Mount Ascutney Regional Commission
Public Hearing on Weathersfield Town Plan
and
Board of Commissioner Meeting
September 28, 2026
MARC Conference room and virtually over Zoom

Board Members Present: Kathy Callan-Rondeau, Chair, Reading; Julie Hance, Treasurer/Secretary, Chester; Walter Martone, Vice Chair, Springfield; Joe Fromberger, Andover; Erin Ladd, Ludlow; Edwin Johnson, West Windsor; Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; Shirley Clark, Cavendish; and Trevor Lashua, Windsor.

Staff Present: Jason Rasmussen, Alexandria Hamilton, Lisa Comstock and Kellen Appleton.

Guests present: Ryan Gumbart of Weathersfield.

Public present: None.

Walter Martone acted as the chair until Kathy Callan-Rondeau arrived.

Walter Martone opened the public hearing at 12:03 p.m. to get input on whether to approve Weathersfield's Town Plan and to confirm the planning efforts of the Town of Weathersfield in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4350.

1. Kellen Appleton advised the board that MARC staff worked with the town of Weathersfield on their town planning process and to coordinate with respect to statutory requirements.
2. Ryan Gumbart stated that the Planning Commission tried to capture in the plan how the town of Weathersfield sees itself, which is as a rural town with rich agricultural history. He said this is one of the major challenges across New England: how to maintain that sort of character and still promote growth.
3. Kellen Appleton advised the board that the Town Plan Review Committee met the previous Friday, and recommends approval of the Weathersfield Town Plan and confirmation of their local planning process.
4. Walter Martone asked if there was anyone from the public that wished to present comments on the Weathersfield Town Plan. Jason Rasmussen advised we did not have anyone present, in person or over zoom, and no written comments were received.

Walter Martone closed the public hearing at 12:10 p.m.

Kathy Callan-Rondeau arrived and called the MARC Board of Commissioners meeting to order at 12:11 p.m.

1. **Changes to the Agenda:**
   a. Jason Rasmussen advised that the Regional Priority Project list will be discussed under Old Business.
2. **Approve the Weathersfield Town Plan and confirm the municipal planning efforts of the Town of Weathersfield in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4350:**

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a. Walter Martone made a motion that the MARC Board approve the Weathersfield Town Plan and confirm the municipal planning efforts of the Town of Weathersfield in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4350. Julie Hance seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Receive the Treasurers Report for August 2026:

a. Jason Rasmmusen advised the board that we are looking good financially at this point, but we are only two months into FY 27. Alexandria Hamilton pointed out that we purchased two new computers, for her and Martha, so the computer equipment line looks high, but it is just a timing issue.

b. Jason Rasmussen advised the board that we are expecting the administrative costs to be a little higher than budgeted for the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District (GUVSWMD), in coordination with the District, due to unforeseen activities this year.

c. Walter Martone made a motion to receive the Treasurers Report as presented. Edwin Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Update on Financial Audit:

a. Alexandria Hamilton advised the board that the auditors completed the draft audit for MARC, which was clean, with no findings or recommendations, and that the single (federal) audit also came back clean, with no findings or recommendations. She said some of the revenue lines were put in the wrong buckets in the report, and she wants to get these corrected. Copies of the revised draft report will be sent to the board as soon as they are available to give you a chance to review it before the next meeting. We will ask RHR Smith to have a representative available at that meeting so the members can ask questions.

b. Edwin Johnson asked if we are satisfied with RHR Smith as our Auditing firm, and how they handled the audit this year? Jason Rasmussen stated that we had a different lead auditor this year. He stated he was disappointed that they did not speak to him directly, as they typically do.

c. Jason Rasmussen reminded the board that the contract for RHR Smith expires this year, and that we are sending out a Request for Proposal (RFP) to auditing firms in our area for a new contract. We usually do this every five years.

5. Approve minutes of the Secretaries Report for the special meeting, on August 25, 2026:

a. Trevor Lashua noted the minutes should reflect that he was present at the August 25, 2026 meeting.

b. Joe Fromberger made a motion to approve the minutes of the special meeting on August 25, 2026, as revised with Trevor attending. Edwin Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Updates:

a. LURB hearing on the 2026 Regional Plan:

1. Jason Rasmussen reminded the board that the Land Use Review Board (LURB) is having a public hearing on October 1, 2026, at 1:00 pm in the MARC conference room and virtually, to review MARC's application for the 2026 Regional Plan.

b. Draft changes to the LURB's Regional Plan Application Guidelines:

1. Jason Rasmussen advised the board that there are proposed changes to the LURB's Regional Plan Application Guidelines. The new guidance includes provisions on mandatory policies in regional plans. Included in the agenda packet is a comment letter from the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA) on the proposed new guidance for the board's review and discussion.

c. Ongoing efforts to coordinate with Towns:

1. Jason Rasmussen advised the board that staff continue to work with towns to update town plans and consider corresponding future amendments to the regional plan.

2. Many current town plans were written before Act 181 and are now being updated. Towns will need to make adjustments to their plans per new statutory requirements. Some towns may want to consider changes to Tier 1B boundaries in their planning update process. We are currently working to help update town plans in Chester, Ludlow, and Windsor. Efforts for a joint meeting with the planning commissions of West Windsor and Reading is delayed, due to changing membership.
3. Jason Rasmussen advised the board that he and Trevor Lashua have a meeting with Senator Joe Major at the prison site in Windsor on Friday, Oct 2.

d. **Annual Report:**

1. Jason Rasmussen advised the board that MARC is required to do an annual report for our ACCD contract. He presented the board with a draft of that report, as he felt they would be interested in reviewing it, and allow them to offer any suggestions or changes before it is submitted.
2. Walter Martone stated he had reviewed it prior to the meeting and suggested spelling out the dates the report covers (i.e., July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026). He also stated that the line mentioning mapping is confusing and felt it could be written more succinctly, and that the At-Work Map is included on the next page, but there is no next page. Jason Rasmussen stated that the map is a work in progress, and the final pages had not been added yet. Those changes will be made.

e. New Contracts:

1. Jason Rasmussen advised the board that we finally got contracts that were held up due to the federal situation, including our annual economic development agreement and emergency management planning grant agreement. He stated we also have new contracts for Ludlow's municipal plan update, and we expect one soon for West Windsor's town plan update. We are also helping towns to apply for new Municipal Planning Grants (MPG), including West Windsor, Weathersfield and Cavendish. Erin Ladd noted that Ludlow is also applying for an MPG.

7. Old Business:

a. Regional Priority list for 2027

1. To follow up on the discussion from last month, Jason Rasmussen advised the board that MARC is coordinating with the Springfield Regional Development Corp (SRDC) with the annual update of the Regional Project Priority list. He stated a letter has been sent out to the towns asking them to submit any projects they want to be considered by Nov. 6, 2026.
2. Jason Rasmussen provided the board with the Regional Project Priority list from 2026, so they could review it and discuss what projects are missing or should not be on the list anymore, with their respective town officials.
2. Walter Martone asked to see all the project forms. He also asked to coordinate with SRDC about what projects make the list and how they get scored.

8. Adjourn

a. The meeting was adjourned at 1:14 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lisa Comstock.