

1 **NRPC Board of Commissioners Meeting**
2 **July 30, 2025, at 6:30 PM**
3 **Hybrid Meeting (Zoom and Greg Brown Lodge)**
4 **Hard'ack Recreation Center, St. Albans City VT 05478**
5
6

7 **Board Member Attendance:** *See attached.* A quorum was present to conduct business.
8

9 **Staff:** Catherine Dimitruk, Greta Brunswick, Dean Pierce, Kyle Grenier, Amy Adams, Emily Klofft,
10 Luke Slomba, Marlana Valenta, Danielle Turin
11

12 **Other Attendees:** Kevin Chu, Vermont Futures Project
13

14 **Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks**

15 Chair P. Zamore called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM followed by roll call.
16

17 **Adjustments to Agenda**

18 None.
19

20 **Opportunity for Public Comment**

21 None.
22

23 **Minutes of the June 2025 Meeting**

24 E. Nance made a correction on to the June minutes: reference approval of the May minutes, not
25 April.

26 *E. Nance motioned to approve June 25, 2025, minutes. B. Murphy seconded. Motion carried. K.*
27 *Waite abstained.*
28

29 **Featured Speaker: Kevin Chu, Vermont Futures Project**

30 P. Zamore introduced the speaker, Kevin Chu, of the Vermont Futures Project, reporting on the
31 Economic Action Plan recently published by the project.
32

33 Mr. Chu gave a Power Point presentation with the overall goal of using data to support the evolution
34 of Vermont's economy towards a thriving future full of opportunity for all. He presented
35 demographic and housing data, asking the question, what does VT want to be when it grows up and
36 growth towards what and for whom? He noted that there is an opportunity to become a local
37 ambassador by discussing and spreading this data in your own community and to be in touch if you
38 are interested.
39

40 Brief discussion by the board followed. H. Demars agreed with the need to recruit more young
41 people and the need to incentivize starter homes. Mr. Chu noted that it must be economically
42 viable to create all types of housing and right now it doesn't bear out that way for all types and in all
43 areas of the country. Mr. Chu referred to the book *Abundance* by Ezra Cline, which compares the
44 cost of building homes in California vs Texas. It costs substantially less to build homes in Texas and
45 more people moved to Texas last year than the entire population of Vermont. Mr. Chu asked where
46 are young people going, and where can they achieve the American Dream? He suggested we learn
47 from trends like this when thinking about Vermont's future.
48

1 C. Rosenquist asked about accessory dwellings and the challenge with some incentives that
2 require property owners to rent at below market rates. Mr. Chu noted that there is a supply
3 challenge, and all new housing unit types contribute to the solution. New units help bring mobility
4 to the market (downsizing). There is no silver bullet that will solve the problem.
5

6 K. Waite noted that there have been many discussions about density, and there is a common
7 understanding that new housing units result in higher taxes. He explained that we haven't solved
8 this messaging issue. Mr. Chu noted the complexity of the issue in Vermont because of how
9 education is funded. He agreed that there needs to be more education on how new homes add to
10 the whole pool of funding and more education is needed on why communities would want to grow
11 their Grand List.
12

13 P. Zamore thanked Mr. Chu for presenting to the Board.
14

15 **Commission Reports:**
16 (written reports enclosed)
17

18 Finance/Operations – K. Waite reported that there was no meeting.
19

20 Personnel – B. Buermann reported that there was no meeting.
21

22 Executive Committee – P. Zamore reported that there was no meeting.
23

24 Project Review – W. Irwin reviewed the project review report. All projects are in conformance with
25 the Regional Plan and generally are positive for the municipality and region.
26

27 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) – B. Morris reported that the TAC met and voted to pass
28 the Transportation Policy Initiative workplan on to the Commission, which is on the agenda later
29 tonight. He noted that the next meeting is in September.
30

31 Brownfields Committee – M. Sherlund reported that there was no meeting.
32

33 Regional Plan and Policy Committee – L. Ruple reported that they met and got a preview of the draft
34 regional plan. They made comments and asked questions that have been addressed in draft before
35 board tonight.
36

