



# RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

## RRPC BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

TUESDAY, April 21, 2026, 7:00 PM

### MEETING DETAILS

Virtual: [Teams Meeting](#), ID: 224 634 587 902, Pass: dBEdSy | Call: 1-8024401368, ID: 641278173#

In-Person: 16 Evelyn Street, Second Floor, Rutland, VT 05701

### MEETING ATTENDANCE

(x = in person) (v = virtual)

TOWN	NAME	
Benson	Cheryl Murray	
Brandon	Jack Schneider	X
Castleton	Liz Mackay	V
Chittenden	Abigail Bradish	V
Clarendon	Brownson Spencer	X
Danby	Andrea Stoddard	V
Fair Haven	Bob Richards	
Hubbardton	Robert Gibbs	X
Ira	Bob Kirbach	V
Killington	Lisa Davis Lewis	
Mendon	Larry Courcelle	X
Middletown Springs	Steven Harrington	
Mount Holly	Jessica Metcalfe	V
Mount Tabor		
Pawlet	Linda Lynton	V
Pittsford	Ann Reed	X
Poultney	Paul Donaldson	
Proctor	Richard Horner	

TOWN	NAME	
Rutland City	David Allaire	X
Rutland Town	Dimitrio Gagnon	V
Shrewsbury	Laura Black	X
Sudbury	Barbara Somson	V
Tinmouth	Judy Gilmore	V
Wallingford	Erika Berner	X
Wells	Francis Gilman	X
West Haven	Kerry Ellis	
West Rutland	Leona Minard	
ACI-Natural Resources	Hilary Solomon	
Ex-Officio- CEDRR	Sarah Pelkey	V
Ex-Officio- CEDRR		
Ex-Officio- TAC		
Ex-Officio- RRWIB		

**Staff:** Devon Neary(v), Mary Kay Skaza, Karen Hill, Maggie O'Brien, Steffanie Bourque

**Guests:** NA



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## MEETING MINUTES

### 1. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order by Chair Black at 7:11 pm.

### 2. APPROVAL OF APRIL 21<sup>st</sup> AGENDA

**Motion to approve the April 21<sup>st</sup> agenda by Spencer. Second by Reed. Approved by voice vote.**

### 3. APPROVAL OF MARCH 17<sup>th</sup> MINUTES

**Motion to approve March 17<sup>th</sup> minutes by Spencer. Second by Allaire. Approved by voice vote.**

### 4. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No comments from guests.

### 5. FEBRUARY 2026 FINANCIAL REPORT

Skaza reviewed the February 2026 Financials. Report for informational purposes only.

### 6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

#### A. Staffing Update

The RRPC is excited to announce that all three open planning positions have now been filled. Will Austin, formerly Assistant Planner in Killington, has joined the RRPC as Land Use Planner. He began on April 6 and is already supporting municipal planning and zoning, as well as transportation and water quality initiatives. Fredi Hayes, former Town Administrator in Highgate, joined the RRPC as Workforce and Economic Development Planner on April 13 and is currently onboarding into the WORC6 Workforce in Motion Academy. Lastly, the RRPC has hired a new Natural Resources Planner that will start in mid-May. These new team members and look forward to the expertise and energy they will bring to the Region.

#### B. Planning Director Announcement

The RRPC is pleased to announce the promotion of Steffanie Bourque to Planning Director. In this new senior leadership role, Steffanie will support program coordination, project delivery, and staff development across the organization, helping to strengthen internal systems and advance key initiatives. This transition will also allow Devon to spend more time working directly with municipal leadership, advancing strategic initiatives, coordinating regional and statewide partnerships, and continuing to expand his role as VAPDA Chair.



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- C. **Municipal Training Series – Essentials of Planning & Land Use**  
The RRPC invites municipalities to participate in the Essentials of Planning & Land Use Municipal Training Series, a three-part training opportunity for municipal officials hosted by the Rutland, Mount Ascutney, and Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commissions. These sessions provide practical, high-level guidance on municipal planning, plan implementation, and land use regulations. Each session begins at 6:00 PM, with both in-person and virtual attendance options available for participants in the Rutland Region. Training will be held on April 16 (Municipal Planning), May 21 (Plan Implementation), and June 18 (Land Use Regulations).
- D. **Flood Safety Act Webinar**  
The RRPC is partnering with regional and state partners to host a Flood Safety Act Webinar: Statewide and Local Efforts to Address Flooding in Rutland County and the Otter Creek Watershed on April 29 at 6:00 PM. The RRPC will also offer an in-person attendance option. This webinar will provide an overview of the work and goals of local organizations, the 2024 Flood Safety Act and its watershed-wide approach to flood resilience, and Vermont’s new statewide river corridor protections. Participants can register at:  
[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/le4E0U\\_USfWz7-7HQ-2jdA](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/le4E0U_USfWz7-7HQ-2jdA)
- E. **National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Board Appointment**  
Devon has been nominated to and accepted a position on the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Board of Directors, where he will join three other Vermont RPC Directors. NADO represents over 500 regional development organizations nationwide and advocates federal policies and programs that support community and economic development. In this role, Devon will help guide national policy priorities and represent the interests of Vermont and rural regions.
- F. **Act 250 / Act 181 – Road Construction Jurisdiction Guidance**  
Beginning July 1, 2026, the construction of roads and associated driveways may trigger Act 250 jurisdiction, with certain statutory exemptions for municipal, state, utility, farm, and forestry roads. Under Act 181, the Land Use Review Board (LURB) is developing guidance to clarify implementation, including exemptions, definitions of pre-existing roads, and distinctions between roads and driveways. A draft guidance document is currently available, and LURB is accepting public comment through April 30, 2026, via mail or email at [Act250.Comments@vermont.gov](mailto:Act250.Comments@vermont.gov). A finalized draft is anticipated in early May.
- G. **Act 181 / S.325 Legislative Updates**



