



***DRAFT* VPA Annual Meeting Minutes**

Friday, November 13, 2020
Zoom Conference

Executive Committee members present: M. Tuttle, A. Weinhausen, S. Lotspeich, D. Rugh, J. Donovan, M. Kane, C. Bryars, R. Francis, R. Venkataraman, and S. Jensen

2019-2020 Officers

Meagan Tuttle, AICP
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Alex Weinhausen
Vice President
VT & NNECAPA Legislative Liaison

Steve Lotspeich, RLA
Treasurer

David W. Rugh, Esq.
Secretary

Jim Donovan, FASLA
NNECAPA Section Representative

At-Large Members

Mark Kane, ASLA
Past President

Catherine Bryars

Rod Francis
VT Downtown Board Alt.

Seth Jensen

Chris Sargent, AICP, CFM

Ravi Venkataraman, AICP
Candidate
Professional Development Committee Chair

VPA Members: C. Sawyer, E. Vorwald, S. Hadd, D. E. White, T. Bamford, B. Saxton, D. Schibler, L. Ravin, S. Westa, K. McCarthy, P. Hough, C. Haiju, J. Murray, D. Pierce, R. Mahoney, K. Lalley, S. Murray, J. Hemmerick, C. Baker, S. Murray

Meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

1. Call to Order

M. Tuttle welcomed all members and Executive Committee members to the 2020 Annual Meeting.

2. VPA Year in Review

M. Tuttle provided an overview of the organization's activities this year, including the challenges of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the opportunities that came out of some of challenges the pandemic presented. VPA welcomed new planners to the state, some members got new jobs or retired, and others have welcomed new babies and pets. M. Tuttle emphasized that despite all the difficulties, there were many successes and accomplishments this year, so she thanked everyone for all their hard work and perseverance.

VPA consists of 185 members, who are now members of the Vermont State Section of NNECAPA. In 2020, a few new members joined the organization, but some old members left as a result of the switch to NNECAPA. Nonetheless, the organization remains strong. M. Tuttle reminded the membership that 2021 will be the last year for organizational memberships. In total, there are about 460 NNECAPA members, and in comparison to the other state sections, New Hampshire has more members than the 185 VPA members, while Maine has less.



A section of the
Northern New England Chapter
American Planning Association
nne.planning.org/sections/Vermont

The Vermont Planners Association (VPA) is a non-profit advocacy and educational organization of planners and related professionals. We are dedicated to advancing community planning in Vermont at the local, regional, and state levels, to foster vibrant communities and a healthy environment.

A. NNECAPA Year in Review

J. Donovan gave the NNECAPA Year in Review. He discussed the new rotating NNECAPA conference and the new revenue sharing model where all three sections will share revenue from the NNECAPA conference. This new arrangement promotes all members attending the conference because all sections will now benefit from any revenue from the conference every year instead of the past practice of just the one host section benefitting every three years. Another new change resulting from the 2020 retreat is that the Section Representative position will become a three-year position. Section Representatives will no longer oversee NNECAPA's annual awards, which responsibility has shifted to the NNECAPA Vice-President. NNECAPA also re-vamped its sponsorship program, and Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Planning Commission is first sustaining sponsor. NNECAPA Administrator N. Kilbride has been very helpful and done a great job. New items for NNECAPA in 2022 include the renewal of N. Kilbride's contract, election of new Chapter Officers and FAICP nominations.

The NNECAPA 2020 Conference was held virtually. There were over 200 attendees during the course of the two-day event. There were six sessions over the two-day event, as well as the annual business meeting and annual awards. Because of the low expenses associated with the virtual conference, the 2020 conference was successful and generated a significant amount of revenue for NNECAPA. Kudos to M. Tuttle for making conference run smoothly, including her hard work putting together the script for the conference.

VPA is still planning to host the NNECAPA 2021 Conference at the Hilton Burlington on October 13-15, 2021. More details will be forthcoming, and the conference planning committee will get started early next year. D. White will likely be the Section Representative and thus will take lead in planning the NNECAPA 2021 Conference. Conference planners may try and incorporate a digital attendance option, but that is still to be determined.

