



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Franklin Regional Planning Board— *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, June 24, 2021 / 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Location:	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86064286391?pwd=REFwdVQvZjBZN0VXREFGNDJRQVQ0UT09# Meeting ID: 860 6428 6391 Passcode: 246939
Facilitator:	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

Bernard Boudreau, Northfield Select Board

James Brodeur, Leyden Select Board

Ted Cady, Warwick Planning Board, FRPB Executive Committee

Marybeth Chichester, Colrain Planning Board

Ron Coler, Ashfield At-Large

Barry DelCastilho, Buckland Select Board

Jennifer Gross, Wendell Select Board, FRPB Executive Committee

Emily Johnson, Deerfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee

Richard Nathhorst, Leverett Planning Board

Charles Olchowski, Greenfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee

Christopher Parker, Wendell Planning Board

Phil Pless, Ashfield At-Large

Nan Riebschlaeger, Wendell At-Large

Joseph Strzegowski, Conway Planning Board

Mike Shaffer, Erving Planning Board

Don Sluter, Whately Planning 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; **Kimberly Noake McPhee**, Land Use & Natural Resources Program Manager

PRESENTERS/GUESTS - None

1. Introductions and Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes	J. Lund, Chair – FRPB & FRPB Members
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J. Lund convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. **Cady moved to adopt the minutes of the May 27, 2021 meeting, Olchowski seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call with three abstentions (Coler, Gross, Strzegowski).**

2. Review and Vote on 2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Report	J. Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager -- FRCOG
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Atwood reviewed substantive changes to the 2021 CEDS Annual Report since last month when she presented at the May FRPB meeting. The 2021 CEDS Annual Report has been approved by the CEDS Committee and adopted by the FRCCOG Executive Committee/EDD Governing Board. Sections modified or added include:

- Updates to the COVID-19 Pandemic Timeline to include events in May and June of 2021
- Section on COVID-19 Pandemic: Childcare that describes impact on individuals and families
- Section on COVID-19 Pandemic: Manufacturing that highlights employment changes in the first 3 quarters of 2020
- Added information about the Community One Stop for Growth, the State’s new grant application and portal
- Added a Summary of Regional CEDS Economic Conditions, an overview of the chapter’s socio-economic and industry trends
- Added a section called Looking Ahead to make note of items related to the re-opening of the economy that were not previously mentioned, like the potential for substantial tourist traffic following the opening of a large brewery in Deerfield, expanded access to entrepreneurial training and capital, and the implementation of six local Rapid Recovery Plans by the end of August 2021
- Section on COVID-19 Pandemic: Economic Recovery and Resilience Planning
- Reformatted the economic benchmarks and a summary of accomplishments and client success stories
- Added a Challenges and Mitigation section describing the lack of staff capacity and the difficulty of securing funding (sometimes due to process-related regulations) for CEDS projects
- Added Next Steps and Anticipated EDA Assistance section that included the county wide study of public water/wastewater systems and the potential for a study of outdoor recreation on the Deerfield River, among other projects with local governments and non-profit organizations
- Noted any Media Opportunities, including the release of the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan, and funding awards for projects in the Action Plan)
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At Lund’s request, Atwood indicated that the very recent opening of the Community Health Center of Franklin County in Orange would be reported in the 2022 Annual Report. **Cady moved to adopt the 2021 CEDS Annual Report, Shaffer seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call.** Atwood will submit the 2021 CEDS Annual Report to the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) by June 30, 2021.

3. MTWP Regional Adaptation & Resiliency Plan	
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MacPhee used an on-line story map to present ongoing work between FRCOG, municipalities and conservation organizations, begun a decade ago, to increase the climate resiliency of the South River watershed in Conway and Ashfield- including the restoration of natural features and habitat. The “Storymap” will be used by local and state officials, regional boards and residents. The overarching goals of the project include reducing threats to homes, businesses and critical infrastructure from flooding and erosion damages; restoring water quality and wildlife habitat degraded by past river alterations; and increasing resiliency to more frequent and intense storms expected from climate change. MacPhee simultaneously highlighted features of the interactive map and the project itself.

Topics included:

- prevalence of critical facilities and inadequate culverts;
- historic mills and dams; retaining walls, berms, canals, etc.;
- riparian buffers and the changing course of the river, erosion and flooding patterns;
- the mapped river corridor vs. FEMA’s 100-year floodplain;
- successful nature-based solutions recently implemented, including the re-establishment of the South River Meadow as a functioning floodplain;
- other river corridor management and protection tools, such as overlay districts and corridor easements; and
- the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership’s \$1.5 million Regional Adaptation and Resilience Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant.

MacPhee spoke of the challenging regulatory process in MA, noting that VT has been much faster in adopting nature-based solutions. MacPhee concluded by promising that a link to the final Storymap will be sent to FRPB members. Several attendees complemented MacPhee on the successes of the various projects; MacPhee noted the work of colleague Allison Gage in the development of the Storymap.

4. Presentation on the Deerfield Wild & Scenic River Project	C. Olchowski, FRPB Executive Committee
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Olchowski explained the ongoing effort initiated by the Deerfield River Watershed Association to have sections of the Deerfield River studied and potentially designated, by Congress or the Secretary of the Interior, as Wild & Scenic. Local and regional officials, including state representatives, have been supportive thus far. Federal designation could bring \$200,000 annually for conservation and river management allowing appropriate recreational use and related development. Olchowski stated that towns and residents will have opportunities for input following the completion of a feasibility study preceding a Congressional vote for designation. **Sluter made a motion for the FRPB to recommend to the FRCOG Executive Committee that they provide a letter of support to the DRWA for conducting a feasibility study; Cady seconded the motion; and the motion passed unanimously by roll call with one abstention (Olchowski).**

5. Nomination and Vote for FRPB Annual Elections	J. Basford, FRPB Nominating Committee
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Basford read the slate of nominations. **Sluter** moved to vote in favor of all candidates nominated to the FRPB for FY22 as presented; **Cady** seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call.

6. Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting/Adjourn/Public Comment	J. Lund, Chair - FRPB
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Sloan announced the recent State ruling that virtual public meetings will be allowed until April 2022. She will send a survey asking members their preference of meeting modality in advance of the September meeting. Further, she asked that anyone interested in serving on the FRCOG Executive Committee, especially members from West County, to be in touch with her. **Cady moved to adjourn the meeting, Sluter seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously; the meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM.**

Documents Distributed / Presentations Viewed:

- Agenda
- FRPB Minutes, May 27, 2021 – DRAFT
- Deerfield River Wild & Scenic Fact Sheet, DRWA, 11/10/20
- A Climate Resilient South River, A virtual tour of the South River Watershed, FRCOG
- An Introduction to Wild & Scenic Rivers, National Park Service, revised 2019

The next meeting will be held on September 23, 2021. Copies of all documents are available. Please contact Liz Jacobson-Carroll at ljc@frcog.org or 413-774-3167 x101.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Blyth, Clerk - FRPB