

1 NRPC Board of Commissioners Meeting  
2 February 22, 2023  
3 7:00PM  
4 Virtual Meeting  
5

6 The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held using the Zoom platform.  
7

8 **Attendance**

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

10 Staff: Emily Klofft, Dean Pierce, Greta Brunswick, Barry Lampke, and Catherine Dimitruk.  
11

12 Chair B. Irwin welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.  
13

14 **Adjustments to the Agenda**

15 None  
16

17 **Welcome, Introductions, Opening remarks**

18 Chair B. Irwin welcomed everyone to the NRPC's February board meeting. Participants briefly  
19 introduced themselves.  
20

21 **Opportunity for Public Comment**

22 None.  
23

24 **Minutes from the January 2023 meeting**

25 *Y. Dandurand motioned to approve January minutes. E. Nance seconded.*  
26

27 E. Nance provided a list of corrections to the minutes. On Page 1, Line 25, her last name was misspelled  
28 and should be corrected. On page 2, line 7 specify that the bridges referenced are in Sheldon, and on  
29 line 21-22 it should specific that the grant is the Community Recovery and Revitalization grant. On page  
30 2, there are two instances where first names need to be replaced with last names.  
31

32 *The motion carried with two abstentions.*  
33

34 **Presentation on Housing Needs Assessment**

35 G. Brunswick and B. Lampke presented on the housing needs assessment and current NRPC projects  
36 related to housing.  
37

38 G. Brunswick presented on data from the housing needs assessment. The goal of the assessment was  
39 to look at trends in housing and population in order to quantify housing needs and identify unmet  
40 needs and inequities. She stated that most of the data from the assessment are from 2020, and  
41 therefore the impact of the pandemic is not yet fully understood. Population and household growth  
42 have slowed in the region; 45% of the household growth in the last 10 years has been in Fairfax and St.  
43 Albans Town. The proportion of senior households, non-family households and single-person

1 households is rising. The majority of the housing stock is single-unit housing and there has been a loss  
2 in multi-unit and missing middle housing.

3  
4 K. Waite asked if the loss in multi-unit housing was an absolute loss or just a loss in the percentage of  
5 housing units. G. Brunswick stated it was a loss in absolute numbers. B. Dubie asked what the  
6 definition of missing-middle housing was. G. Brunswick stated that it was small multi-unit dwellings of  
7 2-4 or even 5-6 units that could fit in existing neighborhoods.

8  
9 G. Brunswick stated that on average renter households and non-family households had lower growth  
10 in incomes than family and homeowner households. Median home prices and rents have increased  
11 dramatically in the last few years. K. Waite asked if the rent costs accounted for utilities, G. Brunswick  
12 stated she did not have specific data on utility costs available, but that utilities are included in  
13 affordability calculations.

14  
15 G. Brunswick explained that affordability is defined as spending no more than 30% of the household's  
16 income on housing, 1/3 households in the region pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs,  
17 with renters being more cost burdened. G. Brunswick stated that cost burden was not equitably  
18 distributed, low-income households and those identifying as other than white-only on the Census are  
19 more likely to be cost burdened.

20  
21 G. Brunswick stated that the assessment found that 7,600 households in the region have an unmet  
22 housing need including those that are experiencing homelessness, the underhoused and those who are  
23 cost-burdened. Recommendations of the assessment include supporting development of new  
24 affordable housing units, improving condition and accessibility of substandard units, focusing on those  
25 disproportionately affected, and expanding programs that address housing cost and household  
26 incomes.

27  
28 B. Irwin asked how it was determined who was underhoused. G. Brunswick stated she did not have the  
29 specific breakdown on hand, but would follow-up with more details later. C. Sawyer noted that the  
30 census data for the City of St. Albans may not be accurate, and this should be considered before  
31 making any recommendations. B. Lampke stated they were also gathering stories to better understand  
32 COVID impacts to housing.

33  
34 G. Brunswick introduced the bylaw modernization project. St. Albans Town and 4 consortium  
35 municipalities are working with NRPC to consider changes to reduce regulatory barriers to housing  
36 creation. The project includes developing local housing profiles, bylaw audits reviewing key topics and  
37 draft zoning bylaw language and recommendations for long-term projects. One recommendation NRPC  
38 is considering is to look at appropriate areas for Neighborhood Development Areas (NDAs) which can  
39 be within ½ mile of downtown or ¼ of village center. This designation program can support new and  
40 infill housing and provide Act 250, tax and grant priority benefits.

