

## Looking Back

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December 1964 saw Brattleboro Chamber of Commerce under leadership of Richard Sykes, Corwin Elwell, and John Hooper mount a regional planning "public interest and information" campaign with a kick-off dinner meeting at Putney Inn. Strong support was given by Development Commissioner Elbert Moulton, state planners Richard Rubino and Bernard Johnson, and Extension Service County Agent Ray Pestle. At March 1965 Town Meetings, 17 towns voted to establish a regional planning program. May 1965 witnessed official formation of Windham Regional Planning Commission with Alden Horton of Wilmington elected chairman. By-Laws were soon adopted and application made for federal "701" funds for a two-year comprehensive planning program. At this time only Brattleboro had an adopted town plan; Brattleboro, Marlboro, and Bellows Falls Village had zoning regulations. Other significant 1965 events were regional conference on planning and development (with Gov. Hoff and Lester Eisner as main speakers) and regional public opinion survey in which 1,058 residents shared their thoughts on course future development and growth ought to take.

In January 1966 a federal planning grant was received and Planners Collaborative of Syracuse, N.Y., was chosen to be WRPC's primary technical consultant in preparation of regional and town comprehensive plans. A report on Population and Housing, 1st of 11 preliminary Planners Collaborative reports, was published in November. Also published was a Dept. of Employment Security report, Windham County Economic and Manpower Resources. A major conference on "Water Resources and Stream Pollution" was held and town planning tours with consultant Dr. Hollister (Sam) Kent began. Two new towns joined WRPC. WRPC chairman was Bill Schmidt of Rockingham.

The year 1967 saw three more towns join WRPC. Jeremy Freeman of Halifax served as chairman and Bill Schmidt became resident planner. Meetings with VT Electric Power Co. were held on proposed 345 kv lines through 11 county towns. Legislation and nuclear power plant study committees were formed. "New Route 9" subject was reckoned with for first time. An essay contest on "Windham Region's and My Town's Future" was sponsored for high school students. Windham Region News began. Phrase "creative localism" was coined and community planning education meetings started with assistance from Extension Service's James Edgerton.

At March 1968 Town Meetings WRPC became WRPDC as all but one member town voted to continue commission as a planning and development organization. Grant from Vt. Development Dept. and member towns' contributions allowed employment of Bill Schmidt as Ex. Director and Mary LaFontaine as Administrative Assistant. John Veller of Dover elected chairman. Regional housing and rural land tax conferences were held along with workshops on land use controls, community facilities, etc. Whitingham became 1st town in state to adopt interim zoning.

Wardsboro, Weston and Winhall joined WRPDC in early 1969. John Veller continued as chairman. New staff added were Joe Teller, Associate Director and Joyce Frost, Administrative Assistant. Regional crime

prevention planning project carried out under James Timmins' direction; crime prevention action project followed with Brownlow Towle in charge. Rural Land Tax committee formed. Much attention given to environmental issues, especially following three June 1969 meetings with Gov. Davis on subject of land development.

In 1970 Albert White of Rockingham was elected chairman. Environmental interest continued. Environmental legislation and land use controls received much attention; Ellen Ruth Reiss employed as part-time legislative assistant. Testimony given at power line hearings. Major conference on environmental legislation and education held. East-West highway committee formed. Regional plan adopted. By June 1970 eight towns had adopted town plans; nineteen towns had some form of zoning. Marlboro became 1st town in state to adopt subdivision regulations under new state enabling law. Dover/Wilmington Ecological planning study begins.