

January 2021

# ACRPC update

## This Month's Calendar

Digital calendar located at  
<http://acrpc.org/calendar/>

Date	Time	Event
Fri. 8	8:15pm	ACTR Board
Wed. 13	7:00pm	Full Commission Meeting (Zoom)
Wed. 20	6:30pm	Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting
Thurs. 21	6:00pm	ACSWMD
Wed. 27	6:30pm	ACRPC Executive Board meeting

Meetings held at 14 Seminary St, Middlebury, are currently postponed due to COVID-19.

Virtual meetings are open to the public and call-in information is provided by invitation and request.



*This newsletter is financed through the State of Vermont Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the State of Vermont. All programs of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission are handicapped accessible.*

## Maple Broadband Reaching Out

Maple Broadband is a non-profit, municipal collaborative, focused on bringing high-speed, reliable, affordable internet access to all households and businesses in Addison County.

Maple Broadband is collecting the contact information of residents and business owners interested in receiving high-speed, fiber internet as soon as construction begins in their neighborhoods.

In January the organization mailed a postcard to every address in Addison County introducing themselves and providing information about their resources webpage. It also launched its webpage,

<https://outreach.maplebroadband.net/>

Maple Broadband is also seeking volunteers with competencies that might be of help in the future, especially experience in fundraising, bookkeeping, grant writing, and website administration. On the Resources webpage, please click "Volunteer to help" and fill out the form. Please encourage friends and co-workers to visit the site and fill out the form.



**MAPLE**  
BROADBAND

(Please see back page for remembrance of long-time regional advocate and volunteer Pete Dominico)

# Announcements

## Towns Awarded

### Municipal Planning Grants

**Cornwall** will update the Town Plan and partner with the RPC to introduce new trainings for citizen planners. For more information, contact John Conor Stinson, [stinson.cpc@gmail.com](mailto:stinson.cpc@gmail.com)

**Middlebury** will develop a branding and marketing campaign to help downtown business quickly bounce back from the pandemic. For more information, contact Jennifer Murray, [jmurray@townofmiddlebury.org](mailto:jmurray@townofmiddlebury.org)

**Panton** will scope and design a project to improve the public's access and enjoyment of the Arnold Bay recreation area. For more, contact David Raphael, [davidr@landworksvt.com](mailto:davidr@landworksvt.com)

**Salisbury** will map endangered bat habitats in an effort to support new housing in the right locations. For more information, contact Deborah Brighton, [debbrighton@myfairpoint.net](mailto:debbrighton@myfairpoint.net)

More information can be found at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>

## Update on

### Clean Water Service Provider Rule

<https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/statutes-rules-policies/act-76>

The interagency committee on administrative rules approved this rule last week. There were minimal adjustments that were made at that meeting, and we were able to quickly pivot and file the rule with the Secretary of State. The revised rule text, along with the filing information forms, can be found on our act 76 website.

Public comment will “officially” open 12/30, and hearings are scheduled 02/01/2021 10:00 am, and 02/03/2021 5:00pm. Comment closes Feb 19<sup>th</sup>.

## 2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan Update

<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/2022-plan>

The Department of Public Service is starting off the process to update the 2016 Comprehensive Energy Plan. The DPS is required to update the CEP every six years, and the next version is due January, 2022.

Materials will be posted on the website, including a Public Engagement Plan and Request for Information related to potential pathways and technologies needed to meet Vermont’s energy and climate goals. Comments on the Request for Information are due **February 1**; this is the first step in a year-long process and there will be subsequent opportunities for stakeholder input throughout the process.

The DPS is requesting your assistance in developing as full an email list as possible. We are asking folks to please forward this information to others who may be interested. To be added to the email list for future updates, or reach DPS staff in a timely manner regarding questions on the CEP process, please send an email to [PSD.ComprehensiveEnergyPlan@vermont.gov](mailto:PSD.ComprehensiveEnergyPlan@vermont.gov)

## Town Meeting Day 2021

- Town Meeting Day is Tuesday, March 2, 2021
- The last day to post warnings is Sunday, January 31, 2021.
- The auditors annual financial report must be distributed by Saturday, February 20, 2021, *unless the town has voted to give notice of the report’s availability.*

In response to the concerns posed by COVID-19, the Vermont Legislature passed Act 162, which allows a legislative body to vote to use Australian ballot for any town meeting in 2021 (annual or special town meetings). More resources from VLCT are available in “Training”.

# Grants & Funding

## Small Grants for Smart Growth

<https://vnrc.org/small-grants-for-smart-growth/>

Applications for \$3,000 are due February 1, 2021

One grant of up to \$3,000 will be made available in a competitive grant round- Additional grants are available in the range of \$500 to \$1,500 per project. Applications for these are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year

Small Grants for Smart Growth provide seed money for community-based initiatives related to smart growth

See website for details– for remaining questions, contact Kate McCarthy at [kmccarthy@vnrc.org](mailto:kmccarthy@vnrc.org)

## Better Connections

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/projects-programs/better-connections>

Grant applications are due **February 19**

Interested municipalities or consortiums of municipalities may apply by submitting a pre-application letter of intent by **January 15**

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) and the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) are accepting applications for grants totaling approximately \$260,000 bi-annually in planning funds to help cities and towns build stronger communities that are more livable and walkable.

