional Plans, Designations, Open Meeting Law**

16 C. Dimitruk provided a PowerPoint presentation on legislative activities.

17
18
19 Act 181 covers the Act 250 changes. There are six main components ranging from municipal plans
20 and regulations to various studies and reports by state agencies and RPCs. NRPC will be hosting a
21 zoning administrators roundtable reviewing all the new municipal regulations regarding Act 250 and
22 changes to local decision-making processes and appeals.

23
24 For Regional Plans, there were changes made to local and regional planning goals that will impact
25 local and regional plans. Land use plans now have to provide for land area, that would
26 accommodate a substantial majority of housing that’s needed based on the housing targets that are
27 established by the RPCs. The next regional plan amendment will be using regional and state-wide
28 housing targets to develop local housing targets based on the future need of the region.
29 Additionally, there will be ten land use categories used state-wide, a new adoption process and a
30 new state-level regional plan approval process through a Land Use Review Board (LURB).

31
32 For Land use plans and Act 250 exemptions, there will now be a tiered system. Tier 1A are the
33 highest density locations for our state. Tier 1B is more limited for downtown or village centers,
34 village areas and planning growth areas that have 50 or fewer housing units.

35
36 Open Meeting Law changes distinguish state and local “non-advisory” and “advisory” bodies. A
37 “non- advisory” body has supervision, control, or jurisdiction over legislative, quasi-judicial, tax, or
38 budgetary matters. An “advisory” body has none of the above. Refer to SOS website for more
39 information: <https://sos.vermont.gov/municipal-division/open-meetings/>

40
41 Act 121 covers statewide river corridor and wetlands including new state standards for NFIP enrollment, and a study
42 on the state administering the National Flood Insurance Program. ANR must also establish criteria for waivers of Act
43 250 permit fees for persons of low income or other criteria.

44
45 Act 143 (S.310) covers natural disaster government response, recovery and resiliency. The seeks to create a
46 community resilience and disaster mitigation fund. It also seeks to improve language service programs during
47 disaster events.

1
2 Act 118 (S.159) covers a County and Regional Governance Study Committee. This is aimed at addressing
3 local government capacity challenges and also whether Vermont’s lack of County government affects our
4 ability to take advantage of federal programs.

5
6 C. Dimitruk will send out the power point presentation to the Board.

7
8 P. Zamore asked if the RPCs will be compensated for their involvement in all these changes. C. Dimitruk
9 noted that there will be a small compensation to RPCs.

10
11 W. Irwin asked if there will be help for municipalities from the state or RPCs. C. Dimitruk replied that land
12 use changes only apply to RPCs. Local changes will be addressed at a local roundtable workshop that NRPC
13 staff is working on for the region.

14
15 B. Morris asked if the RPC is going to get pushback from towns with state zoning overriding local zoning. C.
16 Dimitruk replied that the issues might come into play whether something is in a planned growth area or
17 transition area. Likely it is more of collaboration with municipalities than a conflict.

18
19 C. Rosenquist asked for assistance and clarification with meeting the 3 – Acre Permit rule requirements.
20 This is a burden to both municipalities and property owners in subdivisions that are not in an association. It
21 is creating a divisiveness in the community. D. Pierce added that he had conversations with officials in
22 Swanton Town and Village regarding the rule. He is willing to meet with the Town of Georgia as well. Carl
23 thanked Dean.

24
25 H. Demars added that the state is very good at issuing mandates and poor at helping municipalities achieve
26 these goals and noted that towns need support. C. Dimitruk added that the governance study committee
27 will be looking at what the state is asking of municipalities in an attempt to alleviate some of the burden.

28
29 H. Valenta mentioned that there are funds available through the 3-Acre Permit Obtainment Assistance
30 (POA) Program: <https://anr.vermont.gov/special-topics/arpa-vermont/treating-stormwater-runoff#POA>

31
32 P. Zamore suggested the RPCs have a role through committee or other means in assisting communities
33 related to the 3-Acre Permit rule and work with the state on addressing them.

34
35 **FY25 Committee Assignments**

36 *H. Demars motioned to accept the committee appointments as written. A. McCracken seconded. Motion*
37 *carried.*

38
39 **FY25 Transportation Planning Initiative**

40 B. Remmers provided an overview of the proposed TPI work program and budget. She noted there is slight
41 reduction in funding as two short-term tasks were completed. Two of the tasks were MVRT and LVRT
42 junction study and a state rail trails on-line interactive map. <https://railtrails.vermont.gov/map/>.

