



**Full Commission Meeting
November 12, 2024**

Commissioners Present:

Ralph Meima	Brattleboro
Stanley Noga, Jr.	Brookline
Sarah Shippee	Dover
Matthew Hoffman	Dummerston
Todd Davidson	Dummerston
Steve Lembke	Guilford
Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair	Guilford
Stephan Chait	Halifax
Edee Edwards	Halifax
Patti Smith	Marlboro
Ann Golob	Newfane
Rick Cowan	Rockingham
Bonnie North	Rockingham
Andrew Snelling	Townshend
Paul Spector	Wardsboro
Kara Halpern	Weston
Peter Barus	Whitingham
Ann Manwaring	Wilmington
Bill Dunkel	Windham
Cathy Fales	Windham
Cheryl Carr-Maleh	Winhall
Erik Moses	Winhall
Gretchen Havreluk	Citizen Interest Commissioner - Community Development
Laura Sibilias	Citizen Interest Commissioner – Economic Development
Kathy Urffer	Citizen Interest Commissioner – Natural Resources

A **quorum** of 16 towns were present.

Staff Present: Chris Company, Executive Director, Margo Ghia, Planner, Matt Bachler, Senior Planner

Guests Participants: Adam Grinold and Laura Sibilias, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation

Call to Order: Chair Gabrielle Ciuffreda called the meeting to order at approximately 6:02 p.m.; Recording began.

No amendments to agenda.

Approval of August 27, 2024 Minutes: On a **motion** by Commissioner Golob, seconded by Commissioner Shippee, the minutes were **approved** with two abstentions.

Introduction of Southern Vermont Economic Development District & Regional Project Prioritization:

- *Adam Grinold, Executive Director of the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC)*, introduced the relationship between WRC and BDCC. He reviewed project priorities for the region, noting that they need to be near shovel-ready. The list is developed in conjunction with update of the Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) project identification. Thus far this year projects have been submitted but not yet ranked.
- *Laura Sibilia, Director of Regional Economic Development Strategy at BDCC*, explained the update of the CEDS and who sits on committees to review the CEDS. She reviewed the elements of the CEDS and its purpose. New strategies include examining how AI might affect the region's workforce, and generally the speed with which the economy may change and what it means for preparing our workforce. She asked for WRC to endorse submission of the CEDS to the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Commissioner Golob made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shippee. The motion was **approved** by a unanimous vote.

Rockingham Town Plan Approval & Confirmation: Chair Ciuffreda reviewed the report of the Planning Coordination Committee. On a motion by Commissioner Golob and seconded by Commissioner Snelling, the motion **passed** with one abstention.

Draft Regional Plan Update & Public Engagement Plan Presentation by WRC Senior Planner, Matt Bachler: Executive Director Chris Campany thanked Matt for his coordination and leadership of the plan update, including the WRC's leading innovation in creating Vermont's first regional plan that is designed to exist in digital form to facilitate its usefulness and navigability. Matt reviewed where the process stands and how we got here. He navigated the site to show what information exists and where it can be found. He noted the landing page is still in development. On Wednesday he will be sending a link to the Commissioners for them to begin reviewing the contents of the draft plan update. Commissioners are asked to not share the plan at this point as a public engagement and review process will begin in the new year after Commissioners have had the opportunity to make an initial review before the end of December. At this point staff are soliciting comments from Commissioners that should be addressed before the public engagement process begins in January. Public comments will be compiled and reviewed through March. The goal is to have the Commission vote on the plan in June or July, 2025. It was asked if it was possible for graphs and charts to be downloadable for use by the public. Commissioners noted they liked the design and functionality of the plan.

Project Review Committee Report: Chair Ciuffreda called attention to the summary provided by staff.

Executive Director's Report: Chris reviewed a summary provided ahead of the meeting, focusing primarily on the success of the 4-town housing planning charrette. He explained that he and Associate Director Susan Westa will be meeting with UMass-Amherst about organizing a similar public process to visualize how to grow villages and downtowns away from areas of flood risk. He also explained that he is continuing to build relationships with university programs for the region as

well as the state as a whole. A UMass-Amherst senior landscape architecture capstone studio is interested in using Saxtons River as their design “laboratory” for the Spring, 2025 semester, and Chris is continuing to help lead a project through the UVM Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships to map the existence of public wastewater systems throughout the state. Commissioner Lembke asked Chris how the region is doing and what his priorities are for the region. Chris explained that his top priority is working with communities on flood adaptation and resilience given the public safety and existential threats current and future flood risks present.

Chair’s Report: Chair Ciuffreda expressed her appreciation to Matt and staff for their work on the draft regional plan and their broader service to the Commission and the towns of the Region. She noted this would be the last Full Commission meeting for the 2024 calendar year.

Public Comment: None was offered.

Adjournment: On a motion by Commissioner Edwards, seconded by Commissioner Lembke, the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m. by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chris Company