

TRORC Board Meeting September 26, 2018 – Board Meeting Minutes

Thompson Senior Center, Woodstock, Vermont

Attendance:

Name	Town	9/25/18	6/27/18	5/23/18	4/25/18	3/28/18	2/28/18
Jerry Fredrickson	Barnard	X	X	X	X	X	X
Carl Russell	Bethel	X					
Nancy Jones	Bradford	X	X	X	X		
Marcey Carver	Bradford (Alt)	X					
VACANT	Braintree						
Lynne Bertram	Bridgewater		X				
Jon Binhammer	Brookfield	X	X			X	X
Carl Pepperman	Chelsea	X	X	X		X	
Tim O'Dell	Corinth	X	X	X	X	X	X
Peter Berger	Fairlee	X	X	X	X		
Mark Belisle	Granville	X	X		X	X	X
Monica Collins	Hancock		X			X	
Lori Hirshfield	Hartford	X	X	X	X	X	
Bruce Riddle	Hartford (Alt)	X	X		X	X	X
Charles Jeffries	Hartland	X	X	X	X		X
Frank Tegethoff	Newbury	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jeff Goodrich	Norwich					X	X
Herb Kuendig	Pittsfield	X	X		X		X
Anne Brown	Plymouth	X			X		X
Bill Emmons	Pomfret	X	X	X	X	X	X
Phil Dechert	Pomfret (Alt)	X					
Ramsey Papp	Randolph	X	X		X		X
Winston Sadoo	Randolph (Alt)		X		X	X	
Anni Mackay	Rochester	X	X	X			X
Doon Hinderyckx	Rochester (Alt)	X	X	X			
David Brandau	Royalton		X		X		
Bushrod Powers	Royalton (Alt)	X	X	X	X	X	
Peter Anderson	Sharon	X	X		X		
Deb Jones	Sharon (Alt)						X
Bill Edgerton	Stockbridge						
Steve Campbell	Strafford		X	X	X	X	
Stuart Rogers	Thetford	X			X	X	
Jim Bulger	Topsham	X				X	X
Michael Sacca	Tunbridge		X	X			
Kevin Rose	Tunbridge (Alt)	X					
Bill Baylis	Vershire		X				
Nancy Malmquist	W. Fairlee	X		X			X
Don Bourdon	Woodstock	X		X	X	X	
Steve Schneider	At-Large		X	X	X	X	X
Jennifer Colby	At-Large	X	X				X
Ken Alton	At-Large	X	X	X	X	X	
Kent McFarland	At-Large	X	X				
Andrew Winter	At-Large	X	X	X	X		X

Staff: Kevin Geiger, Kimberly Gilbert, Dee Gish, Peter Gregory, Victoria Littlefield,
Guests: Rod Francis, Ernie Chiccotelli

1. Call to Order and Public Comments:

Chair Jerry Fredrickson convened the Board Meeting at 6:34 p.m. A quorum was declared after roll call. Ernie Chiccotelli of Norwich read a statement regarding the Norwich Town Plan. Ernie offered that there were a number of Norwich citizens who objected to the Norwich Town Plan because they feel that developers will profit at the expense of mid and low-income residents. He noted that a significant portion of property along Route 5 North near Hartford abuts neighborhoods, forests and fields. The Town Plan also contains conflicts and ambiguities and is requesting that the Board does not approve the Norwich Town Plan at this time. Board members began asking Ernie and staff questions and clarifications. Chair Jerry Fredrickson said the discussion should happen during the public hearing. There were no other public comments.

2. Public Hearing – Town Plan Approvals for Norwich and Randolph:

Kimberly Gilbert reviewed the draft Norwich Town Plan Review prepared by staff, noting that TRORC was not under contract with Norwich for this update on the Town Plan. Norwich made some improvements to the Plan since the last review, but currently, some issues remain, as noted in the Town Plan Review. Staff, however, does recommend approval to the Board of the Norwich Town Plan.

A discussion followed with Commissioners and guests asking questions of staff and making comments. Many comments were focused on multi-family housing issues not being addressed in the Plan as required and concerns that the Plan contained ambiguities and inconsistencies in the Land Use chapter that conflicted with the Regional Plan.

Tory Littlefield reviewed the draft Randolph Town Plan Review, noting that this was a quick Plan update in order to meet a state Downtown Designation requirement that had a September 17th deadline. Tory noted that improvements to the Plan were made since the last Review, but that work still needs to be done and will be completed by May, 2019, under a Municipal Planning Grant contract Randolph has with TRORC.