37 Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC) – B. Murphy reported that they met about a change
38 affecting Rutland and Barre plans, but nothing that affects our region.
39

40 Green Mountain Transit – B. Buermann reported there was a meeting about the potential transfer to
41 Rural Community Transit project. He also reported on the College Street shuttle in Burlington.
42

43 Healthy Roots Advisory Committee – M. Scholten reported that there was no meeting.
44

45 Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation – K. Waite, no report.
46

47 Office – staff, no report.
48

1 **Regional Plan Presentation**

2 (discussion item) Draft plan available at <https://www.nrpcvt.com/sectiondraftsoftheplan/>

3
4 C. Dimitruk reported that staff, with support and feedback from the Plan and Policy Committee,
5 have created the first full draft of the regional plan. She encouraged everyone to make sure they
6 pick up a physical copy of the draft plan tonight.

7
8 C. Dimitruk reminded the board of the new framework of regional planning under Act 181, which
9 was passed last summer. The plan now has additional weight and meaning in a few different areas.

10
11 She explained that when the Commission adopts the plan, it will be sent to the new State Land Use
12 Review Board for approval. When the plan is approved, two things will happen. First, the growth
13 areas will become state designations, eligible for state incentive programs. Second, those same
14 mapped growth areas will be eligible for an act 250 exemption for housing, if towns opt in.
15 Specifically, the exemption is for up to 50 units on 10 acres or less.

16
17 There are a lot of barriers to housing that we can't control (interest rates, cost of lumber), but what
18 we can control are things like permitting. This eliminates one barrier to housing that we do control.

19
20 This plan update is more targeted than the last update, since it was substantially revised in 2023.
21 The *Introduction* includes information on environmental justice and environmental benefits and
22 burdens. It discusses how our plan can help or worsen impacts to vulnerable people and areas in
23 the region.

24
25 The *Appendix* includes a section on projects that have Substantial Regional Impact. This is a status
26 the Commission applies to certain Act 250 and Section 248 projects, and the effect is that if there is
27 a conflict between local and regional plan, then the regional plan takes precedence in terms of the
28 project's conformance to municipal and regional plans. For this draft plan, we have raised the
29 threshold for housing units that qualify for Substantial Regional Impact to correlate with the new
30 proposed land use areas and Act 250 permit jurisdictions.

31
32 The *Land Use* chapter is entirely new. It presents the 11 new future land use areas, which are
33 defined in state statute. She noted that staff worked with communities to collaboratively develop
34 the new Future Land Use Map taking into consideration local planning within the boundaries set by
35 statute.

36
37 The *Housing* chapter is updated with new regional and municipal housing targets and other data
38 updates. There is a low and a high target: the low fixes current unmet needs, while the high fixes the
39 housing market for a healthy economy. Throughout the plan, references to the future land use areas
40 were updated and including key updates where data was available.

41
42 For the Regional Plan outreach and adoption process, we are now in phase 3 of reviewing and
43 refining the draft plan. A refined draft will be available for the September board meeting. It is our
44 expectation that the board will be asked to deem the plan sufficiently complete to authorize its
45 submission to the state's Land Use Review Board for the mandated 60-day preliminary review. The
46 goal is to adopt the plan at the February Board meeting and then submit to the State's Land Use
47 Review Board for approval by May.

1 B. Morris asked whether there is an overlay of housing needs and job needs. For instance, when
2 housing is located in Hyde Park and employment opportunities are concentrated in Burlington, it
3 results in increased traffic on the roads. Should we focus on creating jobs in rural communities, or
4 prioritize developing housing closer to employment areas?
5

6 Mr. Chu referenced a chart on page 39 of the Economic Action Plan. Some towns have a higher ratio
7 of jobs to homes and others vice versa. This gives municipal level data to help municipalities plan
8 and strategize on this issue. The answer will be different on a town-by-town basis. C. Dimitruk noted
9 that we need both, and the Plan and the state incentives give every town a chance to participate.
10

