Full Commission Meeting  
June 25, 2019  
Newbrook Fire Department, Newfane, VT

**Commissioners Present:** Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair; John Whitman; Eric Stevens; Stephan Chait; Susan Hammond; Jack Cunningham; Steve Lembke; Lise Fortin; Everett Wilson; Jessica Tobey; Andy Snelling; Lew Sorenson; Roger Turner; George Mora; Laura Sibilia; Edie Mas; Gretchen Havreluk; Joel Bluming; Karen Astley; Bonnie North; James Pinkerton; Travis Dobson; Tom Mosakowski; Bobbi Kilburn  

**Commissioners Participating via Conference Call:** None.  


**Guest Speaker:** Elizabeth Bridgewater, Windham & Windsor Housing Trust  

**Guests:** None.  

**Staff Present:** Chris Campany, Executive Director, Sue Westa, Senior Planner  

**Introductions:** There was a quorum of 17 towns present.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Gabby Ciuffreda at approximately 6:05 p.m.

Everyone in attendance was asked to introduce themselves.

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Administrative Items & Reports:**  

**Approval of April 30, 2019 Meeting Minutes:** On a motion by Commissioner Whitman, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham, the minutes were approved with Commissioners Mora, Turner, Fortin and Kilburn abstaining.

**Approval of Treasurer’s Report:** Treasurer Kilburn explained that we had ended May with a reserve position and anticipated ending the fiscal year with a reserve position as well. She also noted that the office updates had been completed and under budget. On a motion by Commissioner Wilson, seconded by Commissioner Snelling, the Treasurer’s Report was approved.
Program:
WRC Staff Presentation – Homes for All – Updating Municipal Policies to Improve Housing Opportunities: Senior Planner Sue Westa introduced herself and provided a summary of her background prior to starting with the WRC in January. Her presentation began with a question for those in attendance as to what their thoughts were on housing in the region. There were numerous comments about vacant homes and blighted properties. There were also comments about the disparity in housing for 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th homeowners and housing for local wage-earners. She then explained what factors are within town control can impact housing quantity, quality and cost. Of particular interest were examples of what different densities looked like upon the land, and the value of showing examples to citizens as they deliberate town housing policy. A presentation evaluation sheet was distributed.

Guest Presentation – Elizabeth Bridgewater, Executive Director, Windham & Windsor Housing Trust (WWHT): WWHT’s Horizon-Opportunities & Challenges: Director Bridgewater introduced herself and shared her background and interests in housing and economic development. She explained the WWHT had just completed a strategic planning process that includes an intent to focus more effort on housing needs and development in the northern part of Windham County. A discussion about housing affordability, wages and housing costs, and the relative cost of housing within the region, the state and in New England followed. Of particular note was how the structure of affordable housing funding programs create a gap in meeting the needs of individuals and families with different income levels. Programs have tended to focus on low and very-low income individuals and families and those with more moderate incomes, leaving a gap in meeting housing needs for those in between. Also of particular note was the challenge of providing housing in communities that do not have public water and sewer. That infrastructure is necessary to make housing development economically feasible. Director Bridgewater summarized research presented at conferences by Tiffany Manuel with Enterprise about biases held by individuals and communities, and what this research says about opposition to affordable housing in communities. Conclusions and solutions informed by this research are being developed. Executive Director Campany mentioned that the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies is contributing funding to a statewide research that will examine in detail what contributes to the costs of housing in Vermont. Sue Westa described a zoning project for housing in which WRC will participate that has been organized by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Amended Bylaws Adoption: Chair Ciuffreda introduced the proposed bylaw amendments for the second Full Commission meeting in a row. On a motion by Commissioner Lembke, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, the WRC bylaws were amended by a unanimous vote.

Chair’s Report: Chair Ciuffreda explained that the Nominating Committee was seeking nominations to fill vacancies on the Executive Board for the coming year. Those interested in learning more should contact Nominating Committee Chair Carolyn Partridge, or reach out to Chair Ciuffreda and/or Executive Director Campany.
Executive Directors’ Report: Executive Director Campany reviewed his participation at a meeting of the Staying Connected Initiative, which is a network of organizations working to maintain habitat connectivity in Northern Appalachia. He explained that it struck him that there were few regional commissions, counties, councils of government, or local governments participating, while the importance of their policies and the need to coordinate local action and engagement was a persistent theme. He suggested the Commission may want to focus its Regional Plan update on building upon current policies that support habitat connectivity, efforts that would make compact settlement possible, and improving the climate and flood resilience of those compact settlements. There seemed to be general support for this approach.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:57 p.m. on a motion by Commissioner Cunningham.

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins