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**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**  
**NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
June 27, 2007 Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held at the F-GI Workforce Investment Board site.

Commissioners: See attached.  
Staff: Catherine Dimitruk, Bonnie Waninger

Quorum was present to conduct business.

**Welcome, introductions, opening remarks**

Chair R. Larose welcomed everyone at 7:00 p.m. followed by roll call.

**Opportunity for Public Comment**

No comments were received.

**Public Hearing: Northwest Regional Planning Commission Brownfields Program**

B. Waninger explained that this was the second of two public meetings to discuss funding received from the US Environmental Protection Agency for the Northwest Region Brownfields Program. In 2003, the Regional Commission was awarded \$400,000 to assist property owners with environmental site assessments for sites believed to be contaminated by petroleum products or hazardous materials. The Commission was awarded an additional \$200,000 for petroleum sites in 2006, and an additional \$200,000 for hazardous materials sites in 2007. The 2007 award included a requirement to notify the public about the award. Waninger provided an overview of properties that had been assessed through the program, reviewed the types of properties eligible for assessment, and explained the Commission's plans for using the funding. She summarized the phases of assessments and their purposes. She noted that the application for funding was available at the Commission's office, Monday through Friday from 9 am to 4 pm or by appointment. It was also available on the web at <http://www.nrpcvt.com>. Comments on the brownfields program and the Commission's plan for using the funding are due by July 3, 2007. Comments received will be reviewed by the Brownfields Steering Committee at its next meeting. In response to a question, Waninger noted that the primary motivation for owners to investigate potential contamination issues is usually economic – prospective owners want to establish what exists before they take ownership. D. Peirce asked whether a municipality can nominate a property rather than the owner. Waninger replied that a municipality can nominate a property, but the NRPC cannot conduct a field investigation without consent from the property owner. Waninger also noted that the Brownfields Steering Committee is reviewing a draft Voluntary Notification Policy. The goal of the policy is to define when and how notice would be given when potential or confirmed health and environmental hazards that may pose a risk to human health or the environment are discovered through our brownfields investigation. It focuses on providing pro-active notification versus general public information. Once the policy is approved by the Committee, it will be forwarded to the Board. *B. Kade moved to close the public hearing; L. Touchette seconded. Motion carried.*

**Minutes of the May 2007 Meeting**

*C. Steen motioned to accept the minutes as submitted; D. Roberge seconded. Motion carried.* It was noted that "Sims" has one M and one S.

**Committee Reports:**

**Executive Committee** – No report.

**Finance/Operations** – D. Peirce indicated that a budget report was included in the Board packet. Peirce noted that a future agenda item addressed approval of the FY 08 budget.

1 **Personnel** – L. Scangas reported that committee met before the Board meeting for its annual review of  
2 staff for performance and salary. They will forward recommended changes to the Executive  
3 Committee.

4 **Policy/Project Review** – No report.

5 **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** – No report.

6 **VT Assoc. of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA)** – No report.

7 **Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC)** – C. Steen reported that a review had been completed of  
8 the Barry Callebault company. The company had been approved for tax credits; however, layoffs  
9 occurred, so it did not meet the criteria for tax credits and the credits will be taken back.

10 **Downtown Development Board** – C. Steen reported no action. She noted that North Hero had submitted  
11 its village designation application. Steen said the application was excellent and available for review  
12 in the NRPC office.

