



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Franklin Regional Planning Board— *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, June 23, 2022 / 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting ID: 836 2469 1300
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
- Sam Birch**, Wendell At-Large
- Brant Cheikes**, Whately Planning Board
- Marybeth Chichester**, Colrain Planning Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Ann-Mary Cloutier**, Deerfield Planning Board
- Emily Johnson**, Deerfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee, FRCOG Executive Committee
- Mariak Kurtz**, Erving Select Board
- Richard Nathorst**, Leverett Planning Board
- Charles Olchowski**, Greenfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Jane Shaney**, Ashfield Planning Board
- Don Sluter**, At-Large Whately, FRPB Executive Committee (arrived after vote on agenda item #1)
- David Travers**, Heath Select Board, FRPB representative to the Transportation Planning Organization
- Marguerite Willis**, Charlemont Select Board

FRCOG STAFF

- Jessica Atwood**, Economic Development Program Manager
- Keith Barnicle**, Economic Development Special Projects Planner
- Liz Jacobson-Carroll**, Administrative Services Assistant;

PRESENTERS/GUESTS

- MJ Adams**, City of Greenfield
- Val Reid**, Charlemont Select Board

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. Members introduced themselves, then voted on the previous meeting minutes.

J. Blythe moved to adopt the 5/26/22 minutes, D. Travers seconded the motion, and the motion passed by roll call with four abstentions (Cloutier, Kurtz, Shaney, Willis).

2. Presentation and Vote on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Report	J. Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager
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Atwood referenced FRCOG’s designation as a federal Economic Development District, and the CEDS Program’s role in maintaining the region’s eligibility for certain U.S. Economic Development Administration (US EDA) funding programs. Key to this, she noted, is the endorsement of the CEDS Annual Report (the 2nd of 4 on the 2020-2025 CEDS Plan) by the CEDS Committee, the FRCOG Executive Committee, and the Franklin Regional Planning Board. Atwood provided an overview of the report, including sections pertaining to goals & objectives, socio-economic data, progress on particular projects, and pandemic-related concerns and initiatives. Socio-economic data from the U.S. Census Bureau reflects continued population decline, an aging and predominantly white, not Hispanic/Latino population, a relatively small private for-profit employment sector, and flat per-capital income. Atwood presented graphs depicting employment trends, single-family home sales and prices, average annual pay by county, and statistics regarding key industry sectors and clusters. She noted several economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic outlined in the report. These include: the strain on childcare programs resulting in loss of earnings, productivity and tax revenues; the growth in the local health care/social assistance/prevention sector; and the receipt of millions in business and community recovery funds for numerous programs (paycheck protection, loans, sector-specific grants, planning, etc.) in the region. Key project updates highlighted included increased access to capital, a federal earmark, the regional arts and recreation sector work, infrastructure investments, industrial development planning, transportation and transit projects, and workforce initiatives. Once endorsed, the annual report will be submitted to the US EDA to meet a 6/30/22 deadline.

In response to questions about policy, Atwood explained that the five-year CEDS Plan guides economic development activities in the region and that FRCOG is also involved on the statewide Rural Policy Advisory Commission. There was discussion regarding the lack of availability of data pertaining to the sales of homes that are owner-occupied vs. those purchased as 2nd homes; the impact of the expanded short-term rental market on the availability of long-term rental housing in the area; and of the region’s much-improved (and still growing) broadband accessibility. The annual report will be on-line, but hard copies are available upon request, Atwood concluded.

D. Sluter moved to endorse the CEDS Annual Report, M. Kurtz seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously, by roll call.

3. Presentation and Discussion of the Franklin County Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan (ERRP) and Framework	J. Atwood, Economic Development Prog. Mgr. & K. Barnicle, Economic Development Special Projects Planner
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Barnicle introduced the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan (ERRP), the first of its kind for the region, made possible through Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (US EDA). The goal for the plan was to capture the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic in order to document them for future economic emergencies. The ERRP outlines specific recovery-related tasks undertaken and identifies long-term strategies for building resiliency. Barnicle clarified that the ERRP is *not* a public-safety emergency response plan; its focus is on the response to economic shocks caused by natural disasters or other