For more information, contact Jackie Cassino, AOT Planning Coordinator (802.272.2368, [jackie.cassino@vermont.gov](mailto:jackie.cassino@vermont.gov)) or Richard Amore, ACCD Planning & Project Manager (802.585.0061, [richard.amore@vermont.gov](mailto:richard.amore@vermont.gov))

## Downtown Transportation Fund

<https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/downtown-transportation-fund>

Grant applications are due March 8, 2021

The Department of Housing and Community Development is accepting applications for grants to support revitalization efforts in Designated Downtowns. The maximum grant amount is \$100,000 with a 50% match reqt.

The Downtown Transportation Fund assists municipalities in paying for transportation-related capital improvements within or serving a Designated Downtown. Past projects include streetscape improvements, bicycle & pedestrian amenities, park enhancements, utility relocation, street lighting, way-finding signage and other transportation related projects.

For more information see the 2021 DTF Fund Program Description for eligibility, funding and application requirements.

### Additional Clean Water Initiative Funding:

Downtown Transportation Fund (DTF) projects may apply for up to \$67,000 of “add on” clean water funding for eligible storm water implementation projects. A 20% match is required for these funds. Examples of eligible projects can be found on the Department of Environmental Conservation Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) web page. The Clean Water Initiative will provide additional funds for DTF projects to implement stormwater management practices that help control flooding, reduce erosion, and improve water quality. Projects must primarily mitigate nutrient or sediment pollution.

Contact Downtown Program Manager Gary Holloway at 802-522-2444 if you have questions or need assistance.



# Other Grants and Opportunities

## Better Places

<https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/better-places>

**Applications due January 22, 2021**

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Vermont Community Foundation along with funding partners, the Vermont Arts Council, Preservation Trust of Vermont, and the National Life Group Foundation are pleased to announce \$90,000 in grant funding that will help communities reimagine and reopen public spaces for safe dining, shopping, and recreation, while showcasing the unique sense of place their community offers.

Grant awards range from \$5,000 to a maximum grant award of \$20,000. Municipalities, local community groups, and nonprofit entities with documented municipal support may apply. Municipalities must partner with community groups and have a plan to involve the broader public.

## Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)

<https://www.fema.gov/media-collection/fy-2020-assistance-firefighters-grant-afg-application-guidance-materials>

**Application closes 5pm, Friday, February 12**

AFG helps firefighters and other first responders obtain critically needed resources necessary for protecting the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. FEMA will be offering webinars to provide an overview of this year's grant program, including important information and reminders about cost share requirements, program priorities, eligible costs, how to navigate the grant application, and tips for preparing an AFG application. For questions, reach out to the FEMA Region 1 grant specialist Lance Harbour 617-956-7544, [lance.harbour@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:lance.harbour@fema.dhs.gov). Assistance also available from the AFG Help Desk [firegrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:firegrants@fema.dhs.gov) and 1-866-274-0960.



## Shade Tree Preservation Plan Assistance

<https://vtcommunityforestry.org/programs/technical-assistance/shade-tree-preservation-plan>

**Application deadline: 5pm, February 3, 2021**

The Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program (VT UCF) is seeking six municipalities to participate in a collaborative process to draft a shade tree preservation plan specific to the municipality. VT UCF will provide technical assistance regarding tree care and management, example plan language, urban and community forestry best practices, and details regarding municipal procedures. Partner municipalities should be willing and able to assemble a team of interested parties including the tree warden, contribute to draft elements of a shade tree preservation plan, hold a public hearing to accept comments on the plan, and lead a process to adopt the shade tree preservation plan by the governing body of the municipality. **The collaboration requires at least 50 hours of matched time by municipal staff or volunteers for the duration of the year-long project.** No money will be exchanged for the duration of the collaboration.

Amendments to the existing Vermont tree warden statutes became effective on November 1, 2020. Towns now have the option to adopt a shade tree preservation plan written by and for the municipality that describes a municipal shade tree program and allows the flexibility to extend the jurisdiction of the tree warden beyond the core duties now specified in the law.

**For Application or Project Development Questions: Gwen Kozlowski, (802) 651-8343 or [gwen.kozlowski@uvm.edu](mailto:gwen.kozlowski@uvm.edu)**

# Tools & Trainings

## Town Meeting Guidance and Resources

Vermont League of Cities and Towns

<https://www.vlct.org/municipal-assistance/municipal-topics/town-meeting>

The VLCT Municipal Assistance Center (MAC) maintains a comprehensive set of town meeting resources including general information, models and templates, and FAQs on a variety of town meeting topics. They are also available to assist town officials with any town meeting related questions regarding their roles and responsibilities. Email them at [info@vlct.org](mailto:info@vlct.org) or call 1-800-649-7915. Please contact as soon as possible during this busy time of year.

