

New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions
Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2025
1:00-3:00PM
John Andrews Room
NH Municipal Association Building
25 Triangle Park Drive
Concord, NH

1. Welcome and Introductions

At 1:00 PM Chair Peter Griffin called the meeting to order and asked for introductions.

In attendance: Peter Griffin, SNHPC; UVLSRPC; Tim Moore, RPC; Jerry Coogan, UVLSRPC; Paul Rasmussen, SRPC; Jen Czysz, SRPC; Matt Baronas, CNRPC; Megan Taylor-Fetter, SRPC; David Walker, RPC; Sylvia Von Aulock, SNHPC; Bill Chaisson, UVLSRPC; Sandy Crystall, CNHRPC; Sarah Wrightsman, SRPC; Michelle Morin Grey, NCC

Attending on Zoom: Todd Horner, SWRPC; Meghan Butts, UVLSRPC; Shanna Saunders, LRPC; Suzanne Neinaber, SNHPC; Christine Robidoux, SWRPC

Guests: Heather Shank and Janel Lawton, NHBEA

2. Action Items

a. Review and Approval of the September 24, 2025 Minutes

T. Moore moved to approve the minutes of September 24, 2025 as written. P. Rasmussen seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor. S. Crystall abstained.

3. Presentation: RecReady NH Planning Guide

H. Shank and Janael Lawton demonstrated how to navigate the RecReady website, highlighting that the guide is designed to serve as an evolving, long-term resource with tools, case studies, and other materials that will be updated over time. The group also briefly discussed and praised the quality of the artwork featured in the guide.

When asked about next steps, the discussion centered on the need for facilitation and potential resources to help communities pilot projects. Participants were encouraged to work with their Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), as the state does not currently have funding available to provide additional planning support.

Budget considerations were noted, particularly that support may be possible when projects have a transportation connection—for example, a rail trail. Without that nexus, funding opportunities are limited. RPCs can also provide trail counters to help communities measure and understand year-round usage of their recreational assets.

4. Legislative Updates

N. Hodgetts stated that the LSR sign-off process is underway. In the House, all Senate bill language has been published, while only about 50% of the House bill language is currently available. Both the House and Senate have acted on all bills that were carried over and have filed their reports.

N. Hodgetts provided an update on the following bills carried forward from the prior year:

- HB 459, SB 84 bills to regulate lot sizes have been sent to interim study, can't come back in 2026
- HB 639, relative to the use of and disputes over blockchain and digital currencies, which was going to restrict ability to restrict digital asset mining/cryptocurrency in zoning was sent to interim study
- HB 244: Moves all references to building code adoption and building codes from the planning and zone statutes into 155-A, is going forward, will have vote in early 2026.

The Zoning Enabling Act study commission has met 3 times to date, starting to get into more substantive conversations, about modifications to be made such as moving references such as pattern zoning to the innovative land use controls section (674:21). The commission is also looking at opportunities where statutes could be streamlined to make less confusing.

Looking forward, there are many proposed bills that would make changes to or repeal items enacted last year, some are purely technical in nature such as clarifying that manufactured housing can't be used as an ADU. N. Hodgetts commented that, in general, for nearly every bill proposing a new action or requirement, there appears to be another bill introduced to repeal it or pursue the exact opposite approach.

S. Saunders reported that the New Hampshire Planners Association Legislative Subcommittee has convened and is actively reviewing bills as they are introduced.

T. Moore noted that there are numerous ADU-related bills currently under consideration. There are two bills relevant to NHMA: one would propose the creation of an oversight commission to track financial matters. Another bill pertains to municipalities that pay dues.

Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) should continue to monitor these developments and keep their member communities informed. Most of the bill language is expected to be available within the next two weeks.

N. Hodgetts summarized the following legislative service requests and recently released bills:

- LSR 2866: Establishing a 10-year strategic housing and infrastructure plan. would create some new responsibilities for RPCs. However, no funding.
- LSR 2921: Relative to creating a state assessment on non-homestead luxury second homes to fund statewide housing development programs and address

housing shortages and making appropriations, therefore, may include funding for regional housing need assessments. Don't expect any bills with budget impact to go anywhere this year.

