

1 **NRPC Board of Commissioners Meeting**
2 **May 28, 2025, at 6:30 PM**
3 **Hybrid Meeting ([Zoom](#) and St. Albans Town Offices)**
4 **398 Georgia Shore Road, St. Albans, VT 05481**
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6

7 Board Member Attendance: *See attached*. A quorum was present to conduct business.

8 Staff: Catherine Dimitruk, Bethany Remmers, Dean Pierce, Emily Kloft, Kathy Lavoie.

9 Other Attendees: Miro Weinberger (representing Let's Build Homes)

10 **Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks**

11 Chair P. Zamore called the meeting to order at 6:39 PM. He welcomed attendees, noting it had
12 been a while since meeting in person last fall and expressed hope for finding the right balance
13 between in-person and virtual meetings. Roll was called.

14 **Adjustments to Agenda**

15 None.

16 **Opportunity for Public Comment**

17 None.

18 **Minutes of the April 2025 Meeting**

19 *B. Murphy moved to accept the minutes of the April 2025 meeting. H. Demars seconded. The*
20 *motion carried.*

21 **Guest Speaker- [LET'S BUILD HOMES](#)**
22

23 Miro Weinberger presented on behalf of Let's Build Homes. He noted that Corey Parent was delayed
24 by a legislative conference committee meeting on the Community Housing Infrastructure Program
25 (CHIP) bill. Let's Build Homes is a statewide coalition formed in January to tackle Vermont's housing
26 shortage.

27
28 Let's Build Homes aims to facilitate the construction of 30,000 new homes by 2030, a target
29 identified by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA). The coalition is comprised of over 235
30 organizations and 750 individuals. In its role it emphasizes that housing scarcity negatively impacts
31 the workforce and healthcare.

32
33 M. Weinberger highlighted a significant decline in Vermont's housing production since 2000,
34 coinciding with flattened population growth. This shortfall drives high housing costs and
35 homelessness. He expressed optimism about the CHIP bill's potential to unlock substantial
36 infrastructure investment and aid in "last-mile" housing expansion. While supporting traditional
37 affordable housing, Let's Build Homes also seeks to improve the market to meet the broader housing
38 demand beyond subsidized units.
39

40 A key focus of Let's Build Homes is the Act 250 tier mapping effort, and the coalition is advocating
41 for "generous" Tier 1A and 1B areas to encourage housing development.

42
43 The challenge of middle-class housing affordability was also discussed. M. Weinberger noted that
44 certain approaches—such as factory-built housing and regulatory changes to allow for smaller, infill
45 units—could be helpful. He reiterated that CHIP is not limited to low-income housing,
46 acknowledging the need for diverse housing options.

47
48 In response, Commissioners underscored the importance of housing for economic stimulation and
49 workforce retention and expressed support for Let's Build Homes' efforts.

50
51 **Committee Reports**

52
53 Finance/Operations- C. Dimitruk reported that the committee will be meeting in early June.

54
55 Personnel- The committee did not meet. A date for the next meeting is being determined.

56
57 Executive Committee- P. Zamore reported that the committee met. He added its efforts are
58 adequately reflected by the Board report.

59
60 Project Review- W. Irwin noted the committee met and discussed two projects. One is a 4.5
61 megawatt solar installation the committee found to meet the regional plan. No board action is
62 required regarding that project. The other is the VELCO interconnection project. Because the
63 committee deems the project to have substantial regional impact (the impact is positive), board
64 action is required.

65
66 *B. Irwin moved that the NRPC Board of Commissioners concur with the Committee's findings that*
67 *the project is in conformance with the regional plan, has substantial regional impact, and the*
68 *Commission supports the application. B. Buermann seconded. The motion carried.*

69
70 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)- B. Morris noted the TAC met and a new Chair (B. Morris)
71 and Vice Chair (B. Buermann) were elected. B. Morris also shared that the TAC is currently facing a
72 problem with attendance. The quorum of five members is often difficult to meet because several
73 municipal seats are currently vacant, including those for Alburg Town, Bakersfield, Berkshire,
74 Franklin, Highgate, Isle La Motte, North Hero, and St. Albans City. Y. Dandurand raised concerns
75 about the condition of the Route 207 bridge in Highgate. A state official indicates that all current
76 bridge and paving projects on the state's list are scheduled for completion by 2030, and no new
77 projects are being added at this time. The poor condition of a bridge in Enosburg was also noted. The
78 next TAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 12th.

79
80 Brownfields Committee- M. Sherlund noted that the committee approved three projects for funding
81 at the last meeting: one in South Hero, one in Swanton, and one in Highgate.

82
83 Regional Plan and Policy Committee- L. Ruple offered that the committee's work will be addressed
84 as part of the next agenda item.

85
86 Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC)- B. Murphy noted that there was no meeting.

87

88 Green Mountain Transit- B. Buermann reported that GMT had its annual review, with mostly positive
89 outcomes. Policies are being clarified. The organization is continuing to address financial issues and
90 plan more route changes.

91
92 Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation- Did not meet.

93
94 Office- No additions to report in the meeting packet.