41  
42 A. Voegelé asked a question about where children could play in more dense development. G.  
43 Brunswick stated that in the example she provided a playground was proposed for a community lot. L.  
44 McCall asked if impact fees were addressed in this project, as in some communities they might hinder

1 development. G. Brunswick stated that impact fees can be appropriate in some cases, but that she  
2 would be interested in hearing if there are cases where impact fees are hindering development. L.  
3 Douglas asked if sidewalks would be incorporated into planning efforts. G. Brunswick stated that  
4 sidewalk standards were being reviewed as part of the project.  
5

6 B. Lampke presented on the Working Communities Challenge- Housing for All initiative. The project is a  
7 collective impact collaboration with NRPC as the backbone organization. The mission of the project is  
8 to support the creation and improvement of housing for healthy, inclusive and prosperous  
9 communities. Recent events held include an ADU workshop and a community conversation on housing.  
10 Currently, the WCC is working on reaching out to municipal officials to share housing needs assessment  
11 identify support/resources and partner with FCIDC to address employers can address housing-relate  
12 recruitment challenges. The WCC is also looking at partnerships with faith/spiritual communities and  
13 Habitat for Humanity, working with AgeWell to assist with aging in place efforts, and building  
14 connections with small developers to determine how to build capacity.  
15

16 S. Jensen asked B. Lampke what the details of the work with small developers were. B. Lampke stated  
17 they were still in the process of reaching out to developers to determine what their needs are, but it  
18 could potentially involve technical assistance on business planning, navigating bylaws and training on  
19 how to be a landlord. D. Glidden asked if cottage court developments are typically done as a single  
20 development. G. Brunswick stated that they were, although there can be different models of  
21 ownership. B. Irwin stated that given the inequities between renter and homeowner households,  
22 barriers to homeownership should be examined. E. Nance stated that the poor quality of rental  
23 housing stock may be a factor.  
24

## 25 **Commission Reports**

26  
27 **Finance/Operations** – K. Waite stated that the Finance/Operations Committee met and endorsed  
28 the budget adjustment. The Committee also discussed options for refinancing one of the  
29 mortgages on the building.  
30

31 B. Irwin asked a clarifying question about one of the line items. C. Dimitruk stated she would follow  
32 up via email.  
33

34 **Personnel** – L. Ruple stated the Committee did not meet.  
35

36 **Executive Committee** – B. Irwin stated the Committee met and discussed the legislative funding  
37 request.  
38

39 **Project Review Committee** – B. Buermann stated the Committee met and reviewed three projects,  
40 the extension of sewer line in Highgate, redevelopment of a gas station in Alburgh, and expansion  
41 of a sawmill in Fletcher. All three projects were in conformance with the Regional Plan and did not  
42 have a substantial regional impact.  
43

44 **Transportation Advisory Committee** –Did not meet.

1  
2 **Energy and Climate** – Did not meet.

3  
4 **Brownfields Committee** – E. Nance stated updates were in the packet.

5  
6 **Regional Plan and Policy Committee** -E. Nance stated that the Committee met and reviewed draft  
7 language for the Regional Plan. The full board will see first draft of new regional plan in April, with  
8 a goal of presenting final draft in June.

9  
10 **Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC)** – A. Voegele stated there is a meeting tomorrow with  
11 application from North Hero regarding water supply reliability improvements. He stated he would  
12 not be able to attend and asked if anyone other Commissioners would be available. A. Aling stated  
13 that stated he will be attending to make the presentation.

14  
15 E. Nance asked if there was update on Town of Highgate Community Recovery & Revitalization  
16 Grant application and the Plumrose, Inc VEGI amendment. A. Voegele stated that Plumrose, Inc  
17 was approved for minor adjustment. E. Nance stated that the Town of Highgate was awarded  
18 \$700,000 for their Airport Infrastructure project.

19  
20 **Green Mountain Transit** – C. Dimitruk stated that the system has been experiencing crime impacts  
21 lately in Montpelier and Burlington and that GMT staff is looking at how to address system safety  
22 for staff and riders.

23  
24 **Healthy Roots Advisory Committee** – L. Douglas stated that the Healthy Roots annual report is up  
25 on website.

26  
27 **Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation** – No update.

28  
29 **Staff** – See packet.

30  
31 **7- Regional Planning Commission Funding Request**

32 B. Irwin stated that they were looking to see if the Commissioners would support a letter requesting that  
33 the legislature fund the RPC based on the funding formula in statute.

34  
35 C. Dimitruk explained that the RPCs are funded by formula under statute, but the Legislature has the  
36 power to reduce RPC funding below this amount and has done so in the past. She stated that the goal of  
37 requesting full funding by formula is to move away from being dependent on project by project funding.  
38 This would allow the RPC to have greater capacity to react to local/regional needs and to complete its  
39 core functions. If approved, commissioners would be signatories to letter unless they request otherwise.