Discussion followed with concerns being aired about the Plan's weaknesses in dealing with multi-family housing, child care and earth resources. The discussion also included the options of approving, rejecting, or tabling the vote on the approval of the Randolph Town Plan. It was noted that the RPC does not need to approve the Plan in order for the Town to have met the state Downtown Designation conditions. Randolph has already addressed this condition. It was also noted that Randolph continues to actively work on the Town Plan through a contract with TRORC.

The hearing was closed.

3. Action on Town Plan Approvals for Norwich and Randolph:

A motion was made by Frank Tegethoff and seconded by Bushrod Powers that the Norwich Town Plan be approved as recommended by staff. Andrew Winter offered a friendly amendment that the language on page 3, section C of the Town Plan Review be changed to more prescriptive language, removing the word “hopefully” and replacing the word “will” with “shall”. Frank and Bushrod accepted the friendly amendment. Don Bourdon reminded Commissioners that the RPC Board must affirmatively find the local Plan to be compatible with the TRORC Regional Plan, not just determine that it is not incompatible due to it being too vague to make a determination. The Board voted unanimously to reject the Norwich Town Plan with Bushrod Powers abstaining.

A motion was made by Bushrod Powers and seconded by Bill Emmons to approve the Randolph Town Plan. On a vote of 8 in favor and 16 opposed, the Board voted to reject the approval of the Randolph Town Plan due to missing language addressing all statutorily required goals.

4. Approval of TRORC’s Board Minutes from May 23, 2018:

A motion was made by Andrew Winter and seconded by Mark Belisle to approve the May 23, 2018 minutes as presented. Unanimously approved.

5. Acceptance of July and August TRORC Financial Reports:

Peter Gregory reported that the budget figures are on track for the year and that income from the last fiscal years’ invoices are coming in as well as Town dues. TRORC wrote some mitigation grants, that have been awarded to Barnard, Stockbridge and Pittsfield and project management costs will be unbudgeted income.

6. Approval of TRORC’s FY 20 Dues Rate:

A motion was made by Don Bourdon and seconded by Herb Kuendig to approve the FY 20 Dues Rate. Unanimously approved.

7. Regional Plan Chapter Review:

Tory Littlefield reviewed the changes proposed for the Fostering Healthy Communities chapter. Tory asked that any grammatical or typo change suggestions be emailed to her or Peter. Carl Pepperman requested a definition of healthy food, as mentioned on page 4. Andrew Winter suggests a re-wording of the last line on page 4 to read “older housing serving low-income households.” Frank Tegethoff noted that on page 8, line 31, that towns do not have jurisdiction over state highways. Tim O’Dell wanted a mention of housing being located near existing services on page 5 and Jim Bulger was concerned that in many rural towns, there are no services, sidewalks, or much infrastructure, so that the Active Living and Active Transportation sections may not be applicable to some communities. Bruce Riddle will provide written comments, and voiced is disappointment in the chapter. Bruce feels that the region faces huge health concerns and the chapter warrants a higher level of content for greater impact. Carl Russell noted that many Regional Plan chapters overlap here and that this chapter should be more comprehensive when discussing active lifestyles. Suggestions were made for related resources including the United Valley Interfaith Project, SASH (Support

and Services at Home), Council on Aging. Tim O'Dell thought this chapter draft had fostered good discussion and Peter Gregory thanked Commissioners for their thoughtful comments, recommending any more comments be submitted to Tory so that they could be incorporated and brought back before the Board. This chapter will not come before the Board again unless comments suggest policy related changes.

Kevin Geiger reviewed the changes proposed in the Working Landscape draft. Kevin would like comments submitted by the end of October. Carl Russell noted that on page 9, sentence 1 should have the parenthetical note removed. Tim O'Dell questioned whether on page 15, policy 1, if woody biomass should be considered renewable, since using wood for electric generation is inefficient. Discussion ensued with Lori Hirshfield suggesting that the chapter not have a policy to encourage wood for electricity. Jim Bulger suggests changing the word "elegant" on line 4, page 7, and on line 15, there should be a mention of off-site mitigation. Kent McFarland suggests a re-write of the Changing Forest Health paragraph on page 12 to include current data from the region and a greater emphasis on the problem of invasive species, with an inclusion of a goal or policy related to invasives. Kent will help draft the paragraph. Jenn Colby suggested a reference to climate change in this chapter and will provide resources. Carl Russell suggests adding a mention of ways in which the farm and forest economy contributes to conservation and ways to promote farm and forest products to avoid land being sold for unwanted development. Lori Hirshfield asked if on page 15, line 36, we could provide a definition of viable agriculture, or provide some examples. Jenn Colby noted that soils can be used as indicators of viability.

