

Strafford Select Board and the Strafford Planning Commission  
Joint Meeting  
December 6, 2017 at the Morrill Education Center

Select board members present: John Freitag, acting chair, Tony Pippy, Brian Johnson, Kate Siepmann. The planning commission was represented by Stephen Campbell, chair and member of TRORC board, Martha Walke, and Michael Scanlan.

Members of the public: Janet Cavanaugh, Kevin Grady, Lauri Berkenkamp, and John Echeverria, also from the TRORC board.

Peter Gregory, executive director of Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC).

John Freitag called the meeting to order at 7 o'clock and turned the meeting over to Peter Gregory, who came to explain the functions of TRORC to the Select and Planning boards.

Vermont is divided into 11 regional planning commissions of which TRORC is one. TRORC serves 30 communities ranging from Topsham in the north to Plymouth in the south, Hancock to the west and Fairlee to the east. It is governed by a Board of Directors composed of representatives from all member towns. The board meets 9 times a year. Member towns pay dues of \$1.34 per capita. Strafford pays about \$1200 per year. Additional funding comes from the state 25% and the federal government 75%.

TRORC is charged with assisting its member towns with an array of services including consultation on land-use, identifying land-use resources, water quality issues, assisting towns with town plans and permitting and adoption processes, Act 250 issues and technical assistance. Among the specific issues addressed were:

- A pending bill in the state legislature that would turn Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) into "councils of government" to coordinate a system of mutual aid among towns by sharing expertise and equipment. Towns may opt in or out on a project by project basis. The aim is simply to provide better services for less money.
- Act 250 and its effectiveness in controlling large scale, intensive development. Act 250 relies on specific wording in town and regional plans to be clear about what is and is not allowed within their boundaries. Without proper language in the Town and Regional Plans, Act 250 alone cannot be the determining law.
- Wind turbines. Towns can decide and make a case for or against the use of wind turbines to TRORC for an assessment of how Strafford does or does not conform to the state's planning goals.
- Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP). Beginning next year the Agency for Natural Resources will implement a general permit covering stormwater discharges from all town roads, classes 1-4. This will involve ongoing inventories of road erosion, catch basins, and culverts and a plan for long-term maintenance to comply with the Vermont Clean Water Act.
- A question was asked as to who monitors progress in terms of water quality, phosphorus reduction. Peter Gregory admitted that there is not a lot of data being generated at this time but that the department of agriculture keeps an inventory of water quality threats.

After some further but inconclusive discussions of whether there will be mandates for carbon reduction a regional carbon tax, pollution fees? Would the measure for state-mandated energy reduction by 2050 be measured town by town?

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM. There being only one all-electric Tesla in town, all concerned exited to their fully or partially petroleum-powered vehicles.

Faithfully submitted,

Kate Siepmann, Recording Clerk