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**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**  
**NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
*July 26, 2020 Draft Meeting Minutes*

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held virtually via Zoom.us.

**Attendance**

Commissioners: See attached. A quorum was present to conduct business.

Staff: C. Dimitruk, S. Coleman and A. Holland.

Guests: Karen Bates, DEC and J.R. Cox, NWATV.

Chair K. Waite began the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

**Adjustments to the Agenda**

K. Waite asked that the Communications Union District be an action item instead of discussion.

**Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks**

K. Waite welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

**Opportunity for Public Comment**

K. Waite asked for comments. There were none.

**Minutes of the June 2020 Meeting**

*Y. Dandurand motioned to accept the June meeting minutes as written. R. Noel seconded. Motion carried.*

**Northern Lake Champlain Basin Tactical Plan**

Karen Bates from the Agency of Natural Resources gave a presentation on the draft plan with a shared Zoom screen. This is the third public presentation. Comments are due to the Agency by August 7th. This plan feeds into the state-wide plan for the Lake and is meant to be a guide for the state and partners. A story map summarizing the plan is also available at:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b3be1eeaad634d878f1cb5c692938f58>.

The draft was developed in partnership with members of local communities, state and federal agencies, watershed groups, regional planners, and agricultural partners, the basin plan covers four key areas: current water quality issues; strategies to protect and improve local waterways; tactics to prevent and reduce phosphorus pollution from entering Lake Champlain; and funding and technical assistance for projects, such as tree planting along shorelines, that contribute to the restoration of local waterways.

A. Voegelé asked for clarification in NRPC's conformance letter of "outside" on page 3 section C. He recommended the Regional Plan be updated to address this in future updates.

B. Morris noted the date should be changed on the Board's conformance letter to July 29<sup>th</sup>.

B. Buermann asked the Board recognize Karen and Amanda for getting to this stage. Kirk thanked Karen for all the water quality work being conducted in the region.

**Committee Reports** – See attached handouts for details on the reports.

50  
51 Finance/Operations – H. Garret reported they did not meet but will be in September. There have  
52 been some delays in billing for projects, such as Grant-in-Aid, due to the pandemic. Confident that  
53 finances will look good when this is all done.  
54  
55 There was some discussion on installing an air system for the office. Kirke asked the building  
56 committee to research installation and costs prior to opening the office up.  
57  
58 Personnel – L. Ruple reported that interviews were being held for the Healthy Roots position. Lots  
59 of good candidates. Anticipate hiring a temporary position for the EDA Recovery Grant (CARES Act)  
60 which was recently awarded. The new hire for an office support position was unfortunately  
61 terminated because the need is no longer there due to the pandemic.  
62  
63 Executive – K. Waite reported they did not meet but likely will in August.  
64  
65 Project Review – W. Irwin reported that they recently met. Two projects were presented: Perrigo  
66 Project in Georgia Industrial Park and St. Albans City Hard ‘Ack Swimming Pool Project.  
67 The Perrigo project is a significant expansion project. The Hard ‘Ack project was found to have no  
68 substantial regional impact and has committee approval.  
69  
70 Transportation Advisory Committee – H. Garret reported they did not meet.  
71  
72 Energy Committee – Did not meet.  
73  
74 Brownfields Committee –C. Dimitruk reported the committee met on July 20<sup>th</sup>. and approved  
75 funding for a Phase 2 Assessment of the former GMP diesel generation plant in St. Albans City.  
76  
77 Regional Plan and Policy Committee – L. Douglas reported they did not meet.  
78  
79 Vermont Economic Progress Council – A. Voegele reported no meeting was held.  
80  
81 Green Mountain Transit – C. Dimitruk reported that Bonnie Waninger was elected Chair of the GMT  
82 Board.  
83  
84 Clean Water Advisory Committee – A. Holland noted there was no July meeting.  
85  
86 Healthy Roots Collaborative Meeting – C. Dimitruk reported NRPC is in process of hiring a HR  
87 Coordinator. Staff has been very active with continuing work on The Abbey Group’s Famers to  
88 Families Food Boxes project.  
89  
90 Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation – C. Dimitruk reported the committee did not meet.  
91  
92 Office – S. Coleman reported that NRPC hosted a series of weekly local EMD roundtables at the start  
93 of the Governor’s Stay-at-Home order so communities good share best practices for office  
94 operations. He briefed the current status of office’s IT operations and remote work capabilities. No  
95 major issues to date. He and Emily Klofft are actively involved in supporting the formation of a  
96 Communications Union District which will be addressed later.  
97  
98 A. Holland reported that NRPC was selected to be DEC to be the Clean Water Service Provider  
99 (CWP) for the Missisquoi and Lamoille Basins. Act 76 established regional CWSPs that will

100 administer State grants for the purpose of identifying, constructing, and maintaining non-  
101 regulatory water quality projects necessary to meet reduction goals of phosphorus TMDLs and  
102 other pollutants within the Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog Basins.

