



1 applicant in the near future to discuss the remaining criteria, including traffic and  
2 conformance with the regional plan. He noted that the Board may want the applicant to  
3 come in front of the full Commission. When the applicant is ready, the committee will bring  
4 it to the Committee's attention.

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

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

7 **Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC)** – No report.

8 **Downtown Development Board** – C. Steen reported that she could not attend the meeting. She  
9 added though, that North Hero received village designation and had a fantastic application.

10 **Regional Plan Committee** – To be addressed under separate agenda item.

11 **Office** –G. Brunswick reported that she has been coordinating the project review and regional  
12 plan committees. In addition, she has recently finished working with the Sheldon Planning  
13 Commission on a zoning and subdivision regulation re-write. She created a useful reference  
14 guide that other communities may want to copy. She is in the middle of working with the  
15 Enosburg Falls Planning Commission on a Town Plan and Zoning Bylaw revision. Finally,  
16 Brunswick noted that it is MPG season, so she has been busy assisting communities with  
17 applications.

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19 C. Dimitruk reported on the status of ANR's proposed septic rules, of which the Board voted to  
20 object to the seasonal exemption. She submitted comments to LCAR that explained that  
21 decision. LCAR rejected three provisions of the rules, including the ability to receive a septic  
22 permit for as small as a 1 bedroom design, the ability to receive a septic permit without a backup  
23 system location if the system could handle up to 150% of the design flow, and the exemption for  
24 seasonal dwellings. ANR since came back with revised rules and LCAR accepted the revisions  
25 for a 2 bedroom minimum to receive a septic permit and the revision for the design flow, but  
26 rejected ANR's revision regarding the seasonal exemption. ANR proposed that seasonal  
27 dwellings could be exempt as long as they did not have a failing system and their system was not  
28 within 100 feet of a lake. She explained that LCAR met today and that she sent a follow up  
29 email reiterating the Board's comments. She explained further that the matter is on hold because  
30 ANR asked for it to be postponed. Several communities, led by Dick Thompson in Swanton and  
31 Georgia, drafted a well written letter objecting to the seasonal exemption. C. Dimitruk asked the  
32 Board if she should continue to submit comments expressing the NRPC interest in having  
33 seasonal conversion meet the same standard as new dwellings. There was general approval to do  
34 so.

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36 C. Dimitruk reported that there will be a Route 7 Corridor Study public meeting on September  
37 13.

38  
39 C. Dimitruk reported that St. Albans City is working to apply for growth center designation.  
40 Currently, they are preparing an application to receive planning funds from the State. State  
41 growth center designation came out of 2007 legislation and it operates within the Downtown  
42 Program. RPC's are required to assist municipalities with the planning needed to receive  
43 designation under the statute.

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45 C. Dimitruk reported that she has been working with the VCRD on the follow up to the Richford  
46 Community Visit to help in identifying priorities.

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**Committee Assignments**

R. Larose asked everyone to look at the committee assignment list and note if it is correct.

*M. Guernsey moved to approve the committee assignments. D. Peirce seconded.*

It was noted that Isle La Motte members were still listed, while they are no longer representatives. H. Garrett volunteered for the Regional Plan Committee.

*M. Guernsey accepted the amendment to the motion to approve committee assignments as amended.*

*Motion carried.*

**Regional Plan**

J. Lambert reiterated that at the May Board meeting, the Board voted down the Regional Plan by 2 votes. The Commission then tasked the Plan back to the Regional Plan Committee and they decided to decrease the size of the growth center expansion. The land taken out included VT Land Trust farmland and a wellhead protection area. Lambert noted that this is the only change made to the Regional Plan since it was last considered by the Board. He also noted that Swanton supported the idea to reduce the growth center size.

J. Lambert reported that the Committee held a public hearing in July, the minutes of which are in the board packet. One comment made at the hearing was that voters have a say in the growth center. J. Lambert reported that the Committee is presenting the changes to the plan for the full Board’s consideration.

R. Larose opened the floor public comment.

S. Prent commented on behalf of the Northwest Vermont Citizens for Responsible Growth (NWCRG). She noted that the group submitted a letter at the meeting when the plan was rejected. She reported that the NWCRG has reviewed the changes and listened to comments. The NWCRG is concerned about a lack of planning, sprawl, and a loss of agricultural soils. She asserted that the NWCRG’s comments still stand – and they are opposed to the plan as it stands.

C. Leach urged the Commission to vote favorably. The Swanton growth center is located in a logical place for growth near the interstate exit. He noted that this is good for everyone, as we shop in common areas. He further stated that the town needs growth and this is a well planned project. He added that the town will have to deal with the traffic issues. C. Leach reiterated the growth limitations that Swanton faces, and again urged the Commissioners to think of their situation, and that Swanton is doing the best they can for well planned growth adjacent to St. Albans, which will benefit both communities.

