

Kevin Travis	Stockbridge									
John Echeverria	Strafford									
Angela McCanna	Thetford	X								
Jim Masland	Thetford (Alt)									
Jim Clark	Topsham	X								
Michael Sacca	Tunbridge									
Kevin Rose	Tunbridge (Alt)									
Andrea Herrington	Vershire									
Nancy Malmquist	W. Fairlee	X								
Don Bourdon	Woodstock	X								
Brad Prescott	Woodstock (Alt)	X								
Meghan Butts	At-Large	X								
Jennifer Colby	At-Large	X								
Ken Alton	At-Large	X								
Dan Rudell	At-Large									
Andrew Winter	At-Large	X								
Meg Emmons	At-Large									

Staff: Peter Gregory, Kevin Geiger, Geena Baber, Kyle Katz, Lori Kay, Sydney Steinle

1. Call to Order, Approval of the Agenda, Roll Call, and Public Comment:

The meeting opened at 6:30 p.m. A quorum after roll call was declared. No changes to the agenda were made. There were no comments from the public.

2. Public Hearings – Braintree, Sharon and Topsham Town Plan review and Braintree, Sharon and Topsham Confirmation review.

Planner Kyle Katz reported that he had worked on the review of Braintree’s Town Plan, noting that there were significant changes to the Plan, including restructuring and consolidating the chapters. Language was added to the Plan regarding Housing and Smart Growth principles, Forest Blocks and a section on Energy. Katz shared some comments regarding improvements that could be made for the next version of the Town Plan. Those include public participations goals, vocational training options, and locally grown food. Katz confirmed that TRORC staff is recommending that it receive approval. No comments were made during the public hearing for Braintree’s Town Plan.

The hearing for Sharon’s Town Plan review began with comments from Commissioner Ira Clark. He noted that Sharon’s Planning Commission had worked on the Town Plan for a few years. Planner Sydney Steinle reported on her review of the Town Plan. She identified that the Energy chapter had been enhanced. Other changes included the addition of sections on Forest Blocks, Future Land Use mapping, Housing, as well as a Responsibility Matrix. Steinle shared a few improvements that could be made for the next iteration of the Town Plan. Those recommended improvements were focused on New and Rehabilitated Housing and instituting Zoning within the Town Plan – currently only Flood Hazard Bylaws

are included in the Town Plan. Commissioner Ira Clark noted that the Planning Commission will be looking at Zoning. Steinle stated that TRORC staff have recommended the Town Plan for approval. No comments were made during the public hearing for Sharon's Town Plan.

The hearing for the Topsham Town Plan review began with comments from Commissioner Jim Clark. He shared that the Town had some difficulty addressing the sections on Forest Blocks and Energy. Planner Geena Baber noted that she had reviewed Topsham's Town Plan and highlighted its major changes which included the addition of the Goals and Guiding Principles, an expansion of the Housing chapter and the updating of data and maps. Suggestions for future versions of the Town Plan included choosing strong words in some of the sections and including bike paths as part of the Transportation section. No comments were made during the public hearing for Topsham's Town Plan.

Chair Emmons closed the public hearing.

3. Braintree, Sharon and Topsham Town Plan Approvals and Confirmation of Planning Effort

On a motion from Commissioner Bourdon, and seconded by Commissioner Gallagher, the Town Plan review for Braintree was approved unanimously.

On a motion from Commissioner Prescott and seconded by Commissioner Alton, the Town Plan review for Sharon was approved unanimously.

On a motion from Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Berger, the Town Plan review for Topsham was approved unanimously.

And on a motion from Commissioner Bourdon, and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Planning Confirmation of the Process, per 24 VSA, Section 4350, of all three Towns was approved.

4. Public Hearing – Determination of Energy Compliance, Braintree and Sharon Town Plans

Planner Katz provided a brief overview of Braintree's Town Plan and stated that it had included Energy-related policies in several sections of the Town Plan. All required items on the Energy Checklist were included in the Plan.

Planner Steinle had reviewed the Sharon Town Plan for its Determination of Energy Compliance. She noted that the Town Plan needs to demonstrate that the Town is taking leadership in addressing Energy issues in its community. The Town Plan also includes information on the cost and scarcity of Energy in Sharon.

Chair Emmons closed the Public Hearing.

5. Determination of Energy Compliance for Braintree and Sharon

On a motion from Commissioner Prescott and seconded by Commissioner Bourdon, the Town of Braintree's and the Town of Sharon's Determination of Energy Compliance was confirmed and approved unanimously.