### Webinar: Articles and Warnings—Clarity is Critical

<https://www.vlct.org/event/articles-and-warnings-%E2%80%93-clarity-critical>

**Wednesday, January 13, 2021 2:00 to 3:30 pm**

The proper wording of town meeting articles and warnings is important for many reasons including compliance with Vermont law, and to make sure voters understand the questions asked and possible outcomes. For towns voting by Australian ballot for the first time in 2021, this training is essential, and it's an important refresher for those already using this method. During this session, Municipal Assistance Center Senior Staff Attorney Garrett Baxter will review our model warnings and articles and respond to questions.

This is recommended for all municipal officials involved with drafting articles and the town meeting warning including: Selectboard members, municipal managers, administrators and administrative staff, and town clerks. Moderators may also find the information helpful.

Email Event Coordinator at [info@vlct.org](mailto:info@vlct.org)

## Vermont Land Trust Webinars

### Hunting and Land Stewardship in Vermont

January 13, 2021; 7-8pm, Online via Zoom, Free

Want to learn more about the history and influence of hunting on the ecology of our forests? Join South Hero Land Trust, Vermont Land Trust, and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers to learn about the history of wildlife conservation in Vermont and North America, and to hear perspectives on hunting from hunter and non-hunter stewards of the land. Register here: <https://vlt.org/event/hunting-event>

### Getting New Farmers on the Land: How VLT approaches the challenge of affordability

January 20, 2021; 12-1pm, Online via Zoom, Free

Join for a discussion about farm affordability, changes in the farming industry and land ownership in Vermont, and how VLT is responding. Register here: <https://vlt.org/event/affordable-farmland-event>

## Enabling Better Places Workshops

<https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/events>

**Pre-recorded Introductory Lessons:** 10 minute videos in the fundamentals of the incremental bylaw reform methodology and underlying Enabling Better Places.

**January 26th, 1:00 – 2:00pm:** an overview and review of specific challenges and opportunities that have been identified in Vermont. The format of the session will provide a question and answer dialogue

**January 28th, 1:00 – 2:30pm:** a deep-dive lecture with participatory discussion building on day one's training, focusing on providing direct feedback to participants on how to take action on incremental bylaw reform.

# In Remembrance of Pete Dominico

Pete Diminico, who passed away on Christmas Day, 2020, had a long-standing love affair with the New Haven River. He was an angler, and as such loved to match wits – and his knowledge of hatching insects and fly-fishing lures – with the trout in the stream. During his decade or more of fighting serious illnesses Pete often retreated to the banks of the New Haven with his dog Roxy for sustenance and hope, and always found both there by the waters of his treasured river.



Pete was an indefatigable and fierce advocate for the health of the New Haven River and other surface waters in Vermont. Ever alert to threats to water quality, Pete co-founded the New Haven River Anglers Association in 1982, and also New Haven River Watch in 1993, which he later helped merge (along with Otter Creek River Watch and other like-minded groups) into the Addison County River Watch Collaborative in 1997. For the better part of 20 years Pete served loyally and energetically on the ACRWC Steering Committee – much of that time as the New Haven River Watershed Monitoring Coordinator – until 2015, after which he continued to stay on top of water quality issues both at the state and local level. Pete also served on the Middlebury River Task Force to help coordinate post-Tropical Storm Irene restoration work on that river.

Never one to shrink from a fight, Pete was extremely vocal with members of the Vermont Legislature – some of whom were his friends – in order to make sure the State was providing for the monitoring, protection and remediation of rivers and lakes. In 2015, Pete fought hard for the passage of H.35, the Vermont Clean Water bill, writing to local legislators at the time, “The goal of H.35 is to improve our water quality not only in Lake Champlain but all waterways in Vermont... The goal is to help reverse the current trend and lead Vermont down the path to healthier waters... A clean water State should be the goal of all Vermonters to improving their quality of life.”

Pete also was one of the founding members of the Bristol Conservation Commission in 2003, and served until 2019, often as Chair and Vice-Chair. Pete led several projects for the Commission, perhaps his crowning accomplishment being his leadership of the siting, design, permitting and fundraising for a Universal (disabled persons-accessible) Fishing Platform along the New Haven River at Eagle Park. Pete passionately believed that the protection of natural habitats was a communal responsibility. Pete wrote, “Although ultimately the water quality of the New Haven River is the State’s responsibility, local communities are in a much better position to manage and protect this pristine river. In the future, it is my hope the local communities and municipalities will not only offer annual financial support to NHRW/ACRWC but also help to create strong town plans regarding water quality.”

In a 2009 video ([youtube.com/watch?v=iBnwvM9mnAk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBnwvM9mnAk)), Pete expressed his love for rivers and streams and his hope to have a lasting, positive impact on the health of Vermont’s waters.

We can all agree that he did in fact, accomplish that goal.

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A memorial and mass will be held in Manchester, CT– in lieu of flowers, contributions in memory of Pete Diminico can be made to Addison County River Watch Collaborative, P.O. Box 27, New Haven, VT 05472.