

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ROLE AND DUTIES OF A REPRESENTATIVE/COMMISSIONER TO THE ROCKING PLANNING COMMISSION (RPC)

The general information provided here was compiled/copied from the Rockingham Planning Commission website: <http://www.rpc-nh.org/commission/commissioners-2> (*Appointment Procedures and Commissioner Handbook*). In addition, Tim Roache, RPC Executive Director's answers to our questions have been incorporated into this presentation. Also, former RPC representative, Victor Azzi, provided some information based on his experience. (In April 2012, Planning Board members denied his re-appointment on the basis that they wanted to appoint somebody else -- his replacement Kerriann Roman apparently attended very few meetings during her four-year appointment.)

THE ROCKINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION:

It is one of nine regional planning commissions in NH, as established by RSA 36:46. There are 27 communities within the Rockingham County.

ROCKINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION MISSION STATEMENT:

The Rockingham Planning Commission is a voluntary local public organization created and sustained by its member communities and their appointed representatives. Its purpose is to foster sound planning, wise use and careful stewardship of the region's natural and man-made resources. This is accomplished, first, by providing professional planning assistance and advice to member communities concerning local and regional planning and second, by actively promoting and facilitating cooperation and coordination among the communities. To fulfill the first aspect of this mission, the Commission will endeavor to maintain professional expertise and support in the following areas: municipal and regional land use planning, natural resources and conservation, regional transportation planning, coastal resources management, economic development and geographic information systems development. To fulfill the second aspect of the mission the Commission will rely upon the efforts of the appointment commissioners to facilitate intercommunity cooperation and communication (*Commissioner Handbook*, RPC website).

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONER/REPRESENTATIVE:

As governed by RSA 36:46-III, Commissioners are appointed by Selectmen for four year terms (except when more than one position is filled at once in which case the terms are staggered).

Planning Board members nominates a representative commissioner for consideration by the Selectmen and the Selectmen make the appointment.

Tim Roache, RPC Executive Director, provided the following information:

Rye and all members communities in the RPC are best served when commissioners actively participate.

The role of the regional planning commissioner/representative is two-fold: 1) to govern the Commission through decision-making and policy setting, with the staff carrying out your decisions; and 2) to communicate regularly between the Commission and the town or city you represent so that the town is aware of Commission activities and the Commission is aware of local issues and concerns.

The full Commission, which is made of representatives and staff members, meets ten times per year (2nd Wednesday of the month @ 7:00 PM).

In addition to the monthly meetings of the Full Commission, there are additional meetings depending on how many committees one serves on.

The Executive Committee, which is made up of 13 members, meets on average ten times per year. The Committee oversees the policy actions of the commission and is responsible for acting for the Commission between regular meetings. Its authority is established by the Commission to include carrying out the policies of the Commission, acting on personnel changes, taking action on routine monthly financial statements and executing contracts.

Other committees, such as the Legislative committee meets during the legislative session and monitors proposed bills that might be of interest to

member communities. Commissioners serving on any of these committees advise the staff and help ensure that local interests are reflected in the regional planning effort.

Other standing and ad hoc committees - Regional Impact Committee and Master Plan Committee - meet much less frequently on the order of two to five times per year.

In the words of Victor Azzi, former representative to the RPC:

The role of the PCs has evolved over the last twenty-five +/- years; in part, the regional PCs are supposed to represent the interests of each of the regions, including all of the various towns, cities, and municipalities of the state. This includes dealing with the NHDOT, the Legislature and Senate and their committees, sometimes with the Governor and the Executive Council, in developing the budgets for the fiscal years, and the distribution and allocations of the state budget across the state through the various state “Regions” and, in turn, through their towns, cities, etc., We would do this through the 20-year plan, 10-year plan, two-year plan, etc... Any municipality that wasn’t active and vocal if/while seated at the table, was not likely to get any/much of a usually-small pie. We were, together, prioritizing in the State Budget, the projects being proposed by each of the member communities.