

1 **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**  
2 **NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
3 February 23, 2011 Meeting Minutes  
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5 The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held at the Workforce Investment Board facility in  
6 Swanton, VT.  
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8 **Welcome, introductions, opening remarks**

9 L. Scangas chaired the meeting which was called to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by roll call.  
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11 **Opportunity for Public Comment**

12 B. Kade expressed thanks for the pizza.  
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14 **Minutes of the January 2011 Meeting**

15 *A. Baderstadt motioned to approve the minutes. D. Leslie seconded.*  
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17 A brief discussion began on RPC Board membership. A show of hands resulted in an approximate split  
18 between those in attendance who hold elected positions and those who are appointed by local officials.  
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20 P. Larner asked if those who are appointed to the Board are speaking to this Board with the authority from  
21 their community. What we vote on effects on how staff deals with each of the communities. L. Scangas  
22 replied that the assumption is made that representatives are reporting Board activities and decisions to  
23 their communities. P. Howrigan stated that it should not be the policy of this Board to sort out whose  
24 opinion is more valuable than others. We are all on a Board and should function as a Board. J. Luneau  
25 added that we are appointed by elected officials and if our duties are not satisfactory to them, we won't be  
26 reappointed. A. Baderstadt noted this is not the only Board most members sit on. Most who volunteer,  
27 are appointed or elected to serve are active participants in the lives of their communities. It is up to the  
28 community how they want their RPC Board representation to occur. The representation is working. H.  
29 Garrett noted that we should be careful of having a quorum of elected officials from one community as  
30 RPC Board representatives.  
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32 *Motion carried.*  
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34 **Commission Reports**  
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36 Finance/Operations: H. Garrett reported that the Finance Committee did not meet due to local elections.  
37 He reviewed the budget sheet included in the Board packet. He noted that the Commission purchased a  
38 new copier. *L. Touchette motioned to accept the report. R. Buerman seconded. Motion carried.*  
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40 Personnel Committee: L. Scangas reported that there are two staff openings. There have been two rounds  
41 of interviews. The Commission may have new staff by the next meeting.  
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43 Executive Committee: Did not meet; no report.  
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45 Policy/Project Review Committee: C. Steen reported that the Committee had a meeting prior to the last  
46 Board meeting and the report was presented then.

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Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC): D. Leslie reported that TAC met earlier in the month. TAC reviewed VTrans projects for the area and were supposed to prioritize the projects, however, they postponed prioritization until the March meeting because they had questions about several projects.

Energy Committee: B. Buermann reported the Committee is scheduled to meet on March 9<sup>th</sup>.

VT. Association of Planning and Development Agencies: C. Dimitruk reported on behalf of Sylvia Jenson who was unable to attend the Board meeting. VAPDA will be meeting next week to get the preliminary results of the RPC evaluation process. Representatives from the National Association of Development Organizations will be coming next week to interview state officials regarding their views on RPCs. The preliminary results will be provided to VAPDA at their next meeting.

Vermont Economic Progress Council: M. Savoy reported VEPC met on January 27. One project is under consideration for Franklin County which will result in the hiring of 5 new employees.

Downtown Development Board: C. Steen reported there has been no activity however she learned tonight that Bakersfield will be submitting an application.

Office: S. Coleman reported that he provided staff support to the State Emergency Operations Center during a recent Vermont Yankee Drill. It was the first of a series of FEMA required drills for Vermont Yankee. He has been working with LEPC's 4 and 11 and VT HSU on updating each LEPC's three year training and exercise plan. He has assisted VT HSU and Missisquoi Valley Union High School's Crisis Team coordinate and evaluate a school crisis exercise. Updates for local Basic Emergency Operations Plans were completed for Alburgh Town and Village, Sheldon, Berkshire, Enosburgh Town and Village and Highgate. Also completed work on locally adopted and FEMA approved hazard mitigation plans for Fairfield and Georgia. The approved plans will make those communities eligible for federal and state hazard mitigation grants. There will be a workshop to develop EPA's Spill Response Plan for Lake Champlain this spring. He will be participating to provide local input.

