

**TRORC Board Meeting – Zoom Meeting
 May 27, 2020 – Board Meeting Minutes
 Attendance:**

Name	Town	2/26/20	3/25/20	4/22/20	5/27/20		
Jerry Fredrickson	Barnard	X	X	X	X		
Paul Vallee	Bethel			X			
Nancy Jones	Bradford	X	X	X	X		
Marcey Carver	Bradford (Alt)	X	X		X		
Vacant	Braintree						
Lynne Bertram	Bridgewater						
Gwynn Zakov	Brookfield	X		X	X		
Jon Binhammer	Brookfield (Alt.)						
Carl Pepperman	Chelsea			X			
Tim O’Dell	Corinth	X	X	X			
Peter Berger	Fairlee	X	X	X			
Mark Belisle	Granville	X	X				
Monica Collins	Hancock		X				
Lori Hirshfield	Hartford		X	X	X		
Bruce Riddle	Hartford (Alt)	X	X	X	X		
Charles Jeffries	Hartland	X	X	X	X		
Frank Tegethoff	Newbury	X	X	X	X		
Rod Francis	Norwich		X	X	X		
Jeff Lubell	Norwich	X		X			
Sarah Gallagher	Pittsfield		X	X			
Anne Brown	Plymouth	X	X				
Bill Emmons	Pomfret	X	X	X			
Phil Dechert	Pomfret (Alt)	X			X		
Ramsey Papp	Randolph	X	X	X	X		
Gary Dir	Randolph (Alt)		X	X	X		
Anni Mackay	Rochester	X	X	X			
Doon Hinderyckx	Rochester (Alt)	X		X			
David Brandau	Royalton			X	X		
Bushrod Powers	Royalton (Alt)		X				
Peter Anderson	Sharon		X	X			
Bill Edgerton	Stockbridge						
John Echeverria	Strafford		X	X	X		
Jesse Anderson	Thetford		X		X		
Jim Masland	Thetford (Alt)						
Jim Bulger	Topsham						
Michael Sacca	Tunbridge		X				
Kevin Rose	Tunbridge (Alt)	X	X	X	X		
Bill Baylis	Vershire						
Nancy Malmquist	W. Fairlee	X	X	X			
Don Bourdon	Woodstock			X			
Steve Schneider	At-Large	X					
Meghan Butts	At-Large			X	X		
Jennifer Colby	At-Large	X	X				
Ken Alton	At-Large		X	X			
Vacant - Conservation	At-Large						
Beth Long	At-Large	X	X	X	X		
Meg Emmons	At-Large		X				

Staff: Peter Gregory, Pete Fellows, Kevin Geiger, Lori Kay
Guest: Matt Darling, New England Retail Properties

1. Call to Order, Approval of the Agenda, Introductions, and Public Comments:

Call to Order and Approval of the Agenda. The virtual meeting opened at 6:39 p.m. A quorum after roll call was declared. No changes to the agenda were made. There were no comments from the public.

Commissioner Carver inquired on how to have an item added to the agenda at a future Board meeting. Gregory outlined the process – submit a request to the Executive Committee. Executive Committee will review at their monthly meeting and add the item to the agenda for the next Board meeting.

2. Public Hearing on Town Plan Approval and Confirmation of Planning Efforts for Rochester:

No members of the Public were present to comment on the Plan. No comments were offered during the Public Hearing for the Town Plan Approval. Gregory provided Staff comments, noting that the Rochester Town Plan had gone through a major update; TRORC assisted with the update; all statutory requirements were reflected in the Town Plan; and approval of the Plan was recommended. Gregory also indicated that Rochester met the confirmation tests. Chair Fredrickson closed the Hearing.

3. Public Hearing on a Determination of Energy Compliance for the Rochester Town Plan.

No comments were offered during the Public Hearing on the Determination of Energy Compliance. The Chair closed the Hearing.

4. Action on Town Plan Approval and Confirmation for Rochester:

On a motion made by Commissioner Jeffries, seconded by Commissioner Brandau, the Plan was approved and the Confirmation was approved unanimously.

5. Determination of Energy Compliance of Rochester Town Plan approval:

On a motion made by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner Tegethoff, the Determination was approved unanimously.

6. Approval of Minutes from April 22, 2020

On a motion made by Commissioner Jones, and seconded by Commissioner Brandau, the Minutes were approved unanimously.

7. Acceptance of the April 2020 TRORC Financial Reports:

On a motion made by Commissioner Hirshfield, and seconded by Commissioner Brandau, the April Reports were accepted unanimously.

Gregory noted that TRORC's financials are on track. Revenue projections remain firm and are anticipated to stay firm through the end of the fiscal year. Gregory has spoken with many state agencies and legislators and they view Regional Planning Commissions as vital in Vermont's recovery efforts and want to keep RPCs strong as institutions.

