



RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

RUTLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2024, 5:30 PM

MEETING DETAILS

Virtual: [Teams Meeting](#), ID: 226 664 661 864, Pass: qCPd89 | Call: 1-802-440-1368, ID: 485 980 535#
In-Person: The Opera House, 3rd Floor, 67 Merchants Row, Rutland, VT 05701

ATTENDANCE

(X = in person) (V = virtual attendance)

TOWN	NAME		TOWN	NAME	
Benson	Cheryl Murray	V	Pawlet	Harley Cudney	V
Brandon	Dan Snow	V	Pittsford	David Atherton	V
Castleton	Michael Jones	V	Poultney	Sarah Pelkey	X
Chittenden	Jan Sotirakis	V	Proctor	Bruce Baccei	X
Clarendon	Dave Potter	X	Rutland City	Kiana McClure	
Danby	John Mykleburst		Rutland Town	Dave Sears	
Fair Haven			Shrewsbury	Marc Cimonetti	
Hubbardton	Janet Morey		Sudbury		
Ira	Larry Tagart		Tinmouth	Sherry Johson	V
Killington	Abby Sherman	V	Wallingford	Bruce Dobbins	
Mendon	Larry Courcelle		Wells		
Middletown Springs	William Reed		West Haven	John Garrison	
Mount Holly	Clinton Wooley		West Rutland	Sean Barrows	X

Guests: Faith Dall (VTrans)

Staff: Ethan Pepin, Nic Stark

MEETING MINUTES

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made.

2. APPROVAL OF MARCH 28TH AGENDA

Motion by Sotirakis to approve the agenda. Second by Atherton. Approved by voice vote.



RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

3. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 29TH MINUTES

Motion by Sotirakis to approve the minutes. Second by Atherton. Approved by voice vote.

4. OPEN TO PUBLIC

No public comments.

5. TAC ROUNDTABLE

Pepin gave an introduction on the discussion topic, which was to evaluate the usefulness of previous TAC presentations as well as solicit feedback on what would be helpful going forward to make the Rutland TAC more effective. Sotirakis noted that she found some of the presentations interesting and informative, but she felt she did not get a great picture of what was happening on the State level around transportation. Sotirakis noted she had heard a lot about federal infrastructure money through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) but didn't have a grasp on how it was been disbursed. Sotirakis received questions about it from the Select Board but didn't have a good answer. Chair Barrows suggested inviting Representative Shaw to the June meeting so discuss the session right when it wrapped up. Pepin noted transportation work has been slower this session due to the Senate Transportation Committee Chair having health issues which has presented him from attending fully. Cudney echoed Sotirakis' comments, noting he would like to get more of a sense for State level funding opportunities and larger projects. Cudney noted that as a member of the Planning Commission, he is not as directly involved with the Highway Department. While he has found the presentations informative and educational, he is not always sure how to advance things on his end. Pepin said that they would be having District 3 Administrator Chris Taft at the next meeting and that would be a great time to dive into some of the nuts and bolts of town highway/structure grants, most of which are run directly through the District. Atherton pointed out that VTrans Show Me The Money Guide, which provides an overview of all VTrans grant programs. Pepin noted that he presented on all the VTrans grant programs to the TAC previously. Pepin also noted that some of the IIJA grant programs had funding thresholds which was too high for most regional projects, apart from major ones. Pepin said he has been hesitant to highlight these grants too much as he has been advised by FHWA that some are "not really Vermont scale". Murray talked about how she found the town sharing section to be especially valuable as it gave an opportunity to learn about other communities, as well as talk about the 22A project in Benson. Murray also echoed the value of learning about grants, saying that sometimes she brought them to the highway crew and they were already aware, but sometimes not. Pepin suggested that adding a standing agenda item for grants would be useful since they are usually announced during announcements, but sometimes they can slip off the radar. Murray further noted that she would appreciate hearing more about what was happening in her own town, as many TAC members are not directly involved with the government. Pepin said he would try his best, but also added that the Regional Planning Commission is typically only involved with things upon request from the town. Pelkey said that she also feels a bit of disconnect between information received at the TAC and what highway departments are interested in. Pelkey has asked their highway department about what they want to know more about in preparation for this meeting, and they said knowing more about locally available road surface materials and winter sand. Pelkey said this was typical of the more fine-grained focus of highway departments on materials and maintenance. Pelkey noted that



RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

she found some of the information, such as traffic calming useful to her municipal work in economic development, but she sometimes felt like she wasn't really accomplishing much by being there and would appreciate having more of a concrete project to work on like a regional priorities list. Pepin said that was a great point and something he agreed with, noting that the typical project selection process which the TAC engaged in (VPSP2) had been put on hold by VTrans, but since the RPC was starting work on the Regional Plan, that would provide a great opportunity to do that work at that level and give the TAC a much more concrete project to work on and advance. Chair Barrow put out the idea about forming a TAC subcommittee devoted to Regional Plan review so those interested and with more time to devote could dig more into the details and keep the full TAC at a higher level of involvement. Chair Barrows noted that TAC is really meant to be more focused on planning and high-level policy that isn't always interesting to Highway Departments. Chair Barrows also noted that there was a separate group just for Highway Departments which is the best place for the more fine-grained issue like procuring materials or equipment. Chair Barrows resolved to work with Pepin on reviving those meetings. Sotirakis noted that in Chittenden, transportation and emergency management planning were both well integrated and not siloed and that could be a model for other communities. Pepin noted that there is siloing around these areas even in the RPC. Potter noted that advocating for projects was a key role of TAC and something he has done both in the legislature and in TAC. Potter further noted that the TAC needed to review past priorities and determine if they were still priorities. Pelkey said that there were a lot of other committees and boards that work on transportation issues in the region, and it would be good to network with them more or even have them be represented. Chair Barrows noted that in previous years the Bus and airport had representatives but that had fallen by the wayside. Chair Barrows noted that the dynamic with hybrid meetings was different. Pepin noted that it was different and had some positives and suggested that perhaps the TAC should have one in person meeting a year so all the reps could gather in person. Chair Barrows noted that the TAC had field trips before touring the airport and that could be a great reason for a in person meeting. Potter discussed how the TAC could be a better advocacy group, highlighting the planned move of the VTrans central training facility which was in a flood plain. Potter also suggested maybe devoting meetings to a specific project would be good. Atherton noted that folks should not be gun shy about applying for funding to improve flood prone infrastructure even if was not damaged. Atherton said he was happy to provide advice to any communities considering this. Atherton also noted that if VTrans was suspending their project prioritization program, then maybe the TAC should just do it anyway. Sean noted that there were some specific paving projects that were coming up which have not been discussed at TAC, which would be good to be in the loop on, such as the Rutland City paving project. Atherton agreed and said the TAC should be advocating for everyone's needs and supporting each other. Pepin noted that he was still only about 1.5 years into the job and still had plenty to learn, especially from other TAC members. Atherton suggested that knowing the right contacts at VTrans is key. Dall agreed with Ethan, noting that she was still early in her job as a Planning Coordinator, and she was taking lots of notes on how best VTrans could support the TAC.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS



RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Pepin announced that Grants in Aid was now open, and towns merely had to submit a letter of interest to be eligible. Barrows announced that the Tier 2 training for Rivers and Roads was coming up which was highly recommended for TAC members and Highway Departments alike. Sherman noted that she had just sent two of her road crew up for a training on road fundamentals. Pepin asked if everyone was familiar with the Vermont Local Roads listserv as it was a great resource for learning more about this. Baccei said he was not familiar with it.

7. TOWN UPDATES

Sherman announced that Killington was moving forward with the major Killington Road reconstruction project, starting with the segment that begins at the US4 intersection, and it would be closed for several weeks. Pepin asked if everyone was okay to move the next meeting to Wednesday so Christopher Taft could join. No issues were raised. Murray announced that the town garage of Benson had finally been torn down and the new construction was underway. Jones asked if anyone had experience working with a Transportation Alternative Grant to construct a salt and sand shed. Atherton said Pittsford recently did and he would be happy to connect on that.

8. ADJOURN

Adjourned at 6:32 PM.

Respectively submitted by Ethan Pepin