

NNECAPA Executive Committee

2026 - 2027

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President's Corner from Jeff Levine, AICP



OK, now winter is really here in the North Country! I hope everyone is staying warm. I am recovering from a busy fall attending both the Chapter Presidents' Council Meeting as well as the State Legislative Summit (where Eric Cousens from Auburn, ME also joined us.) Lots going on at the national level, of course, but also at the state level. I came back with good information, and am grateful that our three states have relatively well-functioning governments that care about planning.

I'm pleased to announce that we were told at the Chapter Presidents' Council meeting that NNECAPA has been awarded a CPC Administrative Grant to fund improvements in our operations, including better technology at our Northern New England Planning Conference and a transition to a better chapter listserv (more on that below.)

In other APA news, for those of you thinking of getting AICP certification, there is a new cycle starting this year for taking the exam. Rather than just a spring and fall window, starting this year there will be a six-month window when the test stays open, as well as an optional chance to take a pilot exam in the fall at a reduced price. More information on all things AICP at [their web page here](#).

Finally, with a new dues structure taking effect this year, we will be able to provide additional services to members as well as state sections. We're planning to pilot some new offerings this year while we work with sections to determine what might be most beneficial and cost effective in the long term. If you have any ideas, feel free to email me!

Thanks to our 2025 Northern New England Conference Sponsors!



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2025 Northern New England Planning Conference Recap

The NNE Planning Conference was held at the Holiday Inn by the Bay in early November. We had a record-breaking attendance at **450** which created a very cozy atmosphere throughout the three days.

Monday afternoon began with a series of mobile workshops scattered around several communities in the Portland area and a few meet ups at the conference venue. That evening featured our opening reception with our exhibitors and sponsors. The Conference formally kicked off on Tuesday morning with a panel



discussion on today's historic preservation. There were over 25 workshops with topics to include housing, transportation, equity, sustainability, resilience and many others.

Attendees also had the opportunity to visit downtown Portland with its great restaurants, night life and cultural venues. We held our annual awards program, and our congratulations go out to all nominees and recipients. Closing out the conference, on Wednesday afternoon there was a presentation by Galen Koch, an audio producer, educator and sound artist, on her immersive collection on coastal oral histories.

The NNECAPA Executive Committee wants to thank all the conference sponsors and sustaining sponsors who enable us to provide a cost-effective registration fee. The hall was full of vendors, with another record-breaking year with sponsor participation. Thank you too all!

We received many comments from attendees on how to improve for next year and pages and pages of suggested session topics. Survey results include an interesting stat that 98.5% stated they attended due to the sessions being relevant to their work and 95.9% stated networking with sponsors and other attendees was the influence. We will continue to strive to make both of those reasons for you all to return.

The conference committee has already begun the process for the 2026 conference. There are many new faces on the committee and fresh ideas to make next year's conference another success. If you have any thoughts or suggestions for upcoming conferences, membership or general issues, feel free to reach out to [Nancy Kilbride](#), NNECAPA Administrator.

2025 NNECAPA Award Winners!

The NNECAPA Executive Committee is pleased to share the 2025 Award winners with the NNECAPA membership. The awards were presented during the recent NNECAPA Conference held in Portland, Maine, in early November. NNECAPA congratulates the following awardees:

Citizen Planner of the Year: Linda Martin, Wolcott, Vermont

Professional Planner of the Year: Jennie Franceschi, City of Westbrook, Maine

Project of the Year: EnvisionTown: Student Challenge for Affordable Housing, Town of Peterborough, New Hampshire

Plan of the Year: Montpelier City Plan 2025, Montpelier, Vermont

Planner Emeritus: Jo Anne Carr and Mark Lapping

Congratulations to all of the NNECAPA awardees!

The nomination process for 2026 will be announced in the early summer so start thinking about the great people and work that deserve recognition.

Membership Dues

In fall of 2025, NNECAPA held a membership vote on the existing dues structure for the chapter. The membership passed the following NNECAPA dues structure:

- NNECAPA Chapter membership dues for Chapter-only members be increased to \$90 per year;
- NNECAPA Chapter membership dues for members who are also APA members be adjusted to 30% of their APA membership dues per year; and
- NNECAPA Chapter membership dues for members who are students, lifetime members, or retired members remain at \$25 per year.

The new dues structure will be effective for members who renew their membership and new members who join NNECAPA on or after April 1, 2026.

[Click here to renew your membership or join NNECAPA.](#)

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact Erin Zwirko, Vice President of NNECAPA, at vp@nneccapa.org. We appreciate any and all feedback from our members!

NEW NNECAPA Listserv!

One of the things we are able to do under the new dues structure is provide a better list serv for members. Over the next month the USM-NNECAPA list serv will move to a new provider that will offer an easier platform and address issues we've had with messages bouncing back undelivered.

You will be receiving an email soon from **Groups.io** to join the new list serv. Please follow the instructions in the email to set up your new account with Groups.io and stay in touch with NNECAPA communications.

Please keep an eye out for this email and check your spam folders!

