



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Franklin Regional Planning Board— *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, January 23, 2020 / 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; Peggy Sloan, Planning Director - FRCOG

FRPB MEMBERS

- Jerry Lund**, Chair, Leyden, At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Bob Armstrong**, Conway Select Board
- James Basford**, Orange At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee, FRPB Rep. to the FRCOG Council, FRCOG Executive Committee, Rep. to the Route 2 Task Force
- Steven Blinder**, New Salem Planning Board
- Julia Blyth**, Northfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee, Rep. to the Connecticut River Streambank Erosion Committee
- Ted Cady**, Warwick Planning Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Ann-Mary Cloutier**, Deerfield Planning Board
- Ron Coler**, Ashfield At-Large
- Stanley Garland**, Bernardston Select Board
- Jennifer Gross**, Wendell Select Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Wayne Hachey**, New Salem Select Board, FRCOG Council
- Elizabeth Irving**, Montague Planning Board
- Emily Johnson**, Deerfield At-Large
- Jeff Lacy**, Shutesbury Planning Board
- Jonathan Lagrèze**, Colrain Planning Board
- Peter Nai**, Bernardston Planning Board
- Charles Olchowski**, Greenfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Nan Riebschlaeger**, Wendell At-Large
- Dana Roscoe**, Sunderland Planning Board
- Mike Shaffer**, Erving Planning Board
- Jane Shaney**, Ashfield Planning Board
- Homer (Tony) Stavelly**, Northfield Planning Board
- Joseph Strzegowski**, Conway Planning Board
- David Travers**, Heath Select Board
- Chuck Washer**, Shelburne Select Board, FRPB Rep. to the REPC
- Mark Zinan**, Sunderland Select Board

FRCOG STAFF

- Peggy Sloan**, Planning & Development Director; **Helena Farrell**, Land Use & Natural Resources Planner; **Liz Jacobson-Carroll**, Administrative Services Assistant;

PRESENTERS/GUESTS

J. Ameen, Executive Director, Franklin County Solid Waste Management District

Sarah Kohler, New Salem Planning Board

Michael Pattavina, Materials Recycling Facility Advisory Board

1. Introductions	J. Lund, Chair – FRPB & FRPB Members
-------------------------	---

J. Lund convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. A round of introductions followed.

2. Review and Approval of November 7, 2019 FRPB Minutes	J. Lund, Chair – FRPB & FRPB Members
--	---

J. Basford moved to adopt the 11/7/19 minutes, with amendments; J. Blythe seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously with 2 abstentions (J. Strzegowski, D. Travers).

3. Nomination and Vote for At-Large Members – E. Johnson, (Deerfield) and Ron Coler (Ashfield)	J. Lund, Chair – FRPB
---	-----------------------

D. Roscoe moved to elect the nominees, as indicated; J. Strzegowski seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Presentation and Discussion on Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling in Franklin County	J. Ameen, Executive Director -- FCSWMD
--	---

J. Ameen described the history and structure of the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (the “District”) and the comprehensive work it does with 21 of the 26 towns – with trash, recyclables, hazardous waste, compost, bulky waste, wastewater treatment sludge, and more. She noted that the FCSWMD charges an assessment to member towns (17 of which have their own transfer stations), and collects fees-for-service. She shared information regarding the increasing costs of trash disposal locally, including examples for specific towns’ contracted costs. Further, she described the trajectory of the recyclables’ market from producing an income-stream to costing taxpayer money.

Ameen began her “state of the state in trash and recycling” with projections regarding the limited and rapidly diminishing disposal capacity of MA through 2027, noting that where trash is going is of great concern throughout the Commonwealth and beyond. Waste-to-Energy facilities represent part of the shift away from landfills. There are currently 13 in Massachusetts, including one run by Eco Power in Agawam, where the District’s trash is incinerated. Fortunately, FCSWMD has been invited to join a group of Hampden County towns to contract with Eco Power, at favorable terms, for five years beginning July 1, 2020. This will cost District towns less than others are paying for curbside pickup (and transport out-of-state, in most cases). Some attendees expressed surprise at learning that FCSWMD trash is incinerated, and that the waste is brought to an ash landfill in Shrewsbury. J. Ameen noted that neither landfill disposal nor incineration are good options. Operating a landfill is costly and difficult, given environmental regulations, equipment and staffing needs, she said.