13 **Regional Plan Committee** – J. Tuck noted that in May, the full board had voted on the proposed  
14 amendments to the Regional Plan, which failed. Following the vote, the Board tasked the plan back  
15 to the Regional Plan Committee. The Regional Plan Committee met earlier this month and  
16 considered all options available in proceeding with adoption of the proposed Regional Plan.  
17 Ultimately, it decided to decrease the size of the proposed Regional Growth Center expansion by  
18 approximately 300 acres, which is in accordance with modifications made to the proposed growth  
19 center at the local level and includes land within a wellhead protection area and farmland in the land  
20 trust. The proposed changes were shown on the maps included with the public hearing notice, which  
21 were mailed to each Commissioner. Tuck said that for the Commission to take action on the  
22 proposed plan as modified, at least one more public hearing would be required. The Regional Plan  
23 Committee has warned a public hearing for July 25 to meet the 30 day notice requirement and to  
24 move the process along. Tuck noted that the Committee would like support from the full board to  
25 move forward with the public hearing. *B. Johnson motioned to support the Plan Committee’s*  
26 *recommendation to hold a hearing on the revised proposal; L. Scangas seconded.* In discussion, K.  
27 Waite asked for input from Swanton. N. Speer provided background, and C. Dimitruk noted that the  
28 NRPC had received a letter from Swanton Town noting that changes had been made to its local  
29 growth center. The regional proposal was brought into alignment with the local center. Peirce  
30 discussed St. Albans City’s wastewater plan, which is being affected by growth at Exit 20. *Kade*  
31 *moved to table the motion since many Commissioners had not yet received the proposed change.*  
32 Peirce noted the original motion was only to move forward with the public hearing process, not to  
33 support the proposal. *Kade withdrew his motion. Motion carried.*

34 **Office** – C. Dimitruk reported that the regional plan hearing will be July 25 at the NRPC office, and the  
35 regular Commission meeting will be cancelled. The NRPC is sponsoring a new board member  
36 training. The VT Council on Rural Development (VCRD) hosted a community visit in Richford.  
37 The visit brings in resources experts to work with the community to set priorities. Dimitruk  
38 commented that she was impressed with the number of people who participated in the Richford visit.  
39 The community established three priorities: job creation and retention, law enforcement, and image  
40 and communication. VCRD will be embarking on new, 2-year project called the “Council on the  
41 Future of Vermont”. The takes the community visit idea to a statewide level by talking to  
42 communities, people, businesses, etc. to ask for their priorities, hopes, and expectations for the future  
43 of Vermont. It will ask what Vermonters see for the future of Vermont. The project has support  
44 from the VT Community Foundation, other foundations, and private businesses. Dimitruk  
45 commented that the Commission’s audit will be next month. A public safety audit was completed  
46 last month and went well. Swanton Village will be submitting an application for village center  
47 designation.

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49 B. Waninger said that in addition to the Brownfields Voluntary Notice Policy, she is working to  
50 complete public outreach on shoreline erosion. In follow up to its publication of the Shoreline  
51 Stabilization Handbook, the Commission received a grant from the VT Agency of Natural Resources  
52 to work with communities and homeowners on shoreline stabilization. The grant concludes in July.

1 Waninger is also working with BFA Fairfax and Franklin Central School on Safe Routes to School.  
2 The schools are currently developing school travel plans. The plans identify problems associated  
3 with the journey to school and propose solutions to the problems that were developed by the school  
4 and community.  
5

6 **FY 08 Work Programs and Budgets**

7 NRPC Overall FY 08 Budget/Work Program: Dimitruk noted that this work program is a summary of all  
8 the work proposed for FY 08 at the Commission. It lists projects by town that we anticipate working  
9 on. The overall budget decreased somewhat. Revenue streams are grant driven so there are dramatic  
10 changes in some line items, such as professional services. Expenses are going up in a few items,  
11 down in a few, with many items holding steady. There are not many changes in operations, staffing,  
12 or other major operational budget items.

13 Department of Housing and Community Affairs FY 08 Budget/Work Program: This is a separate work  
14 program for regional planning and local land use planning. This is our core funding, provided  
15 through the property transfer tax. It enables our operations and provides flexibility for match. No  
16 major changes are anticipated. One new project is a fair housing training, which is required for  
17 recipients of Community Development Block Grants. The State asked if we would participate and  
18 help host trainings to teach communities about fair housing laws.

