

TRORC Board Meeting March 27, 2019 – Board Meeting Minutes

Thompson Senior Center, Woodstock, Vermont

Attendance:

Name	Town	3/27/19	2/27/19	12/19/18	10/31/18	9/25/18	6/27/18
Jerry Fredrickson	Barnard	X	X	X	X	X	X
Carl Russell	Bethel		X	X	X	X	
Nancy Jones	Bradford	X	X	X	X	X	X
Marcey Carver	Bradford (Alt)		X	X	X	X	
VACANT	Braintree						
Lynne Bertram	Bridgewater			X	X		X
Jon Binhammer	Brookfield	X		X		X	X
Carl Pepperman	Chelsea	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
Lori Hirshfield	Hartford	X		X		X	X
Bruce Riddle	Hartford (Alt)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Charles Jeffries	Hartland	X	X	X	X	X	X
Frank Tegethoff	Newbury	X	X		X	X	X
Jeff Goodrich	Norwich	X	X				
Herb Kuendig	Pittsfield	X				X	X
Anne Brown	Plymouth	X	X		X	X	
Bill Emmons	Pomfret	X	X	X	X	X	X
Phil Dechert	Pomfret (Alt)	X	X	X	X	X	
Ramsey Papp	Randolph	X		X	X	X	X
Winston Sadoo	Randolph (Alt)						X
Anni Mackay	Rochester			X	X	X	X
Doon Hinderyckx	Rochester (Alt)			X	X	X	X
David Brandau	Royalton	X			X		X
Bushrod Powers	Royalton (Alt)	X		X	X	X	X
Peter Anderson	Sharon	X	X	X	X	X	X
Deb Jones	Sharon (Alt)						
Bill Edgerton	Stockbridge						
John Echeverria	Strafford	X	X	X			X
Stuart Rogers	Thetford	X	X			X	
Jim Bulger	Topsham		X			X	
Michael Sacca	Tunbridge	X	X				X
Kevin Rose	Tunbridge (Alt)	X		X	X	X	
Bill Baylis	Vershire						X
Nancy Malmquist	W. Fairlee	X	X	X	X	X	
Don Bourdon	Woodstock		X		X	X	
Steve Schneider	At-Large	X		X	X		X
Jennifer Colby	At-Large					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

Staff: Dee Gish, Peter Gregory, Rita Seto, Sarah Wraight

Guests: Rod Francis - Norwich

1. Call to Order and Public Comments:

Chair Jerry Fredrickson convened the Board Meeting at 6:35 p.m. A quorum was declared after roll call. There were no public comments.

2. Approval of February 27, 2019 TRORC Board Minutes:

Michael Sacca clarified that the Land Trust he reported on in February (Item 5 in the minutes) that helps fund affordable housing in Bellingham Washington, is the Kulshan Community Land Trust. A motion was made by Bushrod Powers and seconded by Herb Kuendig to approve the February minutes. Approved unanimously.

3. Acceptance of February, 2019 TRORC Financial Reports:

A motion was made by Mark Belisle and seconded by Bushrod Powers to accept the February financial reports. Peter Gregory noted that we are caught up on receivables and that there was not a lot of activity in the short month. Financial reports were unanimously accepted.

4. TRORC FY21 Transportation Capital Project Prioritization:

Rita Seto reviewed the previously distributed FY21 Transportation Capital Project Prioritization list through a power point presentation. Discussion included a question about construction schedule and whether any listed bridges are eligible for accelerated construction. Rita noted that some of the projects won't be constructed for another 5 or 10 years and that accelerated construction classification depends on many factors and VTrans will check on each project to see if it makes sense. This list was approved by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and is up for Board approval. A motion was made by Bill Emmons and seconded by Herb Kuendig to approve the Project Prioritization list. Unanimously approved.

Rita reviewed the previously distributed FY21 Town Highway Bridge Program Pre-Candidate list, noting that the list is the same as last year since none of the projects moved to the Project Priority list. A motion was made by Bill Emmons and seconded by Bushrod Powers to approve the Pre-Candidate list as presented. Approved unanimously.

5. Regional Plan Transportation Chapter review:

Sarah Wraight reported that the major changes to the Transportation Chapter include data updates and a re-organization of contents and removal of redundant sections. Policy recommendations were saved, and some new goals, policies and recommendations were added to meet statutory requirements and consistency with VTrans Transit and Long Range Plans.

Jeff Goodrich feels that the Land Use and Transportation section should reflect a desire to reduce carbon emissions. Lori Hirshfield had questions and would like clarification on

the definitions of “substantial regional impact,” “unique circumstances,” “strip development” and “sprawl” on page 10. Peter noted that many of the definitions are contained in the Definitions and Implementation Chapters. Lori feels that “unique circumstances” in Goal 2 on page 10 is too open ended, and that there needs to be studies conducted at the regional level to look at each interchange and articulate what unique characteristics are. Peter Gregory noted that the Land Use Chapter will contain more information and that TRORC will conduct master plans at interchanges with interested communities. Lori suggests adding a reference to the relevant sections of the Land Use chapter. Lori feels that Policy 3 on page 10 has wording that is too subjective. For example, what criteria would be used to meet the “substantial amount of truck traffic” mentioned in the policy? Rita will add a level of service study to include capacity and safety issues. Jeff Goodrich noted that it may be tied to VTrans 1111 permits, and Lori would like that referenced if that is the case. Lori asked for an example of “Regional Centers” in Policy 6 on page 11. Peter Gregory noted that there is only one in the TRO Region – White River Junction, so the Policy will be changed to note that. Lori also asked for a definition of “socioeconomic vitality” in Policy 7. Sarah explained the policy was trying to convey a general message that interchange development could draw growth away from designated centers thereby reducing economic activity and quality of life in downtowns. Lori questions the use of “shall” in Policy 9 on page 11, wondering what the threshold would be activate an impact study. Tim O’Dell asked if Policy 9 on page 11 mentioning “neighboring region” was required by Act 250. Peter confirmed that it was.