C. Dimitruk thanked the personnel committee for their volunteer time during the interview process and provided the following updates. The finance committee will be reviewing and adjusting the budget prior to the next meeting. The energy committee's next meeting will be begin the process of targeting energy grant implementation dollars for communities that conducted energy audits. The Lake Champlain Byways Corridor Management Plan should be completed in the next month. That plan will be going out to the communities who are part of the Byway. She and other RPC Directors will be providing testimony to the Senate Transportation Committee this month. Staff will be developing a Safe Routes to School Program for Alburgh and continue work with St. Albans City and Town schools. The Executive Committee will be reviewing the Commission Bylaws in March. An orientation session for new Commissioners will be conducted in April. There are several town plan and bylaw updates including Montgomery, Alburgh, Enosburgh, Georgia and Franklin that will be underway soon.

S. Coleman added that the Morses Line Working Group met again in January with US Customs and Border Protection from D.C., Ted Brady from Senator Sanders office and Tricia Coats from Congressman Welch's Office. The purpose of the meeting was to get an update of activities regarding the port closure

92 and discuss the public comment period for port closure proceedings. There has been no decision on when  
93 the public comment period will begin.

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95 **Revolving Loan Fund:**

96 L. Scangas reported that the NRPC was one of eleven entities in the United States that was awarded \$1  
97 million by the EPA towards a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to support Brownfields redevelopment. There  
98 are two items for the Board to review: the NRPC Brownfield Program Rules of Procedure and the  
99 procedural outline to manage the RLF.

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101 C. Dimitruk reviewed the executive summary of the NRPC Brownfields RLF Manual and the Steering  
102 Committee Rules of Procedure that were included in the Board packet. The Executive committee will  
103 review the full manual. There will be an RLF Subcommittee of the Brownfields Steering Committee  
104 which will review potential projects for a grant or loan. Those projects that are reviewed by the RLF  
105 Subcommittee will be recommended for approval or disapproval to the NRPC Executive Committee.

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107 There were questions regarding the advisory role of the executive committee in the rules of procedure,  
108 designation of sites for valuation by the Brownsfield Committee, match, definition of a subgrant and the  
109 target list of existing sites. The biggest hurdle has been finding a willing land owner with a viable  
110 redevelopment plan or in the case of public ownership, using a greenspace. There are a couple of projects  
111 in the assessment pipeline such as the Fonda Plant in St. Albans City. The Fonda site will probably be  
112 one of the first projects seeking funding through the RLF. The Brownfields Committee elects its own  
113 membership.

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115 *M. Savoy motioned to accept the NRPC Brownfield Steering Committee Rules of Procedure. L. Touchette*  
116 *seconded. Motion carried.*

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118 *P. Lerner motioned to accept the procedural outline to manage the Northwest Region Brownfields*  
119 *Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund. A. Beaderstadt seconded. Motion carried.*

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121 **Economic Development Planning:** C. Dimitruk reported that the NRPC and others have been fulfilling  
122 the duties of the Economic Development Council of Northern Vermont, which has no staff or budget.  
123 Part of the work is to complete a comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) for the six  
124 northern counties of Vermont. The six northern counties have been designated as a District by the federal  
125 Economic Development Administration. CEDS is an evolving document that outlines the county's  
126 economic priorities. CEDS enables the District to be eligible for infrastructure grants. Some examples of  
127 the types of projects include the WIB, the VT Food Venture Center and a water/sewer project for  
128 industrial parks in the Northeast Kingdom. Towns are requested every year to submit any priorities they  
129 might have for projects they want included in the CEDS. Also, if a community is applying for a  
130 Community Development Block Grant, the project will get extra points if listed in the CEDS. If a  
131 community has a project, they should submit it to Catherine.

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133 C. Dimitruk reported on the Jobs Bill. The administration has proposed putting together a statewide long  
134 range economic development strategy. The RPCs have offered on behalf of their Boards to provide  
135 regional input.

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137 M. Savoy noted that the input from the regional economic development departments is that our priority is  
138 the retention of business and farms in the region and when you read this it focuses on new ventures. Our  
139 priority is assisting that what is here stays in business. A local discussion needs to happen because our  
140 priority is missing. That is why regional input is so important in the administration's process.

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142 C. Dimitruk reported that there will be a proposal that requires town and regional plans to have some kind  
143 of economic development component, which most of our local plans already have. She asked the  
144 members to solicit their local Boards for input.

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146 **Other Business**

147 C. Dimitruk encouraged members to fill out the on-line NADO survey as part of the RPC evaluation  
148 process. Surveys are due by March 30<sup>th</sup>.

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150 **Adjourn**

151 *R. Duso motioned to adjourn. M. Savoy seconded. Motion carried.*

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153 Meeting adjourned at 7:56.