Ameen spoke highly of the state-run Materials Recycling Facility, or “MeRF”, in Springfield, which accepts all paper, plastic, metal and glass from FCSWMD towns. It is the only facility of its type in the Commonwealth. She stressed that while recycling is no longer the revenue stream it once was for local municipalities, Western MA had been fortunate, until recently, to reap \$6/ton (down from \$41/ton), following the crash of the market elsewhere. On July 1st towns will pay \$93/ton for dual-stream recycling. The current commodity offset of \$25 would be deducted from the \$93. Both she and M. Pattavina emphasized that although recycling is more costly than incinerating, it is still better for the environment to recycle.

J. Ameen stressed the importance of diverting waste, collecting organic matter, and extending producer responsibility for the lifecycle of packaging – all of which will reduce costs for towns. The FCSWMD helped Whately to set up the first compost recycling in the county, and most local transfer stations now have a place for organic matter—all of which goes to Martin’s Farm in Greenfield. By weight, 25% of our waste is organic, she said. In response to a question, she explained that anaerobic digesters, which process organic matter into slurry, are expensive. Food processing facilities throughout Vermont are effectively using digesters, but the economics of a residential route to pick-up organics are challenging. The FCSWMD implemented a compost cooperative program in Shelburne Falls where restaurants contract for a dumpster for food waste, and is now working on doing so in Turners Falls. Greenfields Market has a commercial composter, and the county jail runs a compost collaborative, too. Attendees were encouraged to contact Amy Donovan at FCSWMD for more information about composting.

Outlining the benefits of extended producer responsibility programs, Ameen cited the PaintCare program of the American Coatings Association, and the potential for an expansion of the bottle bill to include additional types of bottles. Towns are missing out on cost-savings pertaining to the disposal of paint cans and other products (mattresses, for example), as “take-back” programs already exist in other states. Ameen noted the difficulty of reducing packaging waste in general and the need for the legislature to pass a bill to increase the responsibility of manufacturers for reducing packaging. Currently manufacturers externalize the cost of the life cycle of materials in their packaging. Many organizations across the country, including the Product Stewardship Council, are advocating for this type of legislation.

There was further discussion regarding the economics of recycling glass. Municipalities are now considering separating glass from the other containers, at their transfer stations, so that it can be crushed and sold for use in making highway products. The District is seeking grant funding for member towns to purchase glass roll-offs for their transfer stations. The separation of glass at curbside pickup is becoming more common, Ameen noted.

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

5. Presentation on Buckland Green Streets Low Impact Development (LID) Stormwater Project	H. Farrell, Land Use & Natural Resources Planner -- FRCOG
--	---

H. Farrell presented “Buckland Green Streets: An Innovative Stormwater Management Project in the Shelburne Falls Village in Buckland, MA.” She began by comparing sustainable stormwater management (low impact development, or LID) and conventional storm sewers (grey infrastructure). The latter funnels fast-moving runoff from roadways, which collects sediment and pollutants, and typically deposits the runoff into our waterways. In contrast, LID uses a landscape-based approach to maintain natural systems and protect resources. Like undeveloped land, LID projects slow down the rate of runoff, thereby allowing the infiltration process to retain sediment and remove pollutants, Farrell explained. LID is applicable to various climates and settings and is cost-effective. Examples include grass filter strips in parking lots and bio-retention areas which can capture and filter water while providing habitat.