Frank Tegethoff noted that at the beginning of the Chapter on page 1 and 4, it mentions climate change, but then on page 6 the language changes and the chapter talks about “environmental” and “flooding” challenges. Tim O’Dell suggests replacing the term “rural sprawl” for “scattered and uncoordinated residential development” on page 3, line 17. Similarly, for Policy 2, line 27 on page 10 – replace “strip development and sprawl” with “rural sprawl.” Tim also noted that on page 3, line 38, “rural towns” is not an adequate description of the TRO Region, since Hartford could be considered a “micro metropolis.” Peter Anderson notes that the Recommendations on page 38 regarding Park and Rides do not mention EV charging stations and believes this is a missed opportunity to recommend EV infrastructure. Peter Anderson would also like to see a mention of EC Fiber under the Telecommuting Policy number 2 on page 42. Nancy Malmquist suggested that TRORC might not single out a certain provider for a mention so to encourage competition of providers. Peter Gregory suggested including “community-based communications efforts” to be supported.

Nancy Malmquist suggested that while the Chapter is well organized, that some of the language may become more than what is intended. The Goals, Policies and Recommendations on pages 16 and 17 should be reviewed. Nancy suggests adding “undue” before “adverse impacts” in Goal 2 on page 16, and adding “unless appropriately mitigated” after “important crossing areas” on Policy 3 page 17, for example. Nancy will provide staff with a scan of her suggested changes. Nancy Jones noted the policies (#1 page 16) don’t say “must”, it says “should.” Lori notes that the policies provide a basis for what will be looked at if it is not an absolute and appreciates Nancy Malmquist’s comments. David Brandau noted that “appropriately mitigated” has been a long legal issue. Jon Binhammer feels that mitigation should be used as a last resort and appreciated Nancy Jones’ comments, urging that development should spend a little more money to get it right. Jeff Goodrich notes that nearly all villages are located in low areas, and appreciates the language that Nancy

Malmquist suggests. Peter Gregory would like the full Board to weigh in on any language changes that may affect legal interpretation.

Frank Tegethoff warns that some of the terms are too nebulous and fluid and that the issues of housing is overlaid on the entire Transportation Chapter. Frank suggests making sure we don't have questions when jumping between chapters. Bruce Riddle feels that due to big technological changes in the auto industry, with many companies committing to manufacturing all EVs by 2025, this chapter is missing the moment. E-bikes and multi-modal transit needs to be leveraged. Bruce feels this chapter is not an 8-year vision, it is a static chapter. We need to be thinking of how we create a quality of life 8 years out and move the agenda forward. Jerry mentioned the need for more walkable communities and Bill Emmons asked how we could encourage people to use scooters and side-by-sides. Nancy Malmquist noted it is difficult to accurately predict technological changes and we need to plan in real time.

Jon mentioned that in the spirit of telecommuting that tele-meetings and remote meeting opportunities need promotion. Even TRORC Board meetings should have the capability to be run with Skype, etc. Tim O'Dell noted that a lot of bandwidth is required for tele-meetings and Bushrod noted the value of "intercommunications with human beings" in face-to-face meeting settings.

TRORC staff will take these comments and suggestions into consideration. Peter Gregory reminded Commissioners that there will be a public hearing on the Regional Plan, so further comments can be suggested then.

6. Staff/Commissioner Updates:

Peter Gregory asked Michael Sacca to report on the on-going 4-Town Future forums sponsored by Vermont Council on Rural Development, and thanked him for his leadership in organizing these forums. Michael noted they three forums so far have been well attended and well run. These forums focus on Royalton, Sharon, Strafford and Tunbridge, but many of the topics are applicable to other towns. The last meeting will be held tomorrow, March 28th at the Sharon Elementary School.

Legislative updates: Peter noted that S.96 for clean water projects and governance has language that the RPCs, based on basins, could be the conduit of funds for water projects. This would be an important role for us. Act 250 is still in the House Natural Resources Committee, is complicated and has received lots of testimony. The Broadband bill passed the House and would help communities build fiber projects through funding of the Universal Service Fund. Nancy Malmquist noted that using the Universal Service Fund is regressive. Peter reported that funding for Regional and Municipal planning is level funded per House action.

Peter reported that UVLSRPC is leading the effort for a Housing Study with TRORC and SWCRPC. Twin Pines is also on the committee. The study will report on housing needs and impediments and will focus on the outreach needed to raise the housing issue in the region. Peter also reported on the Northern Border Regional Commission meeting held in WRJ and that TRORC has worked with VT Huts and Rochester Velomont Trail in seeking grant funding.

Peter outlined the Regional Plan update process. When completed, this will be a complete overhaul of the Regional Plan. The Land use Chapter will be reviewed in April and May and we hope to adopt the Plan in October.

Jerry asked Peter to report on the NADO meeting he attended in DC. Peter noted the hot topics were broadband, opioid abuse and its affect on employment and the creative economy.

Dee encouraged Commissioners to take forms for the Volunteer of the Year Award and nominate members of their communities who are deserving of special recognition.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24th at the Thompson Senior Center, Woodstock. Please come early, at 5:30, to enjoy pizza with TRORC staff. This will be a time to hear about staff projects and get to know them better.

Adjourn:

Steve Schneider made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 pm.

Minutes prepared by Dee Gish March 28, 2019.