- SB 592: Enabling regional, conservation, and energy resource planning for habitat strongholds and wildlife corridors – adds responsibilities for conservation, habitat strongholds, and wildlife corridors to RPC responsibilities in RSA 36:45, 47
- SB 627: A bill to increase tolls to add back funding to 10 year plan, but it is unlikely to go anywhere this session.
- HB 1195: relative to municipal zoning requirements for child day care providers, builds off 2024 HB1567
- There are bills to repeal workforce housing law (HB1619), ADU law (HB1012), manufactured housing laws (HB 1016), and variations.
- HB 1357: Manufactured housing on individual lots opportunities
- SB 419: Housing champions: Bills to fund housing champions, bills to repeal the housing champion program (HB1196), also a few bills mention including non-housing related qualifications about childcare or floodplain resiliency to housing champions
- HB 1023: Establishing commercial accessory uses by right
- LSR 2300: Mandatory land use board testing
- HB 1273: Expands coastal resilience incentives in 79-e for property tax relief for any flood mitigation in floodplain by property owner. statewide
- HB 1057: Bill to define private road, and clarify maintenance responsibilities
- HB 1625: Relative to annual reporting on accessory dwelling unit construction and use. – OPD, beyond number of units
- HB 1103: Allowing municipalities to utilize community revitalization tax relief credits on a wider variety of properties and structures, make technical fixes and adds flexibility to housing opportunity zones – removes affordability requirements
- HB 1265: Data Centers:, prohibiting construction of data centers and creating commission to study environmental impacts of data centers, SB 439, regulate where data centers be allowed in commercial and industrial districts (SB 439)
- HB 1303: Authorizing municipalities to adopt zoning ordinances related to the protection, management, or replacement of tree canopy.
- HB 1265: Trying to reconstruction data centers and SB 439 regulating where data centers be allowed and zoning with some kind of parameters are allowed.
- HB 1567: A bill that would extend the House Bill 1567 from two years ago around zoning for child care to expand that.

S. Saunders noted that input from municipalities during the public hearing process is critically important. In many cases, there is only one primary opportunity for to speak publicly. While written comments and letters can also be submitted, many municipalities last year chose to take a wait-and-see approach. As a result, direct municipal participation in this process is essential and should be strongly encouraged by the Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs).

5. Discussion Items

a. Marketing Plan

Peter Griffin asked how the Regional Planning Commissions can increase public visibility and raise awareness of the valuable work they do. He referenced ideas discussed at the September meeting, such as engaging with media figures like Fred Coker at WMUR and reaching out to print media to publish articles highlighting RPC efforts, and asked whether there had been any progress on these initiatives.

J. Coogan reported that he contacted Fred Kocher regarding his Sunday morning show on WMUR. Coker expressed interest in having an RPC representative as a guest, with a focus on discussing housing-related topics. At the RPC Directors' meeting, Jay Minkarah volunteered to serve as the RPC representative for the show.

B. Chaisson provided an update on outreach to local print and digital newspapers and magazines, noting that while many outlets lack the capacity to write original articles, they are open to publishing pre-written submissions.

The group discussed potential news outlets, including:

- New Hampshire Bulletin
- InDepth New Hampshire
- New Hampshire Magazine
- New Hampshire Business Review
- Granite State News Collaborative
- NHPR

As next steps, J. Coogan will follow up with Fred Kocher, B. Chaisson will coordinate a list of applicable print and online news outlets and their contacts, and S. von Aulock will inquire with NHMA about the possibility of repurposing articles previously written for *Town & City*.

6. NHARPC – NHMA Partnership Town and City Articles and Webinars

J. Cysz reported that at the last meeting there was a partial list that the RPC directors have since ironed out. Megan has been sending calendar invites for due dates to the authors responsible.

7. RPC Updates

Dave Walker shared that RPC is wrapping up a regional household hazardous waste assessment for a feasibility study to try to figure out what the best option is to collect household waste based on a regional level so that it's not up to the individual communities.

He noted that RPC is also currently looking for funding to do a feasibility study more specifically on building a regional facility that the communities might have access to. He asked if anybody is aware of some money for that that is not USDA Rural limited.

RPC is also working with at least one community on looking into setting up a future community center and is looking for funding and resources. Two or three communities have expressed interest, but we're working specifically with Fremont on that.

