



Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday, June 10, 2022
Conference Call

Executive Committee members present: A. Weinhagen, C. Bryars, S. Lotspeich, M. Tuttle, S. Wraight, E. Vorwald, R. Venkataraman, G. Brunswick, S. Westa

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NNECAPA Section Representative

At-Large Members

Greta Brunswick

Chip Sawyer
VT Downtown Board Rep.

Ravi Venkataraman, AICP

Sue Westa, AICP

VPA Members: None.

ACCD Staff: Chris Cochran, Jacob Hemmerick, Bronwyn Cooke

Meeting began at 10:07 a.m.

1. Agenda Modifications

None.

2. Announcements

None.

3. Minutes of May 13, 2022 Executive Committee Meeting

Action: Motion to approve the minutes of May 13, 2022 Executive Committee Meeting: 1) E. Vorwald 2) M. Tuttle. *Motion passes unanimously.*

4. Legislative Policy Priority Suggestions for 2023

A. Weinhagen referenced the 2022 list of policy priorities prepared by the Legislative Committee (LC) and requested EC input to update it for the new biennium. EC observed that it is hard to set policy priorities before knowing the priorities of legislative leadership. Priorities of the legislature are not currently clear due to new leadership of chambers and committees starting this fall. ACCD will set priorities over the coming months and may focus on easy-to-achieve goals as opposed to the ambitions of the last two sessions.

Several parties have observed that the Climate Action Plan could have greater focus on land use, specifically on adaption/mitigation strategies rather than GHG emissions goals.



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.

R. Venkataraman suggested VPA push for more support for Complete Streets implementation. More funding to support implementation is needed. For example, the NDA program requires Complete Streets, yet municipalities have limited funding opportunities to design and build to those standards. There could be funding for Complete Streets on top of funding available for NDA. Second, there is the concern that VTrans staff and engineering culture do not adequately support or prioritize Complete Streets compliance for the roads they manage. C. Bryars shared SW Vermont's experience pushing VTrans staff – often unsuccessfully – to consult and comply with VTrans' own standards in project design and implementation. Barriers in those cases were not funding or road standards, but resistance from VTrans. Some hope that VTrans' planned roads standards update and sustainable transportation plan will help the Agency prioritize Complete Streets compliance, but also recognize a broader cultural shift happening at VTrans that will take time. A. Weinhagen suggested that some funding dedicated in the last legislative session could be repurposed specifically for Complete Streets implementation. Possible agenda item for VPA LC.

M. Tuttle asked about the timeline for the report on designation programs and how building code issues play into housing barriers. The report is due July 2023. Resulting legislation would come in 2024. VTrans is pursuing a VMT study to test the assumption that people living in compact settlements drive less miles and emit less GHGs. ACCD is enthusiastic about what will be learned with the new neighborhood program (\$1M). Rep. Seth Bongartz is a major supporter of designation program review.

Chapter 117 changes have been on VPA's policy list for many years to make the chapter more efficient, more strategically focused on topics that are important now vs. decades ago, and to do general cleanup. An important project, but dull. Would be strategic to introduce it at the beginning of a biennium to potentially wrap up in second year. EC members observed that given the current focus on spending ARPA and Infrastructure money there may not be sufficient interest to pursue now.

J. Hemmerick pointed out that a housing framework for various issues – building codes, 117, Act 250, climate change – makes them easier to move through the legislature; that strategy might be applied to Chapter 117 update. A. Weinhagen noted that recent changes to Chapter 117 have focused heavily on ADUs. Need to recognize that ADUs will not solve the housing crisis and go beyond ADUs to actually solve housing problems.

5. Cannabis Regulations

a. May 24th VLCT Workshop Summary

A. Weinhagen reported that most VPA EC members attended the VLCT workshop and a few participated in a follow-up call to identify unanswered questions.

b. Next Steps – VPA Involvement

For many months, VPA has considered providing some form of technical assistance or facilitation to help planners and communities understand municipal regulatory authority, but

wish not to be redundant with existing resources or misrepresent best practices. C. Bryars noted that prevention organizations are looking to VPA as a resource to provide guidance, particularly on establishing local CCC's. S. Lotspeich said that local licensing feels like a separate arena from zoning. Suggests planners stay in zoning lane and not wade into CCCs topic.

