

**New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions
Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2026
1:00-3:00PM
John Andrews Room
NH Municipal Association Building
25 Triangle Park Drive
Concord, NH**

1. Welcome and Introductions

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

Present: Peter Griffin, SNHPC; Matt Baronas, CNPC; Jen Czysz, SRPC; Jay Minkarah NRPC; Shanna Saunders, LRPC; Sandy Crystall, CNPC; Meghan Butts, UVLSRPC; Paul Rasmussen, SRPC; Dave Kerr, LRPC; Todd Horner, SWRPC; Sylvia von Aulock, SNHPC; Sarah Wrightsman, SRPC; Noah Hodgetts, Principal Planner, NHOPD; Brodie Deshaies, Legislative Advocate, NHMA

Sylvia shared that this would be her last NHARPC meeting as she is retiring in June.

2. Action items

a. Appoint a New Vice Chair

There were no volunteers to serve as Vice Chair. The matter will be revisited at the June meeting.

b. Appoint Jay Minkarah to the State Coordinating Council (SCC)

P. Griffin moved to appoint Jay Mincarah as the NHARPC representative to the SCC. S. Saunders seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with all members voting in favor. The motion passed.

c. Review and Approval of the December 10, 2025, Minutes

S. Saunders moved to approve the December 10, 2025 minutes. Following a brief discussion to correct the spelling of Meghan Butts name, P. Rasmussen seconded the motion to approve the minutes as amended. A roll call vote was taken with all members voting in favor. The motion passed.

3. CPACER Presentation: Brodie Deshaies, Legislative Advocate, NHMA

Brodie Deshaies presented an overview of the C-PACER program, which enables commercial property owners to finance energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation, and resiliency improvements through private capital repaid via a property assessment lien.

He explained program eligibility, qualifying improvements, and the steps municipalities must take to participate, including adopting an ordinance,

establishing a district, and entering into an agreement with the NH Business Finance Authority. Municipal responsibilities are limited to administrative tasks such as recording liens and assigning them to capital providers, with no liability for loan defaults, which are handled by the provider.

The Energy Committee recommended adopting the program due to its potential to increase the tax base with minimal effort and advised placing a warrant article on the next town meeting ballot, as a proposed bill to allow Selectboard opt-in is unlikely to pass in time. The presentation also highlighted an effort led by NHMA, Clean Energy NH, and NH BFA to expand education and outreach, including webinars, short informational materials, and collaboration with regional planning commissions and professional organizations to improve understanding and adoption of C-PACER.

4. Legislative Updates

Noah Hodgetts, Principal Planner, NHOPD

N. Hodgetts reported that there has been no update on the Zoning Enabling Act Study Commission since the last meeting. However, HB1005 which sought to repeal this Commission was killed in the House.

He reviewed the following bills with input from Brodie Deshaies:

SB592: enabling regional, conservation, and energy resource planning for habitat strongholds and wildlife corridors

SB 439: relative to municipal data center zoning

SB440: which passed the Senate, gives non-charter towns the option of the governing body voting to adopt 53-f energy efficient and clean energy districts,

HB639: relative to the use of and disputes over blockchain and digital currencies,

HB 244: which moves all references to building code adoption and building codes from the planning and zoning statutes into RSA 155-A

SB 94: prohibiting all municipal technical amendments to the state building code,

HB1196: seeking to repeal the House Champions program passed the House, and is currently in the Senate Commerce committee.

HB1195: requiring that family and group family childcare be allowed in all residential zoning districts and not be subject to site plan review

HB1103: making changes to RSA 79-E to give municipalities the option of using 79E tax relief for housing opportunity zones outside the downtown town center and allows tax 79 tax relief for new construction.

RSA 79-E: community revitalization tax relief for conversion of industrial and commercial properties to residential, and to allow 79-E tax relief in housing opportunity zones for new construction without any prescribed affordability limits

HB1468: would allow municipalities to adopt a flood resilience section in the master plan

HB1681: relative to the definition, inspection, and local approval of tiny houses and yurts as innovative housing structures.

HB1759: amends RSA 673:14 to allow land use board members to present evidence and request a binding vote on whether another member should recuse themselves, prior to a board deliberating on an application.

SB435: would replace the term “unreasonable hardship” in the five variance criteria in RSA 674:33.

SB508: creates new restrictions on stamping of plans within 10 business days, and prohibits planning boards from requiring revised plans from an applicant more than once.