11 There was a review on upcoming August outreach events and ways to submit comments.
12

13 P. Zamore thanked C. Dimitruk for the presentation.
14

15 **FY 26 Committee Assignments - (action item)**

16 P. Zamore reminded Commissioners that last month chairs were elected to committees and
17 nominations were made for committee members. Since then, staff developed a list of proposed
18 committee members. E. Nance made a correction on the committee document; it should read Plan
19 and Policy Committee.
20

21 *B. Irwin motioned to approve FY26 committee assignments. K. Waite seconded. Motion carried.*
22

23 **FY 26 TPI Work Program (action item) Transportation Advisory Committee endorsed draft 24 enclosed**

25 B. Morris reported that at the last TAC meeting, they reviewed and passed the TPI work program for
26 2026. There were very few changes from the previous year, with some deletions because projects
27 were completed.
28

29 *K. Waite motioned to approve the FY26 TPI work program. Y. Dandurand seconded. Motion carried.*
30

31 **Commissioner Announcements**

32 B. Morris recognized the summer transportation interns Melissa Hall and Lorna Peters, who
33 completed a culvert inventory along the entire LVRT in Franklin County. They did an impressive job
34 and managed to avoid parsnip and poison ivy. Congratulations on a phenomenal job!
35

36 Amelia Demars, Grand Isle County youth commissioner, said thank you for the presentation.
37

38 **Adjourn**

39 *C. Renquist moved to adjourn. B. Morris seconded. Motion carried.*

FY26 NPRC Board of Commissioners- Meeting Attendance

Municipality	Board Member	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
		7/30/25	No Meeting	9/24/25	10/29/25	No Meeting	TBD	1/28/26	2/25/26	3/25/26	4/29/26	5/27/26	6/24/26
Frkln Cty Youth	Vacant												
GI Cty Youth	Amelia Demars	X											
Alburg Town	Alex McCracken	E											
Alburg Town	Danielle Choiniere	X											
Alburg Village	Vacant												
Alburg Village	Vacant												
Bakersfield	William Irwin	X											
Bakersfield	Linda McCall	X											
Berkshire	Josh Grims	X											
Berkshire	Claude Charron												
Enosburg Falls	Leonard Charron												
Enosburg Falls	Vacant												
Enosburgh Town	Jesse Woods												
Enosburgh Town	James Oullette (8/25)												
Fairfax	Barbara Murphy	X											
Fairfax	Nicholas Nadeau												
Fairfield	Julia Callan	X											
Fairfield	Chuck Verderber	E											
Fletcher	Michelle Frennier	E											
Fletcher	Lori Ruple	X											
Franklin	Yvon Dandurand	X											
Franklin	Wesley Kempton												
Georgia	Carl Rosenquist	X											
Georgia	Kirk Waite	X											
Grand Isle	Barclay Morris	X											
Grand Isle	Howard Demars	X											
Highgate	Jack Pelkey	X											
Highgate	Anna Comiskey	X											
Isle La Motte	Sylvia Jensen	E											
Isle La Motte	Mary-Catherine Graziano												
Montgomery	Leanne Barnard												
Montgomery	Mark Brouillette												
North Hero	Andy Alling	X											
North Hero	Mike Curtis	E											
Richford	Marissa Tessier												
Richford	Vacant												
Sheldon	Vacant												
Sheldon	Mathew Stebbins	X											
South Hero	Peter Zamore	X											
South Hero	Bob Buermann	X											
St. Albans City	Elisabeth Nance	X											
St. Albans City	Chip Sawyer	X											
St. Albans Town	Marietta Scholten	X											
St. Albans Town	Megan Sherlund	X											
Swanton Town	Nicole Draper	X											
Swanton Town	Nicholas Brosseau	X											
Swanton Village	Heidi Britch-Valenta	E											
Swanton Village	Damon Broderick	X											
	# Municipalities												

QUORUM = 12

E= Excused ; X=Present