6. Approval of TRORC Board Minutes from May 24, 2023

On a motion made by Commissioner Berger and seconded by Commissioner Prescott, the May meeting minutes were approved.

7. Acceptance of the Unaudited TRORC Financial Reports for June, July and August 2023

Gregory addressed the June financials first, announcing that TRORC ended FY 23 with an increase in fund balance of \$163,000. He also noted that the Accounts Receivable balance at the end of FY 23 was \$310,000 which reflected all the remaining invoicing for the fiscal year.

Gregory then spoke regarding the July and August financials, sharing that TRORC receives several upfront payments at the start of each fiscal year – including the Town Dues and a quarterly advance of funds from ACCD. He stated that expenses to date are as expected, and the Accounts Receivable is manageable. He also noted that TRORC’s annual audit is complete and a representative from the auditing firm will be at the October 2023 Board meeting to present the audit and to answer any questions the Commissioners may have about the audit.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gallagher, and seconded by Commissioner Powers, to approve the unaudited Financial Reports of June, July and August 2023. The Motion was approved unanimously.

8. FY 25 Dues

Gregory stated that the FY25 Town Dues chart reflects an automatic 3% increase, just as in past years, except for FY22 which were level-funded due to the detrimental effect Covid had on most towns. Gregory noted that the Executive Committee had recommended that the Board approve the FY25 Town Dues.

On a motion made by Commissioner Winter and seconded by Commissioner Prescott, the FY 25 Town Dues were approved.

Commissioner Berger commented that Towns may need help in securing State funds in the future. He wanted to be sure that Towns can get support from TRORC to assist with assessments, applications and program management.

9. Summer Study Committees on Act 250

Gregory discussed the four Act 250 Study Committees of which he is a member in Studies a, b, and c.

a. Municipal Delegation

The Municipal Delegation was included in the State Housing bill that was passed earlier this year. The Municipal Delegation is looking at the idea of transferring Act 250 decisions from the Natural Resources Board (NRB) to the Towns. The Towns would need to meet a set of criteria in order to take on the Act 250 decisions. Criteria could include adequate support, adequate systems, etc.

b. RPC Plan Land Use Mapping

Composed of Regional Planning Commissions only, this Committee is investigating a requirement that all mapping in Regional Plans meet the mapping standards as defined in Statute. The potential outcomes would be elevated planning at sub-State levels with the goal of having the State apportion funds and resources to the sub-State levels and identifying safe places to build or relocate buildings.

c. Natural Resource Board Act 250 Study

Gregory is on the Steering Committee for this study that is considering whether the threshold for Act 250 applications should be changed to specific areas – the so-called “place-based jurisdiction.” The NRB has brought on a consultant who is running the process.

d. Designation Programs Review

This Committee is looking at the possibility of collapsing the number of State-approved Designations currently available to Towns and Villages.

Gregory acknowledged that there is a lot of overlap between the Committees. The work of the Committees will be completed at the end of 2023 at which time Gregory will share the outcome of the Committees with the Commissioners.

10. Staff/Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Updates:

- Bradford will be having a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Oct. 7 to celebrate the installation of EV charging stations on Main Street.
- West Newbury is holding its 62nd annual Turkey Support on Oct. 7.
- Bradford is hosting an Ultra Run event (30 hours of running) on Oct. 14 with proceeds to go to a program for Veterans.
- The Masonic Lodge in Woodstock will be holding a Haunted House for children, ages six to twelve, on Oct. 28 and 29.
- An Energy forum will take place at the Bethel Middle School in Bethel on Oct. 5. The topic will be wood heat vs. geothermal energy.

Staff Updates:

- The Act 250 application for development of a property in Royalton was approved. TRORC participated aggressively as the proposal was (is) not in conformance with TRORC’s Regional Plan. However, based on the recommendation of TRORC’s attorney, TRORC will not be filing an appeal.
- The Act 250 application to create a retail store/deli in Hartland was also approved. Per Commissioner Jeffries of Hartland, the Hartland Selectboard has deferred to the Planning Commission to decide whether to accept the NRB’s decision or to pursue an appeal. Gregory has consulted with TRORC’s attorney who is suggesting that TRORC pursue an appeal. Following a motion by Commissioner Bourdon, which was seconded by Commissioner Prescott and approved unanimously by the Commissioners, TRORC will appeal the Hartland Act 250 decision.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:

Lori Kay, October 4, 2023