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S.325 is proposed legislation that amends Act 181 to provide technical clarification, improve implementation, and offer greater transitional certainty without changing the core policy direction. The bill extends key Act 250 exemptions for housing development, including priority housing projects, and delays implementation timelines for the road rule, Tier 3 areas, and Criterion 8 to allow additional time for rulemaking and municipal readiness. It also expands eligibility for priority housing in growth areas, advances Tier 3 rulemaking authority, and streamlines regional plan amendment and Tier 1B processes. Overall, S.325 is intended to refine and support the effective rollout of Act 181 while providing additional time and clarity for communities and the State. The bill was passed by the Senate is available at: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Docs/BILLS/S-0325/S-0325%20As%20Passed%20by%20the%20Senate%20Unofficial.pdf>

## H. Regional Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Initiative

Maggie O'Brien, Emergency Management Planner, in collaboration with Eric Pulver from the Vermont Department of Health, has applied to the Land Access and Opportunity Board

(LAOB) Community Resilience Hub Grants to support the Rutland Regional Emergency Management Committee and Rutland Regional Disaster Cooperative (REMC/COAD) Regional Support Network. The initiative builds on existing emergency management structures and the Region's "neighbors helping neighbors" approach by identifying municipal needs, connecting them with capable partner organizations, and developing a coordinated support network. Funding would support a regional needs assessment, identification of sector-based partners, development of coordinated response linkages, and continued municipal engagement in building local resilience.

## 7. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Maggie O'Brien, Emergency Management Planner, provided an overview of the Emergency Management Program, including the new Rutland Region Disaster Cooperative (RRDC). The RRDC has partnered with the VDH to host a series of sub-region exercises as the first phase of this project. The RRDC has also applied to a Land Access and Opportunity Board (LAOB) capacity grant to fund this project in the absence of EMPG funding from FEMA.

## 8. REGIONAL PLAN UPDATE

Steffanie Bourque, Program Director, Provided the Regional Plan Update. The final public hearing is scheduled for May 19, 2026, following the first public hearing held on March 17, 2026. Since that initial hearing, the RRDC has made targeted updates to the Regional Future Land Use Map based on municipal feedback and continued



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coordination with state partners. No other substantive changes have been made to the proposed 2026 Rutland Regional Plan.

As part of the public process, official warnings for the final hearing were distributed on April 14, 2026. These notifications included town-specific memoranda detailing changes to the Regional Future Land Use Map to ensure municipalities clearly understood how updates may affect local planning priorities and future development opportunities. This approach reflects the RRPC's commitment to transparency, regional coordination, and locally informed decision-making.

To support accessibility and public engagement, the RRPC has updated its regional plan webpage ([rutlandrpc.org/plan2026](http://rutlandrpc.org/plan2026)) with comprehensive materials related to the final hearing. These resources include the final draft Regional Plan, final draft Future Land Use Map, a regional plan report demonstrating compliance with state requirements, and a detailed description of map changes. In addition, the webpage features interactive tools that allow users to compare the final hearing draft map with both the first public hearing draft and the earlier preapplication draft. An Act 181 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has also been developed to help stakeholders better understand recent statutory changes and their implications for regional and municipal planning.

The May 19, 2026, meeting represents a critical milestone, as the RRPC Board of Commissioners will be asked to formally adopt the 2026 Rutland Regional Plan. Adoption requires a quorum and an affirmative vote of at least 60 percent of commissioners.

## 9. REGIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Chair Berner reported that the committee reviewed One (1) Act 250 application and tabled Two (2) Section 248 petitions. The Act 250 application [1R0661-18](#), seeks approval for construction of a 180,995 square foot building (Walmart Supercenter Store), located in Rutland Town. The project includes building construction, a parking lot with 751 spaces with dedicated grocery pick up area, shopping cart storage, lighting, landscaping, on-site stormwater treatment system, and connections to municipal water and sewer. The project will utilize access from the existing Diamond Run Mall Road Place off of VT Route 7. Representatives from the Property Developer and the Walmart Corporation provided project status updates to the committee. The representatives shared steps taken to address impacts to the local economy, transportation, the environment, and municipal services.



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**Motion by Berner to send a letter of significant regional impact and conformance with the regional plan to the Act 250 District Commission for project 1R0661-18.  
Second by Reed. Approved by voice vote.**

10. EXECUTIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Black reported that the Committee had met on April 13<sup>th</sup> to review the Financial and Executive Director's reports, the regional plan update and review the agenda for the Board of Commissioners meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

11. COMMISSIONER ROUNDTABLE

No discussion

12. ADJOURN

**Motion to adjourn by Allaire. Second by Berner. Meeting adjourned at 8:14 pm.**

*Respectively submitted by Karen Hill*

*A recording of this meeting can be found at:  
[www.rutlandrpc.org/board-and-committees-meeting-materials/](http://www.rutlandrpc.org/board-and-committees-meeting-materials/).*