



# Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## Franklin Regional Planning Board— *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, September 28, 2017 / 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Location:	JW Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield, MA – First Floor Conference Room
Facilitator:	Jerry Lund, Chair

### FRPB MEMBERS

- Joan Rockwell**, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, Colrain, At-Large
- Bob Armstrong**, Conway Select Board
- John Baronas**, Deerfield Planning Board
- James Basford**, Orange At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Julia Blyth**, Northfield Select Board
- Ted Cady**, Warwick Planning Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Jan Carr**, At-Large Heath
- Jennifer Gross**, Wendell Select Board
- Thomas Hutcheson**, At-Large Greenfield, FRPB Executive Committee,
- Tom Johnson**, Shelburne Planning Board, Alternate
- Jonathan Lagrèze**, Colrain Select Board
- Kenneth Miller**, Ashfield Planning Board
- Charles Olchowski**, At-Large Greenfield, FRPB Executive Committee
- Patricia Perry**, At-Large Greenfield
- Jeanie Schermesser**, At-Large Erving
- Mike Shaffer**, Erving Planning Board
- Greg Snedeker**, Gill Select Board
- Joseph Strzegowski**, Conway Planning Board
- Gisela Walker**, Charlemont Planning Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Chuck Washer**, Shelburne Select Board

**FRCOG STAFF:** **Peggy Sloan**, Planning & Development Director; **Liz Jacobson-Carroll**, Administrative Services Assistant; **Alyssa Larose**, Land Use & Natural Resources Planner;

**GUESTS:** **MJ Adams**, Greenfield; **John Wheeler**, Shelburne Planning Board

<b>1. Introductions</b>	J. Rockwell, FRPB Members
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J. Rockwell convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. A round of introductions followed.

<b>2. Review and Approval of June 22, 2017 FRPB Minutes</b>	S. Lovejoy, FRPB Clerk
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**J. Basford** moved to adopt the 6/22/17 minutes, with corrections to add FRPB members not listed. **T. Hutcheson** seconded the motion, and the motion passed with no abstentions.

<b>3. Presentation on Planning for Affordable Housing</b>	A. Larose, FRCOG
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A. Larose shared her aims for the presentation: to provide an overview of how FRCOG develops housing plans for communities, and then to give attendees ideas on how to proceed. She explained that the combination of aging populations and incomes not keeping pace with the cost of living underscore the need for local communities to actively plan for their housing needs. She also cited the importance of preserving and enhancing community health, vitality, and sustainability, as well as planning for transportation and economic development. The 2013 Regional Plan for Sustainable Development identified the top housing goals for the region, and a 2014 FRCOG Regional Housing Study summarized local demographic trends and projections, housing costs relative to income, the characteristics and availability of area housing, and the greatest affordable housing needs in the county, she said. Then she outlined work completed with local towns in recent years.

Larose identified some common demographic trends in towns that have conducted housing plans in the past several years. These trends include a decline in population but growth in number of households, a rapidly aging population, a decrease in the number of families with children, and an increase in one-person households. Common among most communities are the need for housing for seniors, veterans, young families and those in recovery, among others. Further, in some towns vacancy rates are low, which can drive up prices and make it harder for people to find housing. The housing stock is relatively old across the region, presenting challenges in terms of energy efficiency, lead paint, and the cost to bring homes up to code. The existing housing stock is largely designed for single families. She noted the difficulty for single-income families, as well as many dual-income families, to find affordable housing (defined by Chapter 40B as costing less than 30% of the income of a household earning less than 80% of the area median income.) Chapter 40B encourages towns to maintain at least 10% of their housing stock. Most area towns are far from meeting the 10% goal.

She identified considerations and steps involved in the development of a town's affordable housing plan, and suggested strategies – via zoning for new construction, investing in existing building stock, and identifying/developing programs, and organizations that can assist towns – to promote affordable housing in local communities. She encouraged attendees to consider the impact of infrastructure (including sewer and water, transportation, utilities, broadband, schools, and local staffing and funding) on a town's capacity for affordable housing. She noted that seven towns have passed the Community Preservation Act, which generates funds that can be spent on affordable housing.

Common zoning strategies include allowing for 2-families by right in residential districts, allowing for greater numbers of units within a multi-family structure in select districts by Special Permit, requiring/encouraging affordable housing in new developments, allowing for smaller lot sizes in districts with public water and sewer, and allowing accessory dwelling units. She reviewed strategies to invest in existing housing/building stock, and referred to research on ways to help towns build on town-owned lots. Other strategies for building local capacity include adopting the CPA, establishing a housing committee, collaborating with other organizations, establishing a municipal affordable housing trust, and hiring/sharing a professional housing coordinator with other CPA towns.

J. Gross suggested that FRCOG host regular workshops where experts could instruct first-time landlords to avoid common mistakes (and housing court) which might otherwise result in homeowners choosing to leave their apartments empty. MJ Adams said that Greenfield is developing a landlord

training program for just that reason. Larose noted that senior centers may also be able to assist seniors who are interested in sharing their homes, but need help regarding how to do so. In response to a question from G. Snedeker, P. Sloan recommended that town housing committees include an assessor as well as a member of the Board of Health.

