

**NRPC Board of Commissioners Meeting
January 29, 2025 at 6:30 PM
Hybrid Meeting (Zoom and NRPC Office)
Northwest Regional Planning Commission
75 Fairfield Street, St. Albans, VT 05478**

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

Staff: Catherine Dimitruk, Shaun Coleman, Kyle Grenier, Greta Brunswick, Emily Klofft, Luke Slomba

Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks

Chair P. Zamore called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM. He welcomed the Commissioners and noted the two new members.

Adjustments to Agenda

None.

Opportunity for Public Comment

None.

Minutes of the December 2024 Meeting

E. Nance motioned to approve the December 2024 meeting minutes. B. Murphy seconded. The motion carried.

Regional Plan Update

C. Dimitruk presented on the Regional Plan updates. The current update is needed to ensure conformance with Act 181. Act 181 makes changes to the adoption process, approval process, content and importance of the Regional Plan. The Regional Plan will impact state designation programs and eligibility for Act 250 exemptions.

The Act includes temporary location-based Act 250 exemptions for housing projects through 2026. NRPC has received a regional target for number of new homes by 2050 which NRPC will be responsible for breaking down into municipal targets. The Regional Plan will now be approved by the new state Land Use Review Board. Once approved, areas mapped for growth will be granted automatic state designation benefits and municipalities will be able to opt-into permanent Act 250 exemptions for housing.

There are two new designations: centers and neighborhoods, which will be approved automatically upon approval of the Regional Plan. All communities with an existing designated village center will be mapped as centers in the new process, and many may be expanded. Communities without a current designated village center are likely to receive a center designation under the new maps.

S. Jensen asked if towns without zoning and subdivision regulations would be eligible for village center mapping. C. Dimitruk stated that they would. K. Waite asked if the Act 250 exemptions would apply to towns without zoning. C. Dimitruk clarified that towns without zoning & subdivision regulations would not be eligible for Act 250 exemptions.

C. Dimitruk reviewed the new Regional Plan land use areas required under statute. There are four categories for areas planned for growth: downtown, village center, planned growth areas and village areas. C. Dimitruk reviewed the requirements for each area and an example of the mapping in Fairfax.

H. Garrett had questions about whether the Fairfax planned growth area could be extended to the intersection of VT 128 and if the area would include floodplain. C. Dimitruk explained that there are statutory requirements that limit where planned growth areas can be mapped, such as the presence of Complete Streets infrastructure. The floodplain will not be in the new planned growth area and there are carve-outs in the temporary exemptions for floodplains. Each community will have a chance to review its draft maps.

Commission Reports:

Finance/Operations- No additions.

Personnel-B. Buermann stated the Committee reviewed the personnel policy changes.

Executive Committee- P. Zamore stated there is an ongoing review of the FY24 audit.

Project Review-H. Garrett stated the Committee met and reviewed three projects: ER Dunsmore LLC, Reservoir Road Solar LLC and Malone 75 Swanton Rd Properties LLC. The Reservoir Road Solar, LLC project for 2.375 MW solar was found to have a substantial regional impact due to its impact on two communities, but was in conformance with the Plan.

B. Buermann motioned to ratify the Committee decision that Section 248- Reservoir Road Solar, LLC is in conformance with the Regional Plan. H. Demars seconded. The motion carried.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)-H. Garrett noted that the Committee reviewed its policies and procedures.

Brownfields Committee- M. Sherlund stated that the Committee met and approved the assessment for the South Hero Meeting House project.

Regional Plan and Policy Committee-No additions, the Committee did not have quorum.

Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC)- No additions.

Green Mountain Transit-No additions.

Healthy Roots Advisory Committee-M. Scholten stated that they met, reviewed the strategic plan and discussed farm to school and gleaning initiatives. She noted that the Committee is looking for a new chair.

Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation- No additions.

Office- No additions.

Election of Secretary

P. Zamore noted that there was a vacancy after S. Hadd's resignation and asked for nominations.

K. Waite nominated B. Morris for the position of Secretary. B. Buermann seconded. B. Murphy motioned to close nominations. C. Verderber seconded. The Board unanimously voted to appoint B. Morris as Secretary.

Town of Georgia, Town Plan Approval and Confirmation

M. Sherlund stated that the Plan Review Committee held a public hearing on January 29, 2025 at 6:00 PM to hear public comments on whether the Georgia Municipal Plan should receive regional approval and whether to confirm the town's planning process. After deliberation, the Plan Review Committee finds that the plan:

- Is consistent with the planning goals of Title 24 VSA, Section 4302;
- Is compatible with the Regional Plan;
- Is compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region, and
- Contains all the elements as required in Title 24 VSA, Section 4382.

The Plan Review Committee also finds that the Town of Georgia is:

- engaged in a continuing planning process that includes maintaining a current, regionally
- approved municipal plan,
- engaged in activities that implement its adopted municipal plan in accordance with 24 VSA
- Section 4382, and
- maintains its efforts to provide funds for municipal and regional planning purposes.

