



# Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## Franklin Regional Planning Board — *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, May 27, 2021 / 6:00 – 7:10 p.m.
Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting ID: 884 3850 2325 <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88438502325?pwd=emhJUCtuQk5jSGdSRlBhc0hnbVdwUT09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88438502325?pwd=emhJUCtuQk5jSGdSRlBhc0hnbVdwUT09</a> Passcode 187273
Facilitators:	Jerry Lund, Chair - FRPB; Peggy Sloan, Planning Director - FRCOG

### FRPB MEMBERS

**Jerry Lund**, Chair, Leyden, At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee

**Julia Blyth**, Clerk, Northfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee, Rep. to the Connecticut River Streambank Erosion Committee

**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

**James Brodeur**, Leyden Select Board

**Marybeth Chichester**, Colrain Planning Board

**Elizabeth Irving**, Montague Planning Board

**Emily Johnson**, Deerfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee

**Richard Nathorst**, Leverett Planning Board

**Charles Olchowski**, Greenfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee

**Phil Pless**, Ashfield At-Large

**Jane Shaney**, Ashfield Planning Board

**David Travers**, Heath Select Board, FRPB representative to the Transportation Planning Organization

**Alec Wade**, Orange Select Board

**John Ward**, Gill Select Board

**Chuck Washer**, Shelburne Select Board, FRPB Rep. to the REPC

### FRCOG STAFF

**Peggy Sloan**, Planning & Development Director; **Liz Jacobson-Carroll**, Administrative Services Assistant;

**Jessica Atwood**, Economic Development Program Manager

### PRESENTERS/GUESTS

**Max Marcus**, The Recorder

<b>1. Introductions and Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes</b>	J. Lund, Chair – FRPB & FRPB Members
---	--------------------------------------

Lund convened the meeting at 6:02 PM. **Lund moved to adopt the 3/25/21 minutes, Basford seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote with abstentions by Blinder, Johnson and Ward.**

<b>2. Presentation and Discussion of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Annual Update 2021</b>	J. Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager - FRCOG
---	---

Atwood reviewed her draft of the CEDS Annual Update 2021, in a revised format and with COVID-19 related information in red. The draft will be posted online through June 4, and presented for endorsement at FRPB meeting on June 24, then submitted to the EDA by June 30. Highlights of the update include:

- A regional economic dashboard containing over a dozen graphs comparing 2018 and 2019 data on the socio-economic characteristics of Franklin County residents; changes in the labor force and employment; and important statistics pertaining to industry and the economy.
- Descriptions, with examples, of a dozen pandemic- related resources for workers and employers provided by federal, state and local entities, including: unemployment assistance and paycheck protection; loans and grants to hard-hit businesses in several sectors; marketing, micro-enterprise and small business assistance programs; and disaster/emergency funds.
- Descriptions, with examples, of three pandemic-related programs offering resources for communities and municipalities: targeting local rapid recovery planning; the Shared Streets and Spaces Program, and funding focused the on the resurgence of public places.
- Mention of the ways in which local businesses pivoted to new ways of operating.

The Action Plan Update section reported on 29 projects supporting: small business through loans and grants, some revolving or unrestricted; innovation at LaunchSpace-North Quabbin and GCC’s rural innovation center; development of the creative and outdoor recreation economies; building food security; planning for public sewer/water systems; downtown strategic planning and improving industrial infrastructure toward redevelopment; reaching the last few communities lacking broadband; ongoing passenger rail and micro-transit projects and planning; workforce training; affordable housing efforts; and economic recovery and resilience planning.

Atwood noted that she had received a new report template from the EDA only hours after completing her draft, and that she would revise the plan accordingly prior to the final review at the June meeting. She listed the investment priorities emphasized in the American Rescue Plan Act of March 2021: equity; recovery and resilience; workforce development; manufacturing; tech-based and environmentally sustainable development; and exports and foreign direct investment. Comments on the Draft 2021 CEDS Annual Report are welcome until 5:00 p.m. on June 4, 2021 she concluded.

<b>3. Update on Floodplain Zoning Bylaws</b>	P. Sloan, Planning Director – FRCOG
--	-------------------------------------

Sloan described a model floodplain bylaw that the State is requiring towns to adopt/incorporate into their existing bylaw in order to continue participation in the National Flood Insurance Program established by the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968. The State is encouraging towns to do so in FY22 and FRCOG staff members are available to assist Planning Boards in doing so. The purpose of the updated Floodplain Overlay District Bylaw is to help to ensure public safety, eliminate hazards to emergency responders, prevent water quality emergencies, avoid the loss of utility services, cut flood response and cleanup costs, and reduce property damage. Sloan provided historical and local context, noting that the official maps are on paper, but that FRCOG has developed GIS resources. Further, she described the required designation of a Community Floodplain Administrator -- an employee of each

municipality – and the associated responsibilities. Discussion addressed the impracticality of this unfunded mandate for rural towns, the lack of a regional option for staffing this position and the need for help from legislators working on rural funding issues. Sloan then described the proposed permit and review process meant to limit development in the floodplain overlay districts. Pless noted that regulations currently distinguish between Floodways and the adjacent areas (Floodway Fringe) of the 100-year floodplain (see diagram from a Federal Flood Insurance Study); a halt to development on the latter would have a dramatic effect, he said. Lund re-iterated the importance of consulting with our legislators including Senators Comerford and Hinds.

<b>4. Update on FERC Relicensing</b>	P. Sloan, Planning Director - FRCOG
--------------------------------------	--

Sloan noted that while a Franklin County delegation met with FirstLight, they are still waiting to receive information regarding the timeline and process. She will provide an update at the next meeting.

<b>5. Nomination and Vote for J. Gross for Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee</b>	J. Lund, Chair – FRPB
---	-----------------------

**Basford made a motion to nominate and elect Jennifer Gross to represent the FRPB on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee, Pless seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.**

<b>6. Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting/Adjourn/Public Comment</b>	J. Lund, Chair - FRPB
---	-----------------------

Sloan reminded members that annual elections to the FRPB will take place at the June meeting, and that the board will be asked to approve the CEDS then, too. She will be in touch regarding whether the June meeting will need to be held in person following the end of the state of emergency on June 15<sup>th</sup>. Sloan anticipates in-person meetings resuming latest by September. She reminded attendees of the FRCOG workshop on short-term residential rental building/zoning/sanitary codes taking place on June 3, 2021.

**Blinder moved to adjourn the meeting, Travers seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.**

Documents Distributed / Presentations Viewed:

- Agenda
- FRPB Minutes, March 25, 2021 – DRAFT
- 2021 Draft CEDS Annual Report, May 27, 2021

The next meeting will be held on June 24, 2021. 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,

Julia Blyth, Clerk - FRPB