9. Director Remarks:

Jerry Fredrickson recognized Chris Damiani, who is leaving TRORC to work for the Town of Waitsfield. Peter Gregory thanked Chris for his good work at TRORC.

Peter reported that TRORC will be receiving funding for the third year of Town energy planning. The next Board meeting will continue review of Regional Plan chapters and will have a presentation by VT ANR on the White River Basin Plan. Peter mentioned that thanks to Rita Seto's diligence, 28 of TRORC's 30 towns are working on Grants In Aid projects and that TRORC will likely submit 35 applications for Road Erosion and Culvert Inventories and culvert ditch and bridge projects. Peter reported that he has made two offers to new staff members. Paige Greenfield, a recent UVM graduate with communications experience will be coming on board shortly, and he is still waiting to hear from another prospective employee. He will also be looking to fill Chris Damiani's full-time position. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 31 at the Thompson Senior Center.

Adjourn:

Jerry Fredrickson made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 pm.

Minutes prepared by Dee Gish 9/28/18.

Norwich TP Review Presentation for Board Meeting

- 1) This version of the Town Plan is an update and not an overhaul
- 2) TRORC was not under contract for this project. Our role was to provide comments on a Planning Commission Draft of the Plan toward the end of the project.
- 3) Improvements from the last plan
 - more detailed energy plan
 - more discussion of flood resilience
 - more on forest block and habitat connector protection
- 4) Issues from the 2012 TP Review:
 - The Village Center/ Route 5 South land use area is shown as one area and the plan calls for the creation of additional commercial and mixed use zoning districts along US 5 South and River Road. These need to be designated as land use areas on a Town Plan map, that reflect the business/mixed use focus in the next town plan.
 - The energy section should include a more detailed inventory of resources available to the town and how much energy is being used in town.
- 5) Staff is recommending approval of this plan.
- 6) Weaknesses of the Plan:
 - The energy plan must be improved by including more analysis of energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs and problems within the municipality.
 - The economic development section could be strengthened by identifying policies, projects, and programs necessary to foster economic growth.
 - State the desired scale, size and density of development by land use area in the Town Plan.
 - Recommending ways to encourage multi-family housing must be included in future plan revisions.
 - Clarify both the geographic areas covered by policies, make policies more specific so that they can be better evaluated, and align policies and land use areas when possible.
 - Include any anticipated major utility and facility projects in the plan's lifetime along with methods of financing.
 - Elaborate on childcare issues in town, including financing, infrastructure, and business assistance for providers.

Randolph TP Review Presentation for Board Meeting

- 7) This version of the Town Plan is an update and not an overhaul. It was to meet the downtown designation requirements.
- 8) TRORC is currently under contract for this project through a Municipal Planning Grant. We will continue to make changes and edits.
- 9) Improvements from the last plan
 - An emphasis on goals and policies with identified implementation actions
 - Improved energy chapter
 - New flood resilience and forest block / habitat connector elements
 - Added a relationship to other plans chapter.
 - Expanded upon the utilities and facilities chapter, a recommendation from the last town plan.
 - An implementation matrix was created for the goals, policies, and actions created.
- 10) Issues from the 2012 TP Review:
 - Expanded utilities & facilities chapter and energy chapter is needed. – this was done
 - Discussion of scenic and historic features expanded. – this was done
 - An implementation plan is needed – this was done
 - A relationship to other plans element is needed. – this was done
 - Housing affordability discussion needs to be expanded, accessory apartments need more detail. – not done
 - Expand and clarify productive and working landscapes section to encourage value-added products and sound agricultural practices. – needs some more work
 - Add an earth extraction section – this was not done.
- 11) Staff is recommending approval of this plan.
- 12) Weaknesses of the Plan:
 - The Town Plan needs to include goals and policies that specifically align with the White River Basin Plan. Currently, there is no mention or reference to basin planning.
 - It was identified in the last Town Plan Review for the 2013 Randolph Town Plan that there was no mention of earth resources, this still holds true for the 2018 Town Plan. The next iteration of the Randolph Town Plan must include a section on this for it to become approvable.
 - The Plan lacks discussion and goals around multi-family housing and manufactured housing in Randolph. These need to be expanded upon in the next iteration of the Plan. The Plan will also need to add goals and policies on elderly and disabled housing.
 - There is no mention of childcare in this Town Plan, this is a required element and must be in the next Plan.
 - Discussion around and goals related to protecting upland forests to increase flood resilience should be addressed.