

Approved Minutes
Vermont Community Investment Board
09/22/2025
Calvin Coolidge Conference Room and MS Teams Virtual Meeting

Members Present (15/16)

- ☒ Alex Farrell (*Chair*), designated by the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development
- ☒ Jonathan Cooper, designated the Regional Development Corporations (arrived 10:34 am)
- ☒ Jen Mojo, designated by the Secretary of Natural Resources
- ☒ Bruce Cheeseman, appointed by the Governor, representing local government
- ☒ Cathy Davis, appointed by the Governor, representing the Vermont Association of Chamber Executives
- ☒ Christian Meyer, designated by the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
- ☒ Chip Sawyer, designated by the Vermont Planners Association
- ☒ Jaime Lee, appointed by the Governor, representing the Vermont Natural Resources Council and the Preservation Trust of Vermont
- ☒ Kevin Chu, representing the Office of Racial Equity
- ☐ Laura Trieschmann, State Historic Preservation Officer
- ☒ Geral (GJ) Garrow, (alternate), designated by the Commissioner of Public Safety
- ☒ Michael Gaughan, designated by the Vermont Bond Bank (attended virtually)
- ☒ Michael McDonough, appointed by the Governor, representing local government
- ☒ Peter Trombley, (alternate) State Treasurer's Office
- ☒ Michele Boomhower (vice-chair) designated by the Secretary of Transportation
- ☒ Josh Hanford, designated by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns

Attending Community Planning and Revitalization (CP+R) Team Members (6):

Chris Cochran, Jeff Dube, Jacob Hemmerick, Natalie Elvidge, Jenni Lavoie, and Susie Powers.

Guests (4): Lissa Stark, Winhall Town Administrator; Jackson Evans, Snowsville Village Trust; Lou Helmuth, Town of Braintree; Rebecca Ramos, Snowsville Village Trust.

1. Start of Meeting:

Alex Farrell brought the meeting to order at 10:34 am. Alex welcomed everyone to the meeting and facilitated introductions. Welcomed new board member, Jonathan Cooper.

2. Additions or Deletions to the Board Agenda

There were no further additions or deletions to the board agenda.

3. Public Comment Period

Alex Farrell opened the meeting to public comment; there were no public comments.

4. July 21, 2025, Draft Meeting Minutes

Kevin Chu made a motion to approve the July 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes, and Bruce Cheeseman seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

5. Village Center Designation – New Applications (2)

Town of Winhall, Bondville Village Center

The proposed boundary runs along Rt 30 and River Rd. It includes the Post Office, restaurants, a hardware store, bank, community arts center, Winhall Market and private residences.

Lissa Stark, Town of Bondville, shared that Bondville has one of the longest running fairs in the state. The town is looking into wastewater management to expand housing and businesses in the village.

Michael Gaughn made a motion to approve Bondville Village Center application and award designation, and Jonathan Cooper seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

Town of Braintree, Snowsville Village Center

The proposed boundary runs along Rt 12 and Farnsworth Brook Rd. It includes the church, former general store, an old hotel and fan house, Vermont Micro Weld and Vermont Wooden Box, along with residences.

Lou Helmuth, Selectboard member, shared that Snowsville formed a Community Trust and \$50K was appropriated to support revitalization. Jackson Evans, Village of Snowsville Village Trust, shared that by there are plans to invest in building multi-unit housing.

Josh Hanford made a motion to approve Snowsville Village Center application and award designation, and Christian Meyer seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

6. Training and Presentation on Future Land Use Area (FLUA) Process

A review and training by DHCD staff walked through Vermont's new community investment designation programs with board members. The new designation process shifts to a regional plan approval process. Instead of 5 designations, there are now 2. The two designation categories are Centers and Neighborhoods and a goal is to expand access to the state subsidies that support better planning and revitalization. Staff outlined the new designation framework. The LURB (Land

Use Review Board) has a duty to issue formal reviews. DHCD will complete staff reviews and provide a Memo for the Community Investment Board. Long term, the role of the Community Investment Board members will be to administer benefits and continue to provide input to the 11 Regional Planning Commissions as map changes are proposed.

7. Downtown Transportation Fund Grant - Amendment Request (1) Town of Warren

The Town of Warren requested an extension to their existing grant term. This request is due to town staffing turnover, and challenges securing contractors to provide quotes for the project as outlined in the grant scope of work.

Michele Boomhower made a motion to approve Warren's amendment request. Chip Sawyer seconded. All in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

8. Neighborhood Development Area Designation (NDA) – Amendment Request (1) City of Winooski, Boundary Amendment to Neighborhood Development Area.

The proposed boundary amendment captures a planned housing project site, 50 Park Street, better known as "the Armory". The proposed NDA amendment is entirely within the planning area and therefore does not require special findings or approval by a supermajority of the board.

Board members ask about the history of single site NDA areas. Staff advised while not common, the board has approved three prior single site NDA locations. Additional board questions pertained to why the city did not just make the NDA continuous to this area. Staff advised it may have been due to the lack of complete streets or bylaws supporting NDA program goals in the additional areas that would have been included.

Bruce Cheeseman made a motion to award the Neighborhood Development Area boundary amendment. Kevin Chu seconded. All in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

9. Tax Credit Review

Caitlin Corkins presented a summary of the FY26 round of Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit applications. There were 41 tax credit applications, and 2 sales tax reallocation applications, with requests totaling over \$4.6 million for \$3.3 million in available funding. This was enough to fund the 34 top-scoring applications. The 3 next-ranked applications will be alternates for funding, in ranked order.

Jaime Lee made a motion to accept the funding recommendation and award the tax credits and designate alternates. Chip Sawyer seconded. All in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

10. Old Business / New Business

October Meeting Reschedule

Alex Farrell noted that the October meeting will be rescheduled from **Monday, October 27, 2025** to **Friday, October 24, 2025**.

Potential December Meeting

Chris Cochran said that due to the uncertain timing of Regional Planning Commission submittals of the Future Land Use Area maps, a December meeting may be needed. A tentative date has been set for **Thursday, December 18, 2025**.

August 2025 Bus Tour Recap

Chris Cochran provided a recap of the August bus tour, which brought DHCD staff and Community Investment Board members to Orange and Windsor Counties. The tour highlighted recent community investments across the region. Planning is underway for a **2026 Bus Tour** next August.

VERTA Summit – November 13, 2025

Chris Cochran shared that the **Reimagining Rural Capacity Summit** will be held at Vermont State University's Randolph Campus. It will present findings from national research, along with input from hundreds of municipal officials, volunteers, state agency leaders, and TA providers on the challenges faced by lower-capacity communities. The event will be highly interactive, focused on solutions to build capacity and strengthening technical assistance for rural Vermont. Chris strongly encouraged Board members to attend.

2026 Downtown & Historic Preservation Conference

Chip Sawyer announced that the 2026 Conference will be hosted **in St. Albans on Thursday, June 4, 2026**.

11. Adjourn

Christian Meyer made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Jaime Lee seconded. All were in favor. Alex Farrell adjourned the meeting at 1:36 p.m.

The next Community Investment Board meeting will be on Friday, October 24, 2025.

Respectfully submitted, Susie Powers