M. Tuttle suggested that it may be sufficient to simply help promote the CCB's existing guidance documents, though they need revising. A fundamental problem is that planners simply disagree with the CCB's interpretation of how Chapter 117 applies to commercial cannabis regulation. Planners can help the CCB interpret and potentially update their guidance document. C. Cochran recommended asking the CCB for money to help draft guidance revisions, but they may not have money. Gwynn Zakov of VLCT is on the same page as planners and VLCT is already working with the CCB to update guidance documents, so Gwynn may be in the best position to channel critiques into proposed revisions for the CCB to consider. A. Weinlagen recommended listing types of zoning regulations municipalities use under Chapter 117 that they would reasonably expect to apply to commercial cannabis. This includes buffers (example of gas stations), differentiation of retail uses, conditional use review, density restrictions. M. Tuttle has a draft of this approach to share by email with the group. C. Bryars raised the question of revising self-contradictory statute vs. revising the guidance documents.

A. Weinlagen outlined an option for VPA to identify several people as resources for people who have questions on commercial cannabis in place of VPA hosting a workshop. Another possibility is to set up and maintain a Q&A form on the website.

6. Committee Reports & Officer Round Table

A. Treasurer's Report for May 2022

S. Lotspeich gave Treasurer's Report for May. Payment for award plaques and purchase of \$12K CD. The smaller \$1K CD comes due in July and will be held in cash to combine with larger CD to simplify management of resources. Waiting for NNECAPA to figure out different membership with Sections to monitor cash flows. VPA has a healthy balance of resources.

Action: Motion to approve the April Treasurer's Report: 1) MT 2) RV *Motion passes unanimously.*

B. Downtown Board Report

C. Sawyer not present, but sent an email. No May board meeting. Shared information about the designation program report funding allocation.

C. Professional Development Committee

R. Venkataraman said the summer energy-focused workshop is next Thursday in Woodstock between noon and 5pm with a social event to follow. 25 attendees in-person and 17 remote at this time. Want to get attendance up. Two current sponsorships from CCRPC and VAPDA for \$300 total. Call for sponsorships is competing with those for the NNECAPA fall conference.

D. Communications Committee

S. Westa has been posting about workshop and other minor updates.

E. Nominating Committee

None.

F. NNECAPA

July 15th will be a coordination meeting to prepare for NNECAPA retreat where strategic plan will be reviewed. Looking for issues relevant to each of the sections to consider. Membership management concerns are top of mind. Seasonality of different sponsorship requests and the need to coordinate/concentrate funding asks. Volunteer work for conference preparation feels unsustainable for many volunteers. Also the 3-year commitment for the conference rep position is hard to fill. 11am start for NNECAPA meeting on July 15, though time for this discussion may be adjusted. Details to come.

S. Wright reported that registration is open for the October 17-19 Conference in Maine. For 2024 Vermont conference, the RFP is out with deadline of end of June. The hosting state makes a recommendation on conference venue, but ultimately NNECAPA EC makes the call.

G. Legislative Committee

A. Weinhagen reported that the “waiting for dust to settle” has lasted longer than usual following the close of the session due to Governor taking his time to sign/veto bills. June LC meeting will discuss priorities. There are lots of studies and reports that will result from the last legislative session that VPA LC should monitor. For example, the NRB study on topics including location-based jurisdiction will be interesting to follow. C. Bryars noted another priority policy area discussed by the LC was various concerns about water and wastewater regulation.

H. Awards Committee

C. Bryars reported that 2022 awards ceremony will happen next week and RSVPs are in.

7. Other Business

E. Vorwald mentioned that NNECAPA will do a call for awards in July. Be on lookout for that.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 a.m. The next meeting is the on Friday, July 8th, at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. Group is currently planning to take August off.