103  
104 C. Dimitruk reported that staff continues to work with Alburgh Town and the Alburgh Community  
105 Education Center on the Clubhouse Child Care project. Staff is also working with St. Albans City on  
106 the Almond Blossoms Child Care project.

107  
108 Emily Klofft, AmeriCorps Vista, and Kate Longfield, Eco Corps, will be ending their services in  
109 August. Emily will be transitioning to a staff Planner position at NRPC and Kate has accepted  
110 employment elsewhere. Mark Serrano was selected as the new AmeriCorps Vista person Luke  
111 Briccetti was selected for the Eco-Corps position. Catherine recognized Emily and Kate for their  
112 services and contributions to NRPC.

113  
114 An office reopening plan has been developed which calls for reopening on a part-time basis. Safety  
115 precautions are in place to protect staff such as having only 2 or 3 staff members at a time in  
116 buildings and only 1 person per office. There will be no in person meetings held at the office until  
117 further notice. The current state of emergency expires on August 15<sup>th</sup> however, it is highly it will be  
118 continued for another month. Staff impacts due to the new school startup format are significant. All  
119 but two staff members have children and those that do are the primary childcare providers in their  
120 households.

121  
122 **Enosburgh Town and Village and North Hero Plan Approval and Confirmation**

123 R. Brown stated that the Plan Review Committee was recommending three actions for the  
124 Enosburgh Town and Village Municipal Plan and one action for the Town of North Hero Municipal  
125 Plan.

126  
127 *W. Irwin motioned to regionally approve the Enosburgh Town and Village Municipal Plan. B. Morris*  
128 *seconded. Motion carried.*

129  
130 *B. Morris motioned to confirm Enosburgh Town and Village's planning process. C. Steen seconded.*  
131 *Motion carried.*

132  
133 *W. Irwin motioned to find the Enosburgh Town and Village's Municipal Enhanced Energy Plan meets*  
134 *the standard for an affirmative determination of energy compliance and is in conformance with the*  
135 *Northwest Regional Plan. B. Morris seconded. Motion carried.*

136  
137 R. Brown reviewed findings of Plan Review Committee for North Hero's request for regional  
138 approval of the North Hero Municipal Plan and confirmation of North Hero's planning process. R.  
139 Brown noted that the Plan Review Committee recommended approval of both requests.

140  
141 *B. Morris motioned to regionally approve the North Hero Municipal Plan. A. Voegele seconded. Motion*  
142 *carried.*

143  
144 *R. Noel motioned to confirm North Hero's planning process. H. Garrett seconded. Motion carried.*

145  
146 **Communications Union District**

147 K. Waite stated that there are a lot of inequities due to the lack of broadband services in the region.  
148 Many areas are unserved and underserved.

149

150 C. Dimitruk reported that State Statutes allow municipalities to create a Communications Union  
151 District (CUD) for the delivery of communication services and related infrastructure. The CUD is a  
152 special purpose and independent union district to build and improve broadband services in the  
153 region. Enosburgh Town, Fairfax and Montgomery voted to form a District on July 20<sup>th</sup>. Any  
154 municipality can join through approval by the municipal governing board. Each municipality that  
155 votes to join has one representative and an alternate on the governing board. NRPC was asked to  
156 help the District get organized and the first meeting will be held soon.

157  
158 Currently there are three funding sources available to CUDs in the state: PSD's Broadband  
159 Innovation Grant for a feasibility study and business plan; Vermont Community Foundation grant  
160 for administration and other organizational support; and PSD's Planning Grant for a broad range of  
161 activities. With remote education; telehealth and remote work being the new normal, we future  
162 funding is anticipated.

163  
164 *A. Voegele motioned for Northwest Regional Planning Commission to serve as fiscal agent to the*  
165 *Communications District. R. Noel seconded. Motion carried.*

166  
167 **Commissioner Announcements**

168 Al Voegele reported that the NMC Board of Incorporators met on Monday night. NMC presented an  
169 extensive overview with Green Mountain Board and One Care. NMC finances are significantly  
170 controlled by the state. NMC is in a precarious position of service deliveries. NMC is essential to our  
171 communities given the distance to UVM Medical. We need to maintain our local hospital. NMC has  
172 asked that our Board direct concerns regarding loss of service to the Governor and Green Mountain  
173 Care Board.

174  
175 C. Dimitruk spoke with Jonathan Billings at NMC. There are several ways we could be helpful and a  
176 hospital representative would be willing to present to the Board. NMC is not in danger of closing  
177 any time soon but they are greatly concerned about finances and losing services.

178  
179 **Adjourn**

180 *A. Voegele motioned to adjourn. R. Noel seconded. Motion carried.*

181  
182 Meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.