43
44 Two changes were noted:

- 45 1) Lines 239 – 247 - Alphabetical list is out of order.
46 2) Line 410 – Change “George” to “Georgia”.

1 *H. Garrett motioned to accept the FY25 TPI Work Program and Budget. S. Bousquet seconded. Motion*
2 *carried.*

3

4 **St. Albans Town Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Growth Center Master Plan**

5 G. Brunswick announced that St. Albans Town is participating in this program with 9 other municipalities in
6 northwestern Vermont through DOT funding from CCRPC. The concept is to create compact, walkable
7 communities linked together by transit and also have the density to make transit feasible. The project
8 consists of several phases including planning and developing regulations in TOD, real estate market analysis
9 (nearing completion) and feasible transit solutions. As part of the process, St. Albans Town would like to
10 hear from regional commissioners as part of community engagement. The exercise is one in a series of
11 public workshops.

12

13 She shared a map of the St. Albans Town Growth Center and asked the commissioners for input on
14 strengths and weaknesses on areas or features of the map for areas in greatest need of planning.

- 15 • Collins Perley, Hard' Ack Recreation area, Northwest Medical Center and St. Albans Town Industrial
16 Park were seen as important facilities that are in need of better transit options.
- 17 • Some thought should be considered how the two growth centers could be tied together from
18 pedestrian and bike trail perspective. The rail trail could be uses as a basis for spur trails.
- 19 • Franklin Park West seems to be not under any master planning process. It's a great space for more
20 dense housing projects because of opportunities to get food and access to rail trail.
- 21 • The transportation to adult day care center in Franklin Park West could be improved for the aging
22 population.

23 She thanked Megan Sherlan from St. Albans Town for inviting the Commissioners to participate tonight.

24 W. Irwin asked about using this study to support passenger rail service to Canada. G. Brunswick replied that
25 connections to Canada is of great interest for the region but is not the focus of this exercise.

26 **Commissioner Announcements**

27 J. Callan noted that Route 36 in Fairfield is now open.

28 H. Demars congratulated the Chair on running a great first meeting.

29 **Adjourn**

30 *H. Demars motioned to adjourn. C. Rosenquist seconded. Motion carried.*

31

32 The meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm.

FY25 NPRC Board of Commissioners- Meeting Attendance

Municipality	Board Member	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
		7/31/24	No Meeting	9/25/24	10/30/24	TBD	TBD	1/29/25	2/13/24	3/13/24	4/10/24	5/28/24	6/25/25
Frkln Cty Youth	Vacant												
Gl Cty Youth	Vacant												
Alburg Town	Alex McCracken	X											
Alburg Town	Donna Boumil												
Alburg Village	Vacant												
Alburg Village	Vacant												
Bakersfield	William Irwin	X											
Bakersfield	Linda McCall	X											
Berkshire	Vacant												
Berkshire	Claude Charron												
Enosburg Falls	Leonard Charron												
Enosburg Falls	Vacant												
Enosburgh Town	Jesse Woods												
Enosburgh Town	Vacant												
Fairfax	Barbara Murphy	X											
Fairfax	Sarah Hadd	E											
Fairfield	Julia Callan	X											
Fairfield	Chuck Verderber	X											
Fletcher	Vacant												
Fletcher	Lori Ruple	X											
Franklin	Yvon Dandurand	X											
Franklin	Wesley Kempton												
Georgia	Carl Rosenquist	X											
Georgia	Kirk Waite	X											
Grand Isle	Barclay Morris	X											
Grand Isle	Howard Demars	X											
Highgate	Jack Pelkey	X											
Highgate	Sharon Bousquet	X											
Isle La Motte	Sylvia Jensen	X											
Isle La Motte	Mary-Catherine Graziano												
Montgomery	Leanne Barnard												
Montgomery	Mark Brouillette												
North Hero	Andy Alling	X											
North Hero	Mike Curtis	X											
Richford	Marissa Tessier												
Richford	Vacant												
Sheldon	Vacant												
Sheldon	Jeff Kane												
South Hero	Peter Zamore	X											
South Hero	Bob Buermann	E											
St. Albans City	Elisabeth Nance	X											
St. Albans City	Chip Sawyer												
St. Albans Town	Marietta Scholten												
St. Albans Town	Megan Sherlund	X											
Swanton Town	Harold Garrett	X											
Swanton Town	Nicole Draper												
Swanton Village	Heidi Britch-Valenta	X											
Swanton Village	Neal Speer												
	# Municipalities	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

QUORUM = 12

E= Excused ; X=Present