Thank you to the Muskie School of Public Service for hosting our listserv! It has been much appreciated.

Questions about the listserv? You can always email Jeff Levine (Chapter President) at jrlevine@mit.edu or Sydnie Lambert-Picard (Chapter PIO) at pio@nneccapa.org.

2026 Northern New England Planning Conference

Wednesday October 21 - Friday October 23, 2026, DoubleTree by Hilton, Manchester New Hampshire

Call for Sessions!

DEADLINE: Monday, March 2nd, 2026

The Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association (NNECAPA) is pleased to host its 2026 Conference from **Wednesday, October 21** through **Friday, October 23** at the **Doubletree, Manchester NH**. We are planning this multi-day conference to provide



opportunities for engagement, collaboration, and (re)establishing partnerships with your colleagues, new and old, throughout New England.

As we begin planning for the 2026 conference, help shape this year's NNECAPA Conference by submitting your session proposal! The Conference Committee seeks your session proposals that will provide our conference attendees with a program that is **interactive, informative, and inspirational!** Submissions can cover any planning issues that are relevant to the range of New England communities.

The following is intended to be a guide for possible sessions based on survey data from past conferences, but we welcome any ideas that you think will be worth sharing.

- Let's celebrate our successes! It doesn't matter the topic but tell us how you got it done: partners, funding streams and tools, ordinance reforms, community engagement, etc.!
- Economic development and planning works hand in hand. How have you leveraged both disciplines to get things done?
- ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini - how is AI transforming your work? What other tech are you using?
- Solar arrays, battery storage, electrification: Tell us all about these new land uses and how you have tackled the unknowns.
- How are you incorporating resiliency and sustainability into your work? Modeling, funding, and ordinance reforms all require rethinking the way we plan for the future.
- Putting science, or art, in planning: do you just love stormwater, nature-based solutions, and green infrastructure and want to tell us about it? How have you used art or storytelling to inspire change?
- Do you work in a planning-adjacent or allied field and have information to share that would improve the planning profession, or are you a planner with a favorite allied field partnership that has had unexpected benefits to share?
- We want to know your hard-won wisdom, preferred approaches, maxims, and rules of thumb to better project management, development review, navigating volunteer committees, and engaging with non-planners to support your work. Tell us your tips and tricks!

Session Formats

We look forward to offering attendees a highly engaging conference experience. We strongly encourage session proposals that: share and prioritize lessons learned; inspire attendees with a new way of thinking about or doing the work of planning; are solutions-based and offer meaningful take-aways; and engage attendees in brainstorming and problem-solving. The Committee is seeking a diverse mix of session proposals that are approximately 45, 60 & 75 minutes in length (except for mobile sessions) for our program. Sessions may be in any of the following formats:

- Presentation or Panel Discussion with Q&A (engage the audience)
- On-site or Mobile Workshop (mini, ½ day, or full day)
- Rapid, multi-part presentation (i.e. pecha kucha, "shorts")
- Audience Participation
- Peer-to-peer Discussion
- Another new or innovative format

Submit your ideas.

Send your proposals to the Conference Committee by Monday, March 2, 2026, using the link below. It is important that you provide enough information so that the Committee can evaluate your proposal. If needed, the Committee will follow up for additional information.

The Conference Committee will review all submitted proposals and develop a program that provides a variety of options for attendees and incorporates feedback from previous conference surveys.

Please submit your proposal via this [this form](#)

Preparing for the Conference

Once a general program has been established, the Conference Committee may reach out to those who have identified themselves as speakers or session organizers for additional information or a preview of the presentation to ensure the content is consistent with the submission and that the session meets the goals of the conference. Final presentation slides and handouts will be due in digital format to the Conference Committee by Friday, October 9th at 5:00pm. This will help ensure that we can troubleshoot any IT needs and manage smooth transitions between sessions. By submitting a session proposal, you are acknowledging this deadline.

Due to the limited budget for the conference, we are unable to offer travel expenses, honorariums, complimentary registrations, or lodging for session speakers. By submitting a session proposal, you are acknowledging this policy and understand that you will be responsible for covering the cost of your attendance if you are selected to present. As session organizer, you are responsible for communicating this policy to your co-presenters.

Please submit questions about this request for submissions or general conference inquiries to [Nancy Kilbride](#), NNECAPA Administrator.

Thank you in advance for sharing your ideas and contributing to the success of the Conference!

Sponsorships

Each year the Northern New England Planning Conference provides businesses and organizations with an opportunity to build on existing relationships with the planning community and establish new ones, reaching out across New England to promote their services. We expect to have over 300 planners and related professionals from Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, as well as from Southern New England. We have three different [sponsor levels](#) which are very affordable and will provide you exposure. [Become a Sponsor Today!](#)

Contact [Nancy Kilbride](#) for more details.

Save the Dates for Future Northern NE Planning Conferences:

- 2027 Conference, October 25 - 27, DoubleTree Burlington, Vermont
- 2028 Conference, November 1 - 3, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, Maine

PDO Corner

The NNECAPA 2026 Mentorship Program is now open!

