

## VAPDA Retreat Meeting Minutes

September 12-13, 2024  
Wildflower Inn, Lyndon VT

**RPC Attendees:** Catherine Dimitruk (NRPC), Adam Lougee (ACRPC), Tasha Wallis (LCPC), Charlie Baker (CCRPC), Chris Company (WRC), Bill Colvin (BCRC), Jason Rasmussen (MARC), Devon Neary (RRPC), Christian Meyer (CVRPC), Peter Gregory (TRORC), and Dave Snedeker (NVDA).

**Guests:** Rebecca Ramos and Adam Necrason (Gov. Relations), Melissa Levi and Laura Thompson (NADO)

Meeting began at approximately 9:30 a.m. CD chaired the meeting. DS taking minutes.

### VAPDA Organization

Committee Assignments – see [vapda.org/about](http://vapda.org/about) for more details

Leadership – CD to step down as Chair at next meeting, DN becomes Chair. Vice-chair needed.

Transportation – no changes, but add Rito Seto

Gov. Relations – no changes

Energy – no changes, but add Calli Fishburn

Planning & Econ. Development – CD will Chair, JR comes off, no other changes

Emergency Mgmt. – TW will join, DN comes off, no other changes

Water Quality/Natural Resources – JR will join, no other changes

Public Health – committee disbanded

Env. Justice & Equity – Ann Nelson Stoner, Allie Hopkins, Greta Brunswick

\*Act 181 Committee – CB, CD, Janet Hurley, Matt Bachler

Representatives –

VLCT and Hot Weather – no representatives

Federal Lands – JR

Downtown Board – CM primary, CB alternate

Meeting Dates – Committee leaders asked to submit reports in advance of VAPDA meetings.

Meetings will be on TEAMS and go from 8:30a – 12:30p. Dec., Apr., Jun., and Sept meetings will be in-person.

Potential Staff for VAPDA – Tasks will be primarily administrative and coordinating.

Group Purchasing – ESRI access still needed for things like VT Culverts. CB discussed self-insurance for Health Care and shared ‘Stephanie email’ for VAPDA members to contact.

Statewide Coordination – for state contracts like RPC, TPI, EMPG + monitoring RPC performance and reporting. Discussion of restarting Finance Manager convenings. New idea for VAPDA annual BBQ.

Internal Management discussion touched on hiring, salary survey (LCPC), benefits survey (CVRPC), personnel policies (CCRPC shared), non-exempt staff, field work, and codes of conduct (for Boards).

Members Discussion: County Governance, COGS, CPRG, FEMA mapping & bylaws, 604B, and Brownfields.

Project Sharing – RPCs highlighted key projects from their respective regions.

Act 181 Summary Discussion – CB covered highlights of legislation and work that RPCs will be doing. More frequent check-ins on this work will be forthcoming.

Necrason Group update – Highlights of last session and coming session, budgets, and key contacts.

## **Day 2**

### Committee Reports:

*Transportation* – statewide meetings around airports. REI funding.

*Natural Resources* – NR priorities handout from CC. Some discussion of brownfield funding (statewide).

*ACCD* – housing will be the priority (DHCD will provide more later). More work on updating VPIC resources in coming year (Planning Manual modules). Act 181 RPC independent review. FLU mapping. Housing Production data collection report.

*Emergency Mgmt.* – EM priorities handout from CC.

*Energy & Climate* – CPRG, MVI

**NADA Presentation and Discussion** – Laura Thompson and Melissa Levy

**Adjournment** – 12:15pm

## Proposed VAPDA Natural Resource (Conservation) Priorities for 2024-25

1. Sponsor the follow up to the inaugural North American Landscape Connectivity Summit (if another is held this year).
2. Advocate for the identification of regional/county and municipal responsibilities, opportunities, and capacity challenges related to local conservation planning and implementation initiatives.
  - Local capacity was identified as a primary challenge at the Summit and is a constant issue raised within the Staying Connected Initiative and other networks (including Vermont Conservation Design).
3. Engage in the state process to identify the Tier 3 lands as required by Act 181.
4. Engage in the Vermont Conservation Strategy Initiative led by VHCB to develop the 30x30 and 50x50 Conservation Plan required by the Community Resilience and Biodiversity Protection Act (<https://vhcb.org/our-programs/VCSI>).
5. Continue to support the development of the Connecticut River Watershed Partnership and the federal Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Act.
6. Continue to support multi-state pursuit of funding for coordination of climate and flood resilience efforts among the RPCs/RPAs in the Connecticut River Watershed.
7. Advocate for more regional and municipal outreach through the state Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program, and for more consistent grant rounds.
8. Advocate for the Urban and Community Forestry Program and related Council to include in its definition of urban and community forests floodplain conservation and restoration efforts, headwaters protection efforts, and related projects to improve flood resiliency including flood hazard mitigation plant materials nurseries.
9. Support headwaters and floodplain conservation and restoration efforts as a means of mitigating downstream flood risks, especially to villages, downtowns and other historic settlements.
10. Identify and advocate for development of RPC natural resource planning capacity.

~~VHCB 3 acre implementation plan~~

## Proposed VAPDA Emergency Planning Priorities for 2024-25

1. Restore and increase RPC Emergency Management funding. Encourage decreased reliance on solely federal funding.
2. Have high-level meeting with Department of Public Safety about current and future role of RPCs in emergency response and recovery.
3. Establish a protocol and training for local and state road closures during a disaster
  - Identify an appropriate platform for easily-accessible public information for travelers (i.e., Waze, Google Maps, etc.)
  - Build awareness about the protocol and educate state and local government staff in how to use the platform
  - Inform the public about the platform
4. Advocate for the development of state long-term individual and family recovery policy and protocols.
  - Even if the answer is there will be none, all parties should be aware of what to expect when the Federal Individual Assistance threshold is met and when it is not.
  - It's not for VAPDA to propose the policy or structure, but rather to advocate for the creation of the policy and protocols.
5. Regarding the MOU:
  - Ensure all state agencies understand how the MOU with VEM works; it covers all agencies.
  - Inquire with VEM and partner agencies extent to which they and FEMA are clear on what tasks RPCs can perform that would qualify for reimbursement in the event of a declared disaster.
  - Suggest to VEM and partner agencies that just as they tell towns to do what needs to be done and worry about costs afterwards, the state should do the same thing – they should not be hamstrung by whether or not federal reimbursement is assured.

AHS

~~indirect roles~~ (X)