40  
41 B. Irwin stated that the letter was supported by Executive Committee C. Sawyer asked where is state is  
42 diverting funding to. C. Dimitruk stated that it goes into general fund and therefore it is difficult to give  
43 one answer as to where the funds go. D. Glidden asked what rationale the state was using to divert

1 funds. C. Dimitruk stated that there were many different reasons legislators had diverted funding, but  
2 generally it is easier to underfund non-entitlement spending.

3  
4 *H. Garrett motioned to support the request to the legislature for full statutory formula funding. B.*  
5 *Buermann seconded. Motion carried, D. Glidden abstained.*

6  
7  
8 **FY 23 Budget Amendment**

9 K. Waite stated that each year, the RPC must complete a budget amendment to compensate between  
10 expected expenses versus actual expenses. C. Dimitruk reviewed the budget amendment. Actual  
11 revenue figures are now available for the RPCs contracts that start in October, so those figures have  
12 been updated. Revenues from the statewide grants-in-aid contract have decreased, but so have  
13 expenses. Other new expenses are insurance, and increased travel and meeting costs. NRPC filled the  
14 transportation planner position, so that cost is now reflected in the budget.

15  
16 *A. Voegele motioned to approve the budget adjustment. S. Jensen seconded. The motion carried.*

17  
18 **Appointment of Alternate to Green Mountain Transit Board**

19 C. Dimitruk stated that currently E. Nance is alternate to the Green Mountain Transit Board for both  
20 Franklin and Grand Isle County. Nominating the new transportation planner, Kyle Grenier, as the Grand  
21 Isle County alternate adds another voice from region to Board.

22 *K. Waite motioned to appoint Kyle Grenier as alternate to GMT board, A. Voegele seconded. Motion*  
23 *carried.*

24  
25 **Commissioner Announcements.**

26 None.

27  
28 **Adjourn**

29 A. Voegele motioned to adjourn. M.C. Graziano seconded. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned  
30 at 8:42 PM.

**FY23 NPRC Board of Commissioners- Meeting Attendance**

Municipality	Board Member	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
		7/27/22	No Meeting	9/28/22	10/26/22	11/30/22	No Meeting	1/25/23	2/22/23				
Frkln Cty Youth	Ryan Thatcher	X			X	X		E					
GI Cty Youth	Vacant												
Alburg Town	Alton Bruso												
Alburg Town	Terry Tatro												
Alburg Village	Terry Tatro												
Alburg Village	Vacant												
Bakersfield	Bill Irwin	X			X	X		X	X				
Bakersfield	Linda McCall	E			X	E		E	X				
Berkshire	Vincent Hickey								X				
Berkshire	Claude Charron												
Enosburg Falls	Leonard Charron												
Enosburg Falls	Vacant												
Enosburgh Town	Jesse Woods							E					
Enosburgh Town	Jessica Eagle							E					
Fairfax	Colleen Steen-through 8/1/22, Amber Sotter-start 10/17/22	X			X	X			X				
Fairfax	Sarah Hadd	X			X	X		X	X				
Fairfield	Doug Grant	X			X	X		X	X				
Fairfield	Brian Dubie				X	X		X	X				
Fletcher	Lynn Douglas	X			X	X		X	X				
Fletcher	Lori Ruple	X			X	X		E	X				
Franklin	Yvon Dandurand	X			X	X		X	X				
Franklin	Wesley Kempton												
Georgia	Scott St. Onge												
Georgia	Kirk Waite	X				X		E	X				
Grand Isle	Barclay Morris	X				X		X					
Grand Isle	Howard Demars				X			X	X				
Highgate	Vacant												
Highgate	Vacant (Richard Noel through 10/22)	X											
Isle La Motte	Sylvia Jensen	X							X				
Isle La Motte	Mary-Catherine Graziano					X			X				
Montgomery	Charlie Hancock												
Montgomery	Vacant												
North Hero	Andy Alling	X			X	X		X	X				
North Hero	Vacant												
Richford	Rowena Brown	X				X		X	X				
Richford	Vacant												
Sheldon	Vacant												
Sheldon	Jeff Kane												
South Hero	Peter Zamore	X				X		X	X				
South Hero	Bob Buermann	X			X	X		X	X				
St. Albans City	David Glidden	x						X	X				
St. Albans City	Matt Freedom through 8/1/22, Chip Sawyer - start 1/1/23	X						X	X				
St. Albans Town	Marietta Scholten				X	X		X	X				
St. Albans Town	Albin Voegelé					X		X	X				
Swanton Town	Harold Garrett			E	X			X	X				
Swanton Town	vacant												
Swanton Village	Elisabeth Nance	X			X	X		X	X				
Swanton Village	Neal Speer					X							
# MUNICIPALITIES		<b>14</b>			<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>				

QUORUM = 12

E= Excused