Further, nature-based buffering systems can help us avoid mass failures like those caused by Tropical Storm Irene in the Deerfield Watershed in 2011, H. Farrell continued. Referring to *A Framework for Resilience: Responding to Climate Change in the Deerfield River Watershed (FRCOG, 2019)*, she reviewed the geography of the area, pointing out vulnerable infrastructure and farmland, and proposing strategies to:

- Mitigate stormwater and flash flooding
- Protect soil, vegetation, and wildlife habitat
- Protect infrastructure and public safety
- Reduce non-point source pollution
- Respect community character

The *Framework* articulates a suite of mitigation tools, Farrell noted. A brief discussion of the applicability of porous pavers in various settings led to agreement regarding the importance of site assessment.

H. Farrell described the Buckland site and the proposed project. Shelburne Falls is “shaped like a cereal bowl”, and Crittenden Hill Road creates a great deal of runoff and has numerous high-risk culverts. The turbidity in the Deerfield River is still 10% higher than it was prior to 2011. Farrell noted the high water table and many underground streams in the village. Referring to a map of the area, Farrell presented a concept design featuring roadwork and infrastructure upgrades, and the retrofitting of a water tank (formerly used by the Fire District, but currently defunct) into a bio-retention basin capable of handling significant overflow while providing other benefits. Farrell developed the design in collaboration with the Town Water and Highway Superintendents, and noted that next steps include hiring an engineer, working with the Town on a cost effective design, and seeking State approval. Discussion included the management of invasive plants in the area, and possible funding sources, including MA’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program.

The presentation included maps, graphs, diagrams and photos; see attached. J. Lund’s expression of thanks was followed by a round of applause.

6. Update on FERC Relicensing of Northfield Mountain Hydroelectric Facilities	P. Sloan, Planning Director – FRCOG
--	-------------------------------------

P. Sloan summarized recent events pertaining to the protection of water quality. In August, 2019 the U.S. EPA released a proposed rule that would make significant changes to procedures under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Currently, CWA Section 401 gives states and tribes the right to veto or place conditions on activities requiring a federal license or permit that may result in a discharge. This ensures that projects, such as federal hydropower dam licensing, will not violate state water quality standards. The goals of CWA are to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters.” The Mass and VT Attorneys General signed a letter sent to US EPA objecting to the proposed revisions to section 401, which would “unlawfully curtail state authority” to issue water quality certificates that address impacts from proposed projects. The US EPA has not responded to date.

The proposed changes could impact the FERC and MADEP relicensing process of the Northfield Mountain facility. It is hoped that the MA DEP will have the ability to mitigate some of the impacts of the facility through the 401 water quality permitting process but this may change if the procedures are revised. Also, the request for a rehearing regarding the transferring of the license from First Light to multiple entities was rejected.

7. Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting/Adjourn/Public Comment	J. Lund, Chair - FRPB
---	-----------------------

P. Sloan announced that FRCOG is currently creating a 5-year plan to submit to the U.S. Economic Development Administration for possible funding for economic development projects. Notices have gone out inviting towns to submit their ideas for possible inclusion by March 6th. Economic Development projects identified in this plan as regional priorities are more likely to receive federal or state funding than those that are not. Contact FRCOG’s Jessica Atwood for more information.

There was discussion regarding recent cases where solar developers have argued that they are tax exempt pursuant to State Law Chapter 59 and the State Appellate Tax Board has agreed. Towns could come up short on tax revenues if this issue is not addressed by the State legislature.

J. Basford moved to adjourn the meeting, W. Hachey seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Documents Distributed / Presentations Viewed:

- Agenda
- FRPB Minutes, November 7, 2019 – DRAFT
- Powerpoint presentation by Jan Ameen, Executive Director, Franklin County Solid Waste Management District

- *Buckland Green Streets: An Innovative Stormwater Management Project in the Shelburne Falls Village in Buckland, MA*

The next meeting will be held on March 26, 2020. Copies of all documents are available. Please contact Liz Jacobson-Carroll at ljc@frcog.org or 413-774-3167 x101.

Respectfully submitted,

Gisela Walker, Clerk - FRPB