J. Rockwell’s expression of thanks was followed by a round of applause.

<b>4. Update on Recreational Marijuana Legislation</b>	P. Sloan, FRCOG
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Referencing the workshop FRCOG held with the Attorney General’s Office last week, P. Sloan encouraged town officials to consider, as soon as possible, imposing a temporary moratorium if they would like to regulate, limit or prohibit the establishment of businesses related to the newly legalized recreational marijuana use.

She noted that the various types of facilities – related to the cultivation, processing, and retail sales of marijuana – have potential impacts including noise, water usage, wastewater disposal, odor, security, lighting and other concerns. Cultivation facilities developed elsewhere, Sloan noted, are often large scale industrial buildings, sometimes located in former mills. She added that the legislation allows for artisanal coop cultivation on a smaller scale, and that local farmers may be interested. Recreational marijuana cultivation is not considered an agricultural use and is not exempt from zoning.

P. Sloan reminded those present that all of the Franklin region towns voted to legalize the use of recreational marijuana. In order to limit or prohibit retail sales, towns must go through both a ballot process and a zoning amendment process. Whatever a town puts on the ballot should not be the same as what is currently in the zoning bylaws.

One strategy is to prepare zoning amendments and get zoning passed, then put that language on your ballot. Towns should consult with their Town Counsel as soon as possible. Election cycles are less frequent, and more expensive; this is one of the reasons towns are creating moratoriums. Even towns interested in hosting these businesses will want to consider regulations, which can’t be “unreasonably impractical” according to the legislation. Towns can impose a tax of 3% on sale or transfer of recreational marijuana products, but a Town Meeting vote is also needed to impose the local tax. The Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) is expected to issue regulations by March 15, 2018. Temporary moratoriums are possible through December 2018 according to the AG’s office; if the issuance of CCC regulations is delayed, the AG’s office may consider a longer time frame. On April 1, 2018 license applications can be submitted to the CCC. When a license application is filed with the CCC, they notify the community. It is up to the community to communicate to the CCC about any local ordinances or zoning bylaws or regulations that would make the Applicant noncompliant if the license were issued.

If towns are interested in help with moratorium language or developing regulations they can request technical assistance from the FRCOG on their DLTA funding request form. P. Sloan reminded the group that DLTA letters typically go out in December, and decision letters will follow in January or February 2018. Sloan acknowledged the difficulty of trying to craft regulations before the CCC regulations are finalized. She suggested that town officials carefully review zoning district tables to determine which districts might be suitable for one or more cannabis-related businesses presumably by Special Permit.

<b>5. Update on FERC Relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility</b>	P. Sloan, FRCOG
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P. Sloan reported that earlier in the day, FirstLight formally filed their request with FERC for a Temporary Amendment to their license to allow use of the full storage capacity of Northfield Mountain. FRCOG will work with CRC to submit comments to FERC by 10/30/17.

The schedule of settlement meetings was delayed while outstanding studies were completed, but discussions continue to focus on water flows needed to meet the life cycles of species identified as endangered at either the federal and state levels. J. Blythe expressed appreciation for the information on endangered species provided by representatives from State and federal agencies. P. Sloan thanked J. Blythe and T. Miner for their work on this issue.

<b>6. Other Planning Updates (CPTC &amp; Short Term Residential Rentals Workshop)</b>	P. Sloan, FRCOG
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P. Sloan encouraged members to review the list of workshops taking place in Franklin County and around the state in the coming weeks by the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative, including two sponsored by the FRCOG at the Olver Center. She noted that members whose towns are unable to pay the registration fees for the two local events should contact her regarding possible scholarships. Further, she invited attendees to sign up for the FRCOG workshop on Short Term Residential Rentals that she and colleagues will be offering here on 10/5.

<b>7. Nomination &amp; Vote of G. Walker for Clerk of the FRPB</b>	J. Rockwell, FRPB 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chair
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**T. Cady moved to accept the nomination of G. Walker as Clerk of the FRPB, T. Hutcheson seconded the motion, and the motion passed with no abstentions.**

<b>8. Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting/Adjourn/Public Comment</b>	J. Rockwell, FRPB 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chair
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T. Hutcheson spoke of the work of FRCOG over its 20 year history, noting that other regions do not receive the level of service to which Franklin region officials have come to expect. He encouraged people to attend the anniversary celebration on 10/13/17.

**G. Walker moved to adjourn the meeting, T. Cady seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.**

Documents Distributed / Presentations Viewed:

- Agenda
- FRPB Minutes, June 22, 2017 – DRAFT
- Planning for Affordable Housing, FRCOG 9/28/17
- KP Law packet regarding marijuana legislation
- CPTC Fall 2017 Workshops flyer
- FRCOG Short Term Rentals workshop flyer
- FRCOG 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration flyers
- CPHS 2017 Flu Clinics flyer

The next meeting will be held on November 2, 2017. Copies of all documents are available. Please contact Liz Jacobson-Carroll at [ljc@frcog.org](mailto:ljc@frcog.org) or 413-774-3167 x101.

Respectfully submitted,

Gisela Walker, Clerk - FRPB