B. Legislative Committee Year in Review

Outgoing VPA Legislative Liaison A. Weinhagen gave the Legislative Committee Year in Review. He pointed members to the Department of Housing and Community Development's Legislative Summary, which is on its website. In the 2020 legislative session, the Act 250 Reform bill and new housing bill (S.237) were primary bills VPA tracked. The comprehensive Act 250 Reform bill died, and S.237 was enacted as Act 179 but in a much slimmed-down version as compared to what was originally proposed in the bill. Going forward into the 2021 legislative session, there are no bills on the table because it is a new biennium. A. Weinhagen expects that there will be a technical correction to S.237, and it is possible that Act 250 Reform will be picked up again. However, that is all we know right now. Also significant for the 2021 session is that leadership in the Legislature is changing substantially with former Senate Majority Leader Tim Ashe stepping down and Speaker of the House Mitzi Johnson losing her re-election bid. There is a lot of unknowns as the next biennium approaches. VPA's Legislative Committee will meet in late-December or early-January. VPA membership thanked A. Weinhagen for all his hard work over the last four years in his position as Legislative Liaison. A. Weinhagen highlighted that VPA needs a new Legislative Liaison for 2021-22.

C. Vermont Downtown Board Year in Review

C. Sawyer provided an update on the Vermont Downtown Board in 2020. The Board met remotely all year long with only one in-person meeting. Generally, the Downtown Board oversees the state's designation programs. There are now over 200 Village Centers in Vermont. In 2020, the Board awarded over \$379,000 in downtown transportation funds (there were nine applications for funding and over \$580,000 was requested) and roughly \$2.8 million in Downtown and Village historic tax credits (there were fifty-one applications, requesting over \$5 million in funding). In 2020 the Legislature increased historic tax credit funding to over \$3 million for 2021, which was a goal of the late Paul Bruhn. Next year the Downtown Board will solicit applications for a new winter round of downtown and village historic tax credits, in addition to the traditional summer round. In early 2021 the Downtown Board also plans to address the backlog of designation area renewals that were delayed due to COVID-19. It also plans to update and review the designation application forms and Downtown Board's process, as well as undertake a discussion of the value some of the less-subscribed-to designation programs.

D. Professional Development Committee Year in Review

R. Venkataraman gave an overview of Professional Development Committee's work in 2020. He thanked key committee members like S. Lotspeich, C. Rock and S. Murray for their assistance this past year. In 2020 the Committee hosted two webinars and provided support for the 2020 NNECAPA Conference. In addition, the AICP resources that were distributed by the Committee were quite helpful for those seeking certification in 2020. Next year, the Committee plans to host new webinars, a GIS workshop that got cancelled due to COVID-19 and provide support for the 2021 NNECAPA Conference in Burlington. The Professional Development Committee is seeking new members, so please contact R. Venkataraman to assist, even if your capacity to do so is limited.

E. Awards Committee Year in Review

D. Rugh gave a summary of the Award's Committee's activities and the 2020 awards process. He also reviewed the 2020 VPA Award Winners: Mark Bucher Professional Planners of the Year, Brandy Saxton, AICP and Seth Jensen; Plan of the Year: Enosburg Falls Vital Village Master Plan by Mark Kane, ALSA, and Drew Pollak-Bruce, CPRP, at SE Group; Citizen Planners of the Year: Shannon Haggett of Vergennes and Sally Miller of Woodstock; and Project of the Year: South Burlington's Market Street Reconstruction project. South Burlington's Market Street Reconstruction and Brandy Saxton also won NNECAPA's 2020 Project of the Year and 2020 Professional Planner of the Year awards, respectively. D. Rugh thanked all members for submitting nominations and for working with the Awards Committee through the challenges that the pandemic presented. D. Rugh also noted that Cat Bryars will be taking over as Chair of the Awards Committee next year.

3. Work Plan for Year Ahead

M. Tuttle went over the Executive Committee's draft 2021 Work Plan and highlighted the changes from 2020. Two primary areas of focus for the organization in 2021 will be legislative activities and trying to increase membership.