SB564: (return of SB170 from last year) would (1) prohibit municipalities from capping the road length if the road complies with state fire code requirements, (2) remove the ability for municipalities to cap the number of housing units on dead streets, and (3) allow for utilities and infrastructure underneath designated open space or permitter buffer areas of subdivisions.

SB627: which would increase tolls on out of state drivers to add back some funding to the 10-year plan.

Most bills to make changes or repeal changes from last year were killed. The exceptions are HB1540, HB1010, and HB 1079, which all passed the House.

- **HB1540** – amended in the House to clarify that municipalities continue to have the authority to enforce local health ordinances under RSA 147 for ADUs, related to the inspection, maintenance, upgrade, or replacement of subsurface sanitary disposal systems.
- **HB1010** – amended in the House to clarify that municipalities can subject applications for multi-family development in commercial districts to site plan review and cleans up some other language and definitions including that nonconforming structures can be converted to multi-family dwelling units provided the structure is not altered to further violate zoning district dimensional requirements.
- **HB1079** – amended in the House to clarify that existing structures built before July 1, 2025, are nonconforming structures which can be converted to ADUs, and that such conversions are not considered a change of use. There is a need for some additional technical changes to clarify that such non-conforming structures can’t be further altered to violate zoning district dimensional requirements.

Bills which have been killed include:

- **HB1357**, requiring manufactured housing be allowed on individual lots; HB1050, allowing educational uses in all zoned and unzoned districts
- **HB1023**, allowing commercial accessory units by right
- HB1802, requires training, testing, and certification of land use board members

- **HB1181**, updating the notice requirements to allow for posting of ZBA hearing notices on the municipal website instead of in a newspaper of general circulation as is the case for planning boards
- **HB1619**, repealing the workforce housing law, and placing limitations on municipality's ability to enforce land use regulations

5. Discussion Items

a. Marketing and Advocacy Updates

J. Minkarah reported that he participated in a televised interview with Fred Kocher to promote the work of RPC's. He suggested having other RPC directors also do interviews to provide more information. It was agreed that the organization needs more exposure to get the word out on what RPC's do. P. Griffin asked if anyone knew of a podcast they could reach out to. The idea of creating a marketing video was discussed.

6. NHARPC - NHMA Partnership

a. Town & City Articles and Webinars

The group brainstormed ideas for future articles:

- CPACER Jan/Feb (Shanna, Katrin, Municipality)
- Pencil broader initiative (Sarah Wrightsman)
- Resources for volunteer planners, assist with outdated terms, amendments.

b. NHMA Conference Sessions Solicitation

The group discussed options and suggested the following:

- Transportation Planning - Without new projects advancing into the Ten Year Plan, how to RPCs continue to advance transportation improvements?
 - Dave, RPC
 - Jen/Colin, SRPC
 - Meghan Butts, UVLSRPC
 - Glenn T., LRPC (check with Shanna)
- Grant Writing - A live rendition of [NHARPC CORNER: Grants & Grant Writing: Turning Community Priorities into Action](#)
 - Michelle, NCC
 - Todd, SWRPC
 - Kyle, SRPC
- C-PACER
 - Shanna, LRPC
 - Katrin Kasper, CENH/SRPC Commissioner
 - Tim Corwin

7. RPC Updates

S. Crystal shared that Bow is updating its Master plan and is holding a vision session

M. Butts spoke about the recent venue incident in Tamworth. The group discussed building and permitting issues related to venue rentals.

P. Griffin asked when the committee would like to plan the next Convening. The group agreed to hold the next Convening in Spring 2027. P. Griffin, P. Rasmussen, and J. Minkarah volunteered to form a subcommittee to plan the event. A suggestion for the theme was post-regional plans. The group agreed to hold a convening every other year.

S. von Aulock suggested a session on planning for young people and how to attract and keep young people into the state through marketing. Maybe bring in OPD and DEA to speak about how they are marketing to young people.

P. Griffin discussed rail transportation and the initiatives taking place across the country. He highlighted the Downeaster service, which is now approximately 25 years old and serves over 500,000 passengers annually. In Dover alone, the service has contributed roughly \$100 million in economic development. He noted that this is a strong example of the long-term impact rail investment can have over a 25-year period.

J. Czysz shared that SRPC partnered with UNH students for a joint session with commissioners. They held mini sessions focused on housing followed by a group conversation.

8. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9. Adjourn

At 3:00PM, J. Minkarah motioned to adjourn. Second by P. Rasmussen. All members voted in favor. Motion passed.