8. **Proposal for draft Regional Plan changes:**

Gregory noted that the Board packet included a cover memo and maps. He summarized what led to this current proposal: At the Board meeting in October 2020, the Commissioners directed TRORC staff to meet with Topsham, Bradford and Hartford on land-use issues.

Topsham – modifications were made to the draft Regional Plan and the percentage of land designated as Forest Conservation has been reduced.

Bradford – substantial number of proposed changes have been made since the 2017 version of the Regional Plan. Most recent change is revising the use of the Bradford Fairgrounds to Town Center, allowing principal retail.

Hartford – Staff proposed changing the Quechee Gorge designation from Mixed Use to Quechee Gorge Tourist Area, and worked with the Town to tweak some of the language in the draft Plan.

Gregory summarized next steps, stating that the changes were substantive in nature which requires another Public Hearing and distribution of the draft Regional Plan changes to each Town's Selectboard. If approved by the Board, the Public Hearing would be scheduled for July 1, 2020, and a mail-in ballot would be distributed mid-July.

Chair Frederickson called for comments from each of the towns.

Topsham – no comments were made.

Bradford – Commissioner Carver expressed the town's disappointment that the draft Regional Plan made no changes to the Agriculture land-use designation of the western side of Route 25 during the town's meeting with TRORC staff. Regardless, Bradford's Selectboard and Planning Commission have approved moving forward with the draft Regional Plan as currently written.

Hartford – Commissioner Hirshfield noted that both Town and TRORC staff came to their meeting with some of the same ideas regarding the changes to the Quechee Gorge designation. Hirshfield allowed that while not all their suggestions (related to housing) were incorporated into the current draft, TRORC is already working on the next update to the Regional Plan and Hartford will be submitting their suggestions for the next update. Hartford will be supporting the draft Regional Plan as currently written.

On a motion made by Commissioner Jesse Anderson, and seconded by Commissioner Francis, the proposed changes were approved and Staff was authorized to set a final hearing and move toward adoption of the Regional Plan. The vote was declared unanimous.

9. **Commissioner Reports on Covid-19 activities:**

Upper Valley Strong - Commissioner Hirshfield commented that Upper Valley Strong is doing a lot of communicating - sharing information across the region. Kevin Geiger noted that local organizations have more volunteers than are currently needed.

Funding availability - Geiger stated funds are currently available from several government agencies including FEMA, HUD and USDA. With a second wave of COVID-19 expected in the fall, citizens can use this time to prepare and gather protective equipment, etc.

Communities Preparedness – Commissioner Riddle raised the issue of local colleges and their plan to re-open campuses for the fall semester. The return of out-of-state students may have repercussions on the need for contact tracings, testing, local health care and EMS services.

Commissioner Francis asked whether there is formalized communication between local colleges and regional agencies regarding the planning for re-introduction of students. He noted that while the colleges may be communicating with the towns in which they are based, there is also an impact on nearby communities. Chair Fredrickson suggested Town Health Officers should be contacting the local colleges (and summer camps) through their Selectboards.

10. Executive Director updates:

Vermont has received COVID-19 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, some of which will be used to make grants to sole proprietors and extremely small businesses (which did not qualify for the recent round of Federally funded business loans). Vermont's Agency of Commerce will be enlisting TRORC's help to make these small business grants for half of Vermont. Funds are expected to be available in mid-July 2020.

The Vermont Senate appropriations committee wants to assist communities in gathering cost data on COVID-19 related response and recovery expenses – primarily those expenses that are not covered by FEMA. Senator Kitchel has suggested that the RPCs be paid to provide technical assistance to towns, if they want that help, in packaging eligible costs for reimbursement. The funding for this effort would come out of Vermont's CARES grant which needs to be spent by December 31, 2020.

Commissioner Hirshfield suggested that there may be an opportunity to also support the local business community by providing workshops to help them understand the application processes for these two new funding programs.

FY21 budget – Gregory reported that so far, it's looking good. TRORC is receiving confirmation that various revenue projections are being confirmed.

Regional Energy Coordinator – This new position will be added to the draft FY21 budget and is funded 100% by the seven towns which will be receiving the services. It is a one-year contract position. The State of Vermont is interested in learning from our experience in housing and supervising an employee who is funded through a multi-municipal agreement.

Annual meeting – Scheduled for June 24, 2020, via Zoom. Agenda topics will include: Volunteer of the Year award, announcement of recipients of the 2020 TRORC Scholarship awards, elections, FY21 budget.

11. Other:

No Board meetings are currently scheduled for July or August.

Chair Fredrickson will form a Nominating Committee to fill any open seats on the Board.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m. with a motion by Commissioner Brandau.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:
Lori Kay, Finance Manager, June 2, 2020