Based on these findings, the Plan Review Committee recommends that the Board of Commissions grant Regional Approval to the Georgia Municipal Plan, adopted on January 6th, 2025 , and confirm the planning process of the Town of Georgia in accordance with 24 VSA Section 4350.

H. Demars motioned to approve the Georgia Town Plan. B. Murphy seconded. The motion carried.

B. Buermann motioned to confirm the town of Georgia's planning process. B. Morris seconded. The motion carried.

NRPC Bylaw Changes

C. Dimitruk stated that the bylaw changes were the same as the Board had previously reviewed. The most major change is merging the Municipal Plan Review and the Regional Plan Committee. H. Garrett had a question about meal reimbursements, C. Dimitruk clarified that that was under the personnel policy.

B. Morris motioned to accept the changes in bylaws. B. Murphy seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

NRPC Personnel Policy Changes

C. Dimitruk reviewed the personnel policy changes which include prorating the maximum rate of paid time off for part-time employees, adjusting the first year paid time off to be more competitive with other employers, allowing the Commission to negotiate with new hires on higher paid time off on the basis of years of employment elsewhere, allowing the Commission to post for new positions internally first, correcting an inconsistency in the paid leave policy to clarify that the part-time employee working more than 24 hours a week were eligible and increasing meal reimbursement.

H. Garrett asked for clarification regarding the increase in meal reimbursements. C. Dimitruk noted that the draft sent to the Commissioners had an error. The changes did include an increase in \$5 for meal reimbursement rates.

H. Demars motioned to accept the amendments with the addition of increasing the meal reimbursements by \$5, as discussed. E. Nance seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

TAC Rules of Procedure

K. Grenier reviewed changes to the TAC rules and procedures. The major changes were that the TAC will adhere to the NRPC Public Participation Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy and Code of Conduct Policy.

B. Morris motioned to accept the changes to the TAC rules of procedure. H. Garrett seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Code of Conduct

P. Zamore stated that the Code of Conduct adopted by NRPC in 2023 included a requirement for periodic review of the code. Commissioners can provide comments now or after the meeting via email. No Commissioners had comments at the meeting.

Commissioner Announcements

B. Buermann noted that there is an opening in the Executive Committee for a member-at-large.

A. McCracken announced that the Alburgh Family Clubhouse childcare project had broken ground.

B. Murphy stated that the Commission would miss Sarah Hadd and her incredible work and congratulated her for her appointment on the Land Use Review Board.

H. Demars noted there was a new state ethics course. C. Dimitruk stated that she would forward any relevant items to the Commissioner.

S. Jensen shared her concerns with the new education proposal from Governor Scott and its potential impact on local control and possible school closures in Grand Isle County.

Adjournment

B. Murphy motioned to adjourn. H. Demars seconded. The Commission adjourned at 7:39 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		X			X	X					
Alburg Town	Donna Boumil												
Alburg Village	Vacant												
Alburg Village	Vacant												
Bakersfield	William Irwin	X			E		X	E					
Bakersfield	Linda McCall	X		X	X		X	X					
Berkshire	Josh Grims						X	X					
Berkshire	Claude Charron												
Enosburg Falls	Leonard Charron												
Enosburg Falls	Vacant												
Enosburgh Town	Jesse Woods												
Enosburgh Town	Vacant												
Fairfax	Barbara Murphy	X		X	X		X	X					
Fairfax	Sarah Hadd	E		X	X		X						
Fairfield	Julia Callan	X		X	X		E	X					
Fairfield	Chuck Verderber	X		X	X		X	X					
Fletcher	Vacant												
Fletcher	Lori Ruple	X			X		X	X					
Franklin	Yvon Dandurand	X		X	X		X						
Franklin	Wesley Kempton												
Georgia	Carl Rosenquist	X		X	X		X	E					
Georgia	Kirk Waite	X		X	X		X	X					
Grand Isle	Barclay Morris	X			X		X	X					
Grand Isle	Howard Demars	X		X	X		X	X					
Highgate	Jack Pelkey	X			X		X	X					
Highgate	vacant	X		X									
Isle La Motte	Sylvia Jensen	X			X			X					
Isle La Motte	Mary-Catherine Graziano												
Montgomery	Leanne Barnard												
Montgomery	Mark Brouillette												
North Hero	Andy Alling	X		X	X		X	X					
North Hero	Mike Curtis	X		X	X			X					
Richford	Marissa Tessier												
Richford	Vacant												
Sheldon	Vacant												
Sheldon	Jeff Kane												
South Hero	Peter Zamore	X		X	X		X	X					
South Hero	Bob Buermann	E		X	X		X	X					
St. Albans City	Elisabeth Nance	X		X	E		X	X					
St. Albans City	Chip Sawyer			X	E		X	X					
St. Albans Town	Marietta Scholten			X	E		X	X					
St. Albans Town	Megan Sherlund	X			X		X	X					
Swanton Town	Harold Garrett	X		X	E		X	X					
Swanton Town	Nicole Draper			X	X		X						
Swanton Village	Heidi Britch-Valenta	X		X	X		X						
Swanton Village	Neal Speer				X								
	# Municipalities	16	0	14	14	0	16	15	0	0	0	0	0

QUORUM = 12

E= Excused ; X=Present