



# Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## Franklin Regional Planning Board— *MINUTES*

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| Date & Time: | Thursday, September 23, 2021 / 6:00 – 7:50 p.m.                  |
| Location:    | Zoom Meeting ID: 881 5464 6501                                   |
| 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
- Steven Blinder**, New Salem Planning Board
- Bernard Boudreau**, Northfield Select Board
- Brant Cheikes**, Whately Planning Board
- Marybeth Chichester**, Colrain Planning Board
- Ron Coler**, Ashfield At-Large
- George Moonlight Davis**, Erving Planning Board
- Barry DelCastilho**, Buckland Select Board
- Jennifer Gross**, 1<sup>ST</sup> Vice Chair, Wendell Select Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Wayne Hachey**, New Salem Select Board, FRCOG Council
- Richard Nathhorst**, Leverett Planning Board
- Emily Johnson**, Deerfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Charles Olchowski**, Greenfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Christopher Parker**, Wendell Planning Board
- Phil Pless**, Ashfield At-Large
- Jane Shaney**, Ashfield Planning Board
- Don Sluter**, Whately, At-Large
- Alec Wade**, Orange Select Board
- Analee Wulfkuhle**, Deerfield Planning Board
- Jon Wyman**, Buckland Planning Board
- David Young**, Warwick Select Board

### FRCOG STAFF

- Peggy Sloan**, Planning & Development Director; **Liz Jacobson-Carroll**, Administrative Services Assistant; **Jessica Atwood**, Economic Development Program Manager; **Meghan Rhodes**, Sr. Transportation & Land Use Planner

### PRESENTERS/GUESTS

- Sarah DeStefano, Weston & Sampson
- George Naslas, Weston & Sampson

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| <b>1. Introductions and Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes</b> | J. Lund, Chair – FRPB & FRPB Members |
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J. Lund convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Attendees introduced themselves as they voted on the following motion.

**D. Sluter moved to adopt the 6/24/21 minutes, C. Olchowski seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously, by roll call, with five abstentions (Boudreau, Brandt, Hachey, Shaney, Wulfkuhle).**

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| <p><b>2. Presentation &amp; Discussion on the Regional Brownfield Assessment Program</b></p> | <p>S. DeStefano, G. Naslas –<br/>Weston &amp; Sampson &amp;<br/>J. Atwood, Economic<br/>Development Program<br/>Manager – FRCOG</p> |
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After introducing DeStefano and Naslas, Atwood described the history and goals of the Brownfields program, credited program partners and Brownfield Steering Committee members, and noted several markers of success. The latter include the receipt of highly competitive grant awards (eight EPA Brownfields Assessment Awards and two Clean-Up Revolving Loan & Subgrant Fund awards). These awards have brought approximately \$2.5 million in funding to the region for the assessment and/or clean-up of 73 sites in 22 Franklin County towns since 2002.

DeStefano gave an overview of the methods used by the engineering firm of Weston & Sampson (hired following a public procurement process) to conduct environmental site assessments (ESAs). A Phase I ESA involves historical research, site reconnaissance and surveys, while the Phase II ESA can include a subsurface investigation and sampling of hazardous materials in soils and groundwater or an assessment of interior hazardous building materials. Using three projects as examples, Naslas shared photos of hazardous materials found on-different sites, referenced sampling and assessment techniques, and described various considerations in the development of remediation plans.

Atwood highlighted two significant long-term projects – the assessment of the Wissatinnewag site in Greenfield, and the assessment and clean-up of the Railroad Salvage site in Turners Falls. These sites demonstrate the program’s success in leveraging EPA Region 1 resources. She referenced two additional projects – at the Ramage Paper Mill/Monroe Bridge Overlook and Montague’s Turnpike Road Industrial Area – that have received national recognition. In conclusion, Atwood noted that the FRCOG will soon apply for another EPA Brownfields Assessment grant with the hope of continuing its work with municipalities on the assessment, clean-up and re-development of Brownfield sites.

Topics of discussion included the difficulty of restoring historic buildings and reusing former industrial sites that have become Brownfields, funding the removal of PFAS chemicals, and potential liability issues for towns taking properties with unpaid taxes prior to understanding what potential contamination may exist.