RPC is wrapping up a complete streets policy and design guidelines document for the Town of Exeter.

There is a lot good work going on with a large number of communities to address changes required by the last legislative session.

In response to funding a community center, P. Griffin suggested looking at the new community center in Plaistow for ideas.

B. Chaisson shared that he has been made aware of T-Mobile grants for community projects; they award them quarterly.

N. Hodgetts suggested looking at the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) which had a community center investment program. That program has run out of money. Check if other community development tax credit programs can be used for funding community centers.

M. Moren-Grey shared that NCC was awarded an AARP grant which enabled them to purchase \$1,500 in pop up equipment. She offered the equipment to other RPCs as a lending opportunity. She stated that they had to rent a U-Haul truck to move the equipment to a site.

S. von Aulock shared that SNHPC also got an AARP grant and also purchased equipment. S. von Aulock shared that SNHPC is wrapping up an ADU guide.

SNHPC has a "travel trainer" and is working with Easter Seals staff to teach their clients how to ride the bus, what it's like and what it costs, how accessible it is, all those things that are barriers for people to actually get on the bus.

M. Baronas shared that he is working on a couple of hazard mitigation plans. CNHPC is doing a lot of wrap up of the summer data collection so traffic data analysis and RSMS plans.

He also talked about a demonstration project where they borrowed demonstration equipment from Southern for a project in Hopkinton. That project ended up catching DOT's attention, and when it came time to pave that area, they decided to remove the slip lane based on what they had seen through the demonstration.

M. Butts reported that several road safety audits are underway and nearing completion. The team is also wrapping up HOP grants and is deeply involved in reviewing regulations and drafting materials. In addition, work continues on the Long Island Sound Futures Fund stormwater project, now more than a year in

progress. The project has reached the site-selection phase, with consultants narrowing more than 100 potential implementation sites for spring work.

J. Czysz provided an update for SRPC, noting ongoing efforts related to recent legislative changes. SRPC is collaborating with the Southern Maine Planning and Development Council on implementation work for a joint land use study for the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Housing emerged as a major issue, and SRPC used available grant funds to help municipalities draft warrant articles and implement the required legislative updates. In total, SRPC assisted eight or nine communities through this process.

SRPC is also partnering with Rockingham Planning Commission on multiple flood-resilience and climate-resilience projects. Rockingham has developed a framework for coastal resilience collaboratives, and SRPC is now seeking grant funding to help municipalities build consensus and develop MOUs to advance the work.

Additionally, SRPC is working with NHDES on coastal flood-resilience planning involving several SWRPC communities. Funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, this project uses GIS analysis to identify community assets located in high-hazard areas, prioritize flood-risk hotspots, and develop mitigation action plans.

SRPC is preparing to host a "Commissioner 101" session, which will feature informal small-group discussions organized by program area. Staff will rotate among stations to engage with commissioners, and the event will conclude with a Jeopardy-style activity.

P. Rasmussen shared a local issue that may have broader regional implications. Recent legislation has enabled developers to build large single-family homes—sometimes with eight bedrooms—in districts that do not allow multi-unit housing. Because occupancy cannot be restricted below two people per bedroom, these homes function similarly to boarding houses. If developers cannot obtain variances for multi-unit housing, this strategy becomes an alternative. Municipalities may need to decide whether to allow multi-unit housing in residential districts or face an increase in oversized homes that serve the same purpose.

P. Griffin reported that the adoption of the Ten-Year Plan has been delayed. As part of ongoing discussions, Councilor Wheeler has proposed advancing the I-293 Exit 6 and Exit 7 projects ahead of prior scheduling, which could result in changes at the expense of other planned projects.

J. Cogan asked what is the overall outlook today on funding for RPCs going forward?

Michelle Moren Grey responded that when we went into our budget season, we were at the highest percentage of local contracts. We have now flipped that as a result of the uncertainty with grant funding.

P. Griffin asked if anyone has contacts with podcasts that could be a valuable platform for promoting regional planning and encouraged them to reach out.

8. Public Comment

There was no public Comment

9. Adjourn

3:00 PM: Following a motion and a second, the group voted unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Taylor-Fetter