B. Kittell noted that he will abstain from voting on the Regional Plan. He added that the biggest benefit of this plan goes to the Chair of the Swanton Planning Commission. In addition, people have never been able to vote. Kittell asserted that he is not accusing Swanton of mal intent, but they are giving up valuable topsoils and not being stewards of the land. Kittell noted that Bob

1 Manning is being driven off his farm and that the reason the plan did not pass last time was his  
2 plea. Kittell added that the town needs to not only get a handle on growth in the growth center,  
3 but outside the growth center too.  
4

5 B. Kade asked what the difference between the two proposals is. C. Dimitruk drew the growth  
6 center expansion on the wipe board and pointed out the decrease in size. She reiterated that the  
7 lands taken out were VT Land Trust farmland and a wellhead protection area. B. Kade stated  
8 that in practical terms there is no change.  
9

10 H. Garrett gave a presentation on statistics related to the need for commercial growth in  
11 Swanton. He noted that they are proposing to develop only 3 percent of all agricultural soils in  
12 the Town. He also noted businesses and farms that receive tax breaks, which decreases the grand  
13 list in Swanton. Garrett asserted that Swanton needs a tax base, industry has left, and the burden  
14 has moved to homeowners.  
15

16 S. Prent commented that she understands what H. Garrett said about taxes and what B. Kittell  
17 was saying about stewardship of the land. She asserted that building a tax base is not  
18 justification for making a bad decision to eliminate prime agricultural soils. S. Prent also pointed  
19 out that the numbers read by H. Garrett do not represent farmable land. What is really being  
20 developed is farm land because it is easy to develop. S. Prent made a final comment that  
21 decisions made now will have an effect later.  
22

23 K. Collins asked what the intensions for this land are and whether voters have been asked.  
24

25 C. Leach responded that everybody realizes we need more commercial areas to grow. We need  
26 balance in the grand list, back to the way it was. There is no other good place to go. He reported  
27 that this proposal makes sense because it is next to Exit 20 and St. Albans. He further explained  
28 that people ask him how they can increase the tax base and he tells them that this proposal will  
29 make a difference and provide a lot of relief for the people that live in Swanton. C. Leach  
30 reiterated that it is a well planned area and it makes a lot of sense.  
31

32 H. Garrett noted that legally, the town could not put it to the voters. He asked however, if he put  
33 it as a non-binding question at the next town meeting, would that satisfy the concerns of S. Prent  
34 and B. Kittell.  
35

36 B. Kittell commented that this is a desperate situation, and he is willing to go for desperate  
37 measures. He has a feeling that Swanton residents might know what is best for the land. After  
38 the moratorium is up, the issue should come up for a vote every year. Kittell noted that last year  
39 he heard of the effects the growth center would have on the Village. Will this be worth it 20  
40 years from now?  
41

42 M. Savoy introduced herself as a member of the Regional Plan Committee and specifically  
43 directed her comments to K. Collins' question. Savoy noted that different towns are involved  
44 with planning at different extents. Swanton has a long history of planning. The proposal that  
45 came to the Committee showed years of planning. Any other further questions for the  
46 Committee, the Committee can answer.

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2 S. Kossmann commented that she wants to know if there has been opportunity for people to  
3 review this plan.

4  
5 T. Clippinger explained the multi-committee process undertaken by the town to develop the plan.  
6 Originally, the plan came from Swanton residents.

7  
8 D. Thompson noted that Swanton now has Village Designation and that they are not abandoning  
9 the Village. He noted that Swanton will do everything they can to enhance and keep the vitality  
10 of the Village alive. Thompson further commented that the 390 acres of agricultural soils in the  
11 proposed growth center expansion are 3 percent of the total in Swanton. Vermont is never going  
12 to have excellent paying jobs, Vermont is lucky to have good paying jobs. Thompson explained  
13 the mitigations benefits if this land were to be developed and concluded by reiterating that  
14 Swanton currently absorbs taxes and this growth center is good for the community, landowners,  
15 and to agriculture.

16  
17 G. Wright commented in response to B. Kittell, that this is not the last piece of prime agricultural  
18 soil in Vermont. G. Wright contended there are thousands of acres of prime soils in Vermont  
19 growing to brush. G. Wright noted that he lives in South Hero and cuts hay for horse owners.  
20 He has people begging him to cut hay they would give away. Wright noted that Representative  
21 Lavoie is here and cares about the land and the impact on the tax payers. Wright further noted  
22 that he conserved 100 acres of land in the VT Land Trust, but that the VT Land Trust does not  
23 follow through with the maintenance programs they require. In 12 years, they have not visited  
24 his land. Wright asserted that property taxes should be assessed for landtrusted land and that  
25 there is a bill stuck in the legislature on this issue.

26  
27 M. Guernsey noted to the Chair that there should be a ruling for a two minute limit per person,  
28 especially in respect to speaking multiple times. R. Larose agreed. B. Kade noted that he has  
29 never heard of limiting Board members time for comment.

30  
31 C. Steen commented that the people of Swanton know what is going on. Citizens have had the  
32 chance to go to public hearings. This proposal seems well planned and a well stewarded project.