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| <p><b>3. Presentation &amp; Discussion on Culvert Inventory &amp; Assessment</b></p> | <p>M. Rhodes, Senior<br/>Transportation &amp; Land Use<br/>Planner -- FRCOG</p> |
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Rhodes explained that the FRCOG has been conducting culvert assessments for interested county towns in recent years, and that Highway Superintendents, Finance Committees and Select Boards have found them helpful planning tools. Assessments involve significant fieldwork followed by the

development of an interactive GIS map with each culvert’s location georeferenced and information attached including photographs and data regarding the dimensions and condition of each. This enables town officials to incorporate culvert maintenance into their regular work, and repair/replacement into their asset management systems -- and to budget accordingly. Franklin County roads include approximately 10 culverts per mile, she said. Rhodes noted potential funding sources for assessments are District Local Technical Assistance, Community Compact, and Municipal Vulnerability (MVP) programs. For culvert replacement, funding is currently available through the MVP program, MA Division of Ecological Restoration, MassDOT, Chapter 90, and town funds. Additional discussion topics included the pros/cons of bottomless culverts in use in Vermont; FRCOG’s work with Trout Unlimited to develop a culvert right-sizing protocol applicable to individual culverts and possibly on a town-wide scale; and the federal infrastructure bill, which may prompt the funneling of money for transportation-related projects to towns through the state. Rhodes offered FRCOG staff assistance in applying for grants, and noted that getting repair/replacement designs done now may position towns well to receive federal infrastructure funding in the relatively near future.

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| <p><b>4. Presentation &amp; Discussion on Municipal ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plans</b></p> | <p>M. Rhodes, Senior Transportation &amp; Land Use Planner -- FRCOG</p> |
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Rhodes described FRCOG’s work assisting towns in the development of ADA Self-Evaluations and Transition Plans (required under Title II of the ADA), which include prioritized plans for improvements and identifies the party responsible for each. She noted that the completion of these plans can help protect towns from potential lawsuits. The cost to towns has been in the range of \$10,000-15,000, and covers compliance in all buildings and facilities (sidewalks, parks, etc.) and programs, including the town website and other communications. A. Wade indicated that Orange is already seeing the benefits of its 2020 ADA Transition Plan in its receipt of \$40,000 for its water treatment facility building. Rhodes indicated that these plans are important components of both Community Development Block Grant and Complete Streets applications.

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| <p><b>5. Nomination and Vote for J. Blyth for FRCOG Executive Committee, for D. Sluter for FRPB At-Large Member, and for M. Chichester (Colrain) and D. Sluter (Whately) for the FRPB Executive Committee</b></p> | <p>J. Lund, Chair - FRPB</p> |
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**D. Young motioned to nominate and elect Julia Blyth to the FRCOG Executive Committee, D. Sluter seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.**

**B. Cheikes motioned to nominate and elect Don Sluter to the FRPB as an At-Large member, W. Hachey seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.**

**W. Hachey motioned to nominate and elect Marybeth Chichester and Don Sluter to the FRPB Executive Committee, J. Blythe seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.**

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| <p><b>6. FERC Update / Other Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting/Adjourn</b></p> | <p>J. Lund, Chair – FRPB &amp; P. Planning Director -- FRPB</p> |
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Sloan reported that First Light is re-opening its settlement discussion with stakeholders under a confidentiality agreement. The discussions are focused on recreational facilities associated with the Northfield Mountain pump storage and the Turners Falls hydroelectric facilities.

Sloan thanked members for their input regarding course offerings from the Community Planner Training Collaborative, noted that FRCOG will host a session in November, and encouraged members to take advantage of the convenience of this year's all-online offerings.

Sloan welcomed new members Davis and Cheikes.

**Sluter moved to adjourn the meeting, Olchowski seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.**

Documents Distributed / Presentations Viewed:

- Agenda
- FRPB Minutes, June 24, 2021 – DRAFT
- *FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program* (Atwood, Naslas and DeStefano, 9/23/21)
- *Culvert Inventories & Assessments* (Rhodes, 9/23/21)
- *ADA Self-Evaluations & Transition Plans* (Rhodes, 9/23/21)

The next meeting will be held on November 4, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. 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