19 VT Agency of Transportation FY 08 Budget/Work Program: This work program details our  
20 transportation planning work, such as culvert inventories, traffic counts, and corridor studies. This  
21 year, the Commission will be updating the Regional Transportation Plan, which is required by the  
22 State for our contract. This work program runs on Federal Fiscal Year cycle (Oct. 1-Sept. 30),  
23 whereas our others follow our fiscal year of July 1 to June 30. No major changes are anticipated.  
24 There will be a new project to work with local emergency providers to identify accident locations  
25 that are not reportable under current accident laws  
26

27 *M. Guernsey motioned to approve all three work programs and budgets; L. Touchette seconded. Motion*  
28 *carried.*  
29

30 **Election of Officers and Representatives**

31 R. Larose turned the meeting over to M. Guernsey. Guernsey noted nomination taken last month for a  
32 slate of officers included:  
33

34 Chair: Raymond Larose  
35 Vice-Chair: Michael Guernsey  
36 Secretary: Bob Johnson  
37 Treasurer: David Peirce  
38 Chair, Personnel: Laz Scangas  
39 Chair, Policy/Project Review: John Lambert  
40 Executive Committee Member-At-Large: Patrick Howrigan  
41

42 Guernsey opened the floor to further nominations by office. None were offered. *L. Touchette motioned*  
43 *to close nominations and have the Secretary cast one ballot for the slate of officers nominated last month.*  
44 *C. Steen seconded. Motion carried.*  
45

46 Guernsey asked for nominations for appointments. FY 07 representatives were as follows:  
47

48 Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA): Bill Kittell  
49 Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC): *Colleen Steen withdrew herself from consideration and*  
50 *nominated Marilyn Savoy*  
51 Downtown Development Board: Colleen Steen  
52 Economic Development Council of Northern Vermont (EDC): Richard Roberge and Marilyn Savoy

1  
2 *L. Touchette moved to nominate the current slate of representative for the remaining seats; R. Roberge*  
3 *seconded. Touchette moved to close nominations and have the Secretary cast one ballot for the four*  
4 *positions; D. Peirce seconded. Motion carried.*

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6 **Other Business**

7 New Septic Rules: M. Guernsey noted that new septic rules had taken effect Sunday. The Vermont  
8 Agency of Natural Resources is taking over all regulation of septic unless towns agree to do so  
9 themselves. Under the new rules, conversion of a seasonal facility to a year round residence would  
10 not have any septic review. The rules committee meets today to review certain pieces of the rules,  
11 including the seasonal conversion. Guernsey said that he considered the seasonal conversion bad  
12 policy. J. Tuck provided an update that the decision had been postponed for one month, and  
13 encouraged people to contact the legislative rules committee regarding the seasonal conversion issue.  
14 D. Borthwick-Leslie asked if the Commission should comment. Dimitruk said the Project Policy  
15 Review Committee could comment. However, the full Board will not meet again until August and  
16 the Rules Committee will likely have made a decision by then. *P. Howrigan motioned to have*  
17 *Commission issue a statement of concern for exempting seasonal conversions; Kade seconded. B.*  
18 *Johnson proposed a friendly amendment to “object to” the seasonal conversion exemption.*  
19 *Discussion: Kade suggested that the rules should have a provision giving towns veto power over any*  
20 *exemptions. Peirce noted that the issue of exemptions in general is a larger one of watershed water*  
21 *quality. Howrigan clarified that his statement was not a motion, but rather a suggestion that the*  
22 *Commission make a statement about the exemption of seasonal conversions. Peirce motioned to*  
23 *write a letter objecting to the exemption for seasonal septic systems being converted to full time use;*  
24 *M. Guernsey seconded. Motion carried.*

25 TAC: M. Guernsey noted the Northwest Public Transit Network provides mileage reimbursement to  
26 volunteer drivers. Franklin County volunteers get the mileage reimbursement although Grand Isle  
27 volunteers do not request it. The Network is taking a new direction to solicit volunteers to drive  
28 folks to appointments. Guernsey requested help in spreading a message on the need for volunteers.

29  
30 **Adjourn**

31 *M. Guernsey motioned to adjourn. D. Peirce seconded. Motion carried.*

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