33  
34 P. Howrigan commented that he understands and appreciates the problems in Swanton regarding  
35 taxes. The land in the proposed growth center is appealing because of where it is located. He  
36 noted that when he puts himself in the position of people who farm there and thinks of H.  
37 Manning who is in debt to keep farming that land, he does not feel right about paving this land  
38 over.

39  
40 R. Larose spoke as a Commissioner, not as Chair. He is baffled at the opposition. Whether it is  
41 commercial or residential, it is prime farmland. R. Larose noted that Rocheleau's has been  
42 developed, Seymour has been developed, where was the opposition when these were coming in?

43  
44 S. Prent responded that those were bad decisions and we should not repeat them.  
45

1 S. Kossmann asked if Swanton's Town Plan has a goal of protecting other resources outside the  
2 growth center?  
3

4 H. Garrett noted that Swanton prides itself as the toughest Planning Commission in the State.  
5 They came to the Selectboard to stop growth on Bushey Road. If farmers want to sell, we can't  
6 tell a farmer who to sell it to or when.  
7

8 N. Hunt noted that everyone should realize that development is inevitable at Exit 20. This is a  
9 lesser of evils to have it planned. Swanton should not be punished for the mistakes of another  
10 municipality.  
11

12 A. Baderstat commented that this is all we can do, we cannot predict the future, growth is  
13 happening without an attempt to plan. We need to stay focused on what Swanton has asked for  
14 and stay with the spirit of the Regional Plan; then cast a vote.  
15

16 *B. Johnson made a motion to adopt the Regional Plan as proposed. L. Scangas seconded.*  
17

18 M. Guernsey requested a roll call vote to make it official. R. Larose asked for discussion.  
19

20 C. Dimitruk commented that NRPC spent a lot of time talking about the growth center piece and  
21 she wants to remind everyone that we are adopting a lot more. The regional plan committee and  
22 NRPC staff spent significant time rewriting major sections of the plan, and it has a lot more  
23 behind it than the growth center.  
24

25 R. Roberge asked for clarification on what a yes vote would mean and what a no vote would  
26 mean. R. Larose clarified that yes is to approve the plan and no is to not approve the plan.  
27

28 *B. Kade made an amendment to the original motion to adopt the Regional Plan with the*  
29 *amendment of eliminating the NE Wing of the Regional Growth Center.*  
30

31 There was discussion on the amendment to the motion.

32 R. Larose ruled B. Kade's amendment to the original motion out of order.  
33

34 B. Johnson called each Commissioner's name in a roll call vote on the original motion made by  
35 B. Johnson and seconded by L. Scangas.

1 A. Baderstadt- Yes  
2 R Baker – Yes  
3 T. Tatro – Yes  
4 J. Jesberger - Absent  
5 N. Hunt – Yes  
6 C. Charon – Yes  
7 H. Mayo - Absent  
8 R. Duso – Yes  
9 R. Larose – Yes  
10 R. Roberge – Yes

11 L. Touchette – Yes  
12 R. Devine – Yes  
13 C. Steen – Yes  
14 W. Kittell - Abstain  
15 M. Savoy – Yes  
16 B. Douglass – No  
17 D. Clark – Yes  
18 D. Larivee – Yes  
19 J. Baitz – Yes  
20 K. Waite – Yes

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|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 A. Demars – Yes           | 12 P. Howrigan – No    |
| 2 D. Borthwick Leslie – Yes | 13 M. Guernsey – Yes   |
| 3 J. Paquette – Yes         | 14 G. Wright – Yes     |
| 4 R. Trombley – Yes         | 15 D. Peirce – Yes     |
| 5 B. Kade – Abstain         | 16 L. Scangas – Yes    |
| 6 D. Merrier - Absent       | 17 B. Johnson – Yes    |
| 7 P. Johnson - Absent       | 18 K. Middlemiss – Yes |
| 8 J. Lambert – Yes          | 19 H. Garrett – Yes    |
| 9 H. Mattson - Absent       | 20 B. Manning - Absent |
| 10 K. Collins – Yes         | 21 C. Leach – Yes      |
| 11 R. Brouillette – Yes     | 22 N. Spear - Yes      |

*Totals: Yes – 32 No – 2 Abstain – 2 Absent - 6  
Motion passed.*

H. Garrett thanked those in favor and those not in favor. He hopes that Swanton does not let the Board down. They will try to be good stewards of the land.

**Other Business**

M. Savoy reported on the Vermont Economic Progress Council. At the summer meeting, it was reported that Energizer Battery received 479,000 in tax credits based on the addition of jobs.

It was noted that J. Tuck and H. Simms have resigned and there are currently no replacements. *M. Guernsey motioned that staff should write a letter to them on behalf of the Board thanking them for their service. J. Baitz seconded. Motion carried.*

*J. Lambert motioned to adjourn the Board Meeting. D. Peirce seconded. Motion carried.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:13.