emergencies induced by human activity. The ERRP includes a general overview of federal, regional and municipal government responses, and documents the various forms of funding available. Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic thus far include: a recognition that existing challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and equity imbalances are exacerbated by emergencies; that clear and frequent communication is important; that transparency and flexibility are essential; and that businesses should build capacity now to enable them to shift business models, technology, etc. as needed. The framework outlines a path to respond to an economic emergency: convening and coordinating partners; assessing existing resources and advocating for those still needed; preparing and launching new programs and services; collecting and communicating information via a single clearinghouse that is objective and trusted; and deploying services through a regional business recovery center. A key takeaway, Barnicle noted, is that regional economic development agencies should work together to identify stakeholders, devise a strategic plan for collaboration, and articulate a communication plan – before disaster strikes. To this end, the ERRP identifies contacts, existing services and additional services that could be employed in response to an emergency (as resources and capacity allow) by nine regional organizations and local municipalities. The document also includes guidance for economic development organizations and the business community regarding emergency preparedness planning, crisis communications, and considerations for temporary relocation.

The ERRP and Framework include a section that identifies vulnerabilities and suggests long-term resiliency strategies in three categories:

1. Reversing population decline: marketing the region for business development; enhancing efforts to make the region more hospitable to communities of color and a younger demographic; increasing the availability of affordable housing
2. Improving strategic infrastructure: providing technical assistance to municipalities and infrastructure districts, such as those operating water and wastewater facilities; and supporting regional planning work related to digital equity, downtown revitalization, and industrial real estate
3. Developing businesses in the private sector: identifying opportunities to better foster entrepreneurship and economic self-sufficiency; developing industry-specific toolkits to support business recovery, growth and resiliency (like those recently done by Cape Cod Commission); continue coordinating and marketing the programs and resources of the existing business development eco-system

Discussion touched on the potential for more in-depth planning for specific types of emergencies (such as a cyber-attack), the possibility of coordinating a shared economic recovery center where business managers and individual workers could get information and access services. Adams stressed the value of work done by Atwood during the pandemic to collect, organize and synthesize the “firehose of information”, that helped the City of Greenfield respond to the economic hardship of the pandemic. Johnson suggested that towns identify, on their websites, individuals to whom small business owners could turn to in an emergency. Lund noted the importance of Select Boards’ authority in responding to economic emergencies.

Barnicle will distribute the plan to framework partners, and post it on the FRCOG website. He will let FRPB members know if FRCOG’s recent application to the EDA for a grant to fund some of this work is successful. He plans to update the ERRP annually.

4. Nomination and Vote for the 2022-23 FRPB Annual Elections	C. Olchowski, FRPB Nominating Committee
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C. Olchowski read and then made a motion to vote to elect the slate of nominations as presented; M. Chichester seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously by roll call.

5. Brief Update on FERC Relicensing Process	
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Tabled.

6. Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting/Adjourn/Public Comment	J. Lund, Chair - FRPB
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J. Blythe motioned to adjourn, D. Sluter seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 7:24 PM.

Documents Distributed / Presentations Viewed:

- Agenda
- FRPB Minutes, May 26, 2022 – DRAFT
- 2022-06-23 FRPB Presentation (by K. Barnicle and J. Atwood)
- FRPB 2022-23 Nominations - Final 6-6-22

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 22, 2022. 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



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

FRANKLIN REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD NOMINATIONS 2022-2023

Nominating Committee: Charlie Olchowski - Greenfield, Emily Johnson - Deerfield and Jeff Lacy - Shutesbury

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Jerry Lund, Chair Leyden	Ms. Jennifer Gross, 1 st Vice Chair Wendell
Ms. Julia Blyth, Clerk Northfield	Mr. Charles Olchowski, 2 nd Vice Chair Greenfield
Ms. Marybeth Chichester Colrain	Ms. Emily Johnson, Deerfield
Mr. Donald Sluter Whately	Mr. Jeff Lacy Shutesbury
Mr. Michael Shaffer Erving	

REPRESENTATIVE TO THE FRANKLIN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS & FRCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ms. Emily Johnson, Deerfield

REPRESENTATIVES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs) COMMITTEE

Ms. Jennifer Gross, Wendell

*REPRESENTATIVE TO THE REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING
COMMITTEE*

Mr. Chuck Washer, Shelburne

*REPRESENTATIVE TO THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION
(TPO)*

Mr. David Travers, Heath

AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Ms. Julia Blyth Northfield, MA Expires 06/25	Ms. Zara Dowling New Salem, MA Expires 6/25
Mr. Sam Birch Wendell, MA Expires 06/25	Mr. Mike Shaffer Erving, MA Expires 6/25