95
96 **Regional Plan Amendment and Adoption**

97
98 Executive Director Catherine Dimitruk and Regional Planner Emily Kloft presented on the regional
99 plan amendment and adoption process. The update is required by Act 181. That Act includes
100 changes to Act 250, state designation program, and regional plans.

101 C. Dimitruk highlighted the following aspects of Act 181 and the plan update:

- 102 • Statute requires updating the regional plan and setting housing targets for each
103 municipality.
- 104 • Once the plan is adopted and approved by the state Land Use Review Board (LURB), state
105 designations will happen automatically, and Act 250 exemptions will change in areas
106 planned for growth. The previous trigger of 10 housing units for Act 250 jurisdiction could
107 increase to up to 50 houses (on up to 10 acres in planned growth areas) if a town “opts in” to
108 the designation. The regional plan will become a controlling item for state designations and
109 Act 250 jurisdiction.
- 110 • New planning goals include demonstrating that a majority of housing targets can be met in
111 planned growth areas and examining environmental benefits and burdens to ensure equity.
- 112 • Requires more robust public participation and outreach, with a focus on equity.
- 113 • Introduces consistently used future land use areas statewide, with 11 different districts.
114 Areas planned for growth eligible for Act 250 jurisdiction changes and state designation
115 include downtowns and village centers, planned growth areas, and village areas (excluding
116 transition areas). Other areas include rural, agricultural, forestry, conservation, enterprise,
117 and resource-based recreation.
- 118 • Maps showing these land use areas were presented. The maps were developed in
119 collaboration with municipalities. The starting point for mapping was existing local plans
120 and state statutory definitions. C. Dimitruk noted that the areas eligible for state incentives
121 and Act 250 changes are significantly larger than current designated areas. These areas are
122 generally at least the same size, sometimes larger and differently shaped, than the interim
123 quarter-mile buffers around designated centers. Separate maps were created for larger
124 municipalities with planned growth centers and smaller village centers.

125 E. Klofft then presented on the municipal housing targets. These municipal targets are based on a
126 regional housing target, which stems from a statewide target. The targets use assumptions based
127 on historical Vermont population growth.

- 128 • For our Northwest region, the target is approximately 2,000-3,000 housing units by 2030 and
129 between 7,000 and 13,000 units by 2050.
- 130 • To break this down by municipality, 60% of the regional target was assigned to the five
131 communities with planned growth centers based on existing housing units. The remaining
132 40% was split among all communities, including the rural areas of those five towns.
- 133 • This results in a growth rate of about 0.6% to 1.2% per year in rural communities and 1.2%
134 to 2.5% per year in communities with planning growth centers by 2050. This is an increase
135 from the region's average growth rate of 0.8% per year from 2000-2020.
- 136 • These targets are considered aspirational goals requiring changes in planning and
137 infrastructure to accommodate the growth. Municipal-specific numbers will be emailed to
138 commissioners.

139 The schedule for outreach and adoption was presented.

- 140 • The project started in the fall. Activities have included meetings with municipalities and the
141 planning committee.
- 142 • Phase 3 is starting, with public outreach beginning shortly after this meeting.
- 143 • Public outreach will include community open houses spread throughout the region to
144 gather feedback on the maps and targets. Equitable participation is a goal, with efforts to
145 reach people where they are.
- 146 • Phase 4 will be the review and adoption process in late fall through early 2026.
- 147 • A draft plan is expected in advance of the July board meeting for initial feedback.
- 148 • A second draft is expected for review in September.
- 149 • In September, the board will be asked to approve submitting the plan to the LURB for a
150 required 60-day review.
- 151 • After receiving LURB feedback and additional public/board comment, a final plan will be
152 prepared.
- 153 • The formal hearing process is hoped to start by the end of 2025.
- 154 • The goal is to have the plan adopted and submitted to the LURB by February 2026.
- 155 • After LURB approval, the new plan is expected to be in effect by May 2026 and is good for
156 eight years.

157 Regarding opting in to the Act 250 jurisdiction changes, municipalities will be asked sometime in
158 August, September, or October. Towns can opt in before the regional plan is officially adopted by
159 the LURB, and the latest they need to decide is by February 2026 when the plan is submitted. Staff
160 will provide guidance and outreach to municipalities on the opt-in process.

161

162 **Commissioner Announcements**

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164 Chair P. Zamore asked if there were any Commissioner announcements. P. Zamore then indicated
165 he had one significant announcement of his own. He indicated that Catherine Dimitruk's 30 years
166 of service to the NRPC had been informally recognized at a previous meeting. Tonight, it would be
167 recognized formally.

168

169 In his remarks, P. Zamore highlighted her knowledge, effectiveness in cultivating relationships with
170 towns, the state, and nonprofits, and facilitation of new ideas. Assistant Director Bethany
171 Remmers then shared notes from staff praising C. Dimitruk's leadership, collaborative and
172 supportive environment, respect, honesty, humor, and genuine care.

173

174 Catherine was presented with a token of appreciation. She expressed gratitude to the staff, board,
175 and for the opportunities.

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177

178 **Adjournment**

179 *B. Buermann moved to adjourn. Y. Dandurand seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.*