4. Approval of Minutes of 2019 VPA Annual Meeting

M. Tuttle presented the minutes of the 2019 VPA Annual Meeting for approval. There was no discussion.

Action: Motion to approve the minutes of the 2019 VPA Annual Meeting: 1) J. Donovan. 2) M. Kane. *Motion passes unanimously.*

5. Approval of 2021 Operating Budget

S. Lotspeich gave a presentation on the 2021 Operating Budget. VPA's budget has been reorganized to bring it more in line with the budget of other State sections, which makes it much easier to track for N. Kilbride, who oversees the budgets for all State Sections using QuickBooks and works with each section's Treasurer. The budget now reflects the actual amount of funds as shown on the section's bank statements, and the budget's categories were changed between 2020 and 2021 so the categories now track those of other State sections.

Going into 2021, VPA is in a strong financial position. 2020 revenues and expenses were lower than expected due to lack of in-person activities. Also, VPA realized some unbudgeted revenue from a profitable 2020 NNECAPA Conference, which was held remotely instead of in-person. VPA's 2021 Operating Budget is similar to 2020 with some adjustments. The 2021 Budget does present a deficit in the range of \$1,300, but VPA has a strong balance end to start the year, which is expected to get carried through 2021, the deficit is not problematic. 2021 Revenue comes from: the NNECAPA base payment, registration fees for a section meeting, the section's pro-rata payment from NNECAPA, conference sponsorships and VPA's share of NNECAPA Conference profit, if any. Expenses are in several categories but include: section meetings, stipends for the Legislative Liaisons and the Downtown Board Representative, the awards process, legislative support/lobbying, and sharing legislative intern with VNRC during the legislative session. There are also a few miscellaneous expenses like the cost of the mailbox in Montpelier and some mailing/printing expenses.

In the 2021 budget, VPA removed some expenses like sponsoring other events. This was done to limit the anticipated budget deficit and because it was unknown whether those events would actually be held in 2021 due to the pandemic. Budgeting for special projects were also removed not only because VPA was not anticipating a project like that in 2021 but also because the revenue source for those projects, a grant from NNECAPA, is no longer available.

At this time, it is unknown what will happen if an in-person NNECAPA Conference is canceled and if the conference has to move to the virtual realm again. However, the venue contract is a NNECAPA contract, not a VPA contract. If there is a loss in 2021, NNECAPA covers 70% of the loss and each of the three state sections would cover 10%. Holding a virtual NNECAPA Conference in 2021 would also off-set a loss, and NNECAPA would also seek to move the in-person conference to 2022 if the pandemic forces the cancellation of the 2021 conference.

Action: Motion to approve the 2021 Operating Budget: 1) D. Rugh. 2) J. Donovan. *Motion passes unanimously.*

6. Approval of Bylaw Amendments

C. Bryars gave an overview of the proposed VPA Bylaw amendments. The key proposed revisions are to change the Section Representative's duties and term. The Section Representative will now be a position elected every three years. The proposed Bylaw amendments also set out a clearer process for filling vacancies in director positions and clarify and re-order the provisions regarding Directors and Appointees. This latter amendment removed specific label of "officers" from the Bylaws because it was redundant. It also clarified that Directors were EC members who hold elected positions, while appointees are those whom the EC appoints to certain positions. Lastly, there were a few clarifying revisions or technical corrections.

Action: Motion to adopt proposed changes to bylaws: 1) J. Donovan. 2) D. White. *Motion passes.*

7. Election of Directors

M. Kane presented proposed 2020 Slate of Directors. There is a fair amount of turnover this year in the Slate, but geographic diversity of the EC has improved with new prospective directors from Franklin and Windham Counties. M. Kane, J. Donovan, C. Sargent and S. Jensen are all leaving EC, and they were all thanked for their many years of collective service to VPA's leadership. Nominations from the floor were requested, and none were forthcoming.

Going forward membership asked that the Nominating Committee consider increasing diversity on the EC in future years. K. McCarthy pointed out that the 2021 EC will include more municipal planners but lack private planning consultants, which participated on the EC in previous years. One benefit of the proposed Slate, however, is that there's greater geographic and gender diversity on the EC. The section is generally pleased that there are three new voices on the EC for 2021, and M. Tuttle encouraged more active participation in 2021 from most of the membership since a number of committees lack volunteers, including the Professional Development, Communications, Nominations and Awards Committees.

Action: Motion to approve the 2020 Slate of Directors: 1) J. Donovan. 2) S. Hadd. *Motion passes unanimously.*

8. Other Business

None.

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.