The NNECAPA Mentorship Program supports planners through bi-monthly meetings guided by curated conversation prompts. Mentors and mentees are now being recruited. [Learn more and apply.](#)



Host a NNECAPA Webinar or APA OH Planning Webcast in 2026

Have a project, idea, or topic you'd love to share? Lead a conversation with planners across the region! NNECAPA webinars take place Thursdays from 12:00 to 1:00 PM, and APA OH Planning Webcasts are Fridays from 1:00 to 2:30 PM. Please contact pdo@nneccapa.org if you're interested.



AICP Exam Prep & Certification Support

More Flexible AICP Certification Process

You can now take the exam between April and September and submit your Experience Assessment anytime from April through November. For more details, please visit the [APA One Path page](#).

2026 AICP Office Hours by APA

Join an upcoming AICP Office Hours session to get your AICP questions answered and connect with others preparing for the AICP exam. Office Hours are open to members and non-members, but you must register

[Thursday, March 5, 2026 | 1 - 2:00 pm ET](#)
[Wednesday, May 6, 2026 | 3 - 4:00 pm ET](#)
[Tuesday, June 9, 2026 | Noon - 1:00 pm ET](#)

[Thursday, August 6, 2026 | 1 - 2:00 pm ET](#)
[Wednesday, September 9, 2026 | 3 - 4:00 pm ET](#)

NNECAPA AICP Exam Prep Resources

We are offering scholarships to help cover the cost of study materials. [Apply here.](#)

Join the [NNECAPA AICP Study Group Slack Channel](#) to stay motivated and share resources!



Please contact **Dayea Shim**, NNECAPA Professional Development Officer at pdo@nneccapa.org for any questions.

Celebrating 30 Years of Visionary Planning: Plan NH Announces Free 2026 Municipal Memberships

For three decades, **Plan New Hampshire (Plan NH)** has had the privilege of sitting at the table with local leaders and residents to help imagine the future of our towns and cities. Since our founding in 1989, our mission has been to foster vibrant, healthy, and resilient communities across the Granite State. This year marks 30 years since Plan NH's first documented Community Design Charrette in Belmont in 1996.

As we reach this 30-year milestone, we want to say thank you to the communities that have welcomed us and recognize these lasting partnerships by **offering free membership to all New Hampshire municipalities throughout 2026.**

Throughout the year, we are planning several special events and charrette-focused content. These include our Spring Workshop and Walking Tour in Contoocook Village in Hopkinton, which was the focus of a Plan NH Charrette in 2000. In the summer we will host a walking tour in Belmont at the site of the first documented Charrette in 1996. The year will culminate with a special event, "Celebrating 30 Years of Charrettes," in the late fall.

A Legacy of Collaborative Design

The heart of our work is the **Community Design Charrette Program**. This unique, hands-on process brings together a volunteer team of professionals — including architects, planners, engineers, economic development experts, and more — to work side-by-side with residents. Together, we listen to local needs and develop a "roadmap of possibilities" for downtowns, neighborhoods, and public spaces.

Over the last 30 years, this program has completed 86 charrettes in 70 communities, helping to preserve historic assets, improve walkability, and support thoughtful growth.

"Charrettes are about more than design—they're about listening, connecting, and creating a shared vision for the future," says **Tiffany Tononi McNamara**, Executive Director of Plan NH. "Offering free memberships for 2026 is our way of thanking local leaders for their partnership and ensuring every town—large or small—feels supported and empowered to plan boldly."

Why Join Plan NH in 2026?

By joining Plan NH, at no cost for municipalities throughout 2026, you gain access to a statewide network of expertise and support, including:

- **Priority consideration** for the Community Design Charrette Program.
- **Discounted rates** for educational gatherings, networking events, and workshops.
- **Direct access** to a diverse network of professional resources and statewide partners.
- **A public listing** of your support for sustainable, community-centered planning.

On the decision to make memberships free for municipalities in 2026, Chair of the Plan NH Membership Committee, **Amanda Savage**, notes, "This is a wonderful opportunity for communities to reengage with us or join for the very first time. We hope every municipality will join us as we celebrate where we've been and where we're going together."

How to Activate Your Membership

Joining is simple. Municipal leaders or any group who wishes to support our work can visit www.plannh.org to set up their 2026 membership or contact the Plan NH office at info@plannh.org or 603-253-2462. We look forward to dreaming, planning, and building a better New Hampshire with you in the year ahead.

From Quaint to Curated: The Evolution of Lodging in Ski Towns

[Click here](#) to view the presentation provided by the below panelists on how Ski Towns have adopted their lodging throughout the years as the industry grows in Vermont.



Merry Vigneau and her husband, Grady, bought the Round Hearth Ski Dorm in October of 1988. Their focus was on youth group ski trips and summer camps. Due to a number of different factors, culminating with Covid, they were forced to leave the group lodging industry and now run a Cafe, Marketplace and have 13 guest rooms. The original Round Hearth Lodge was built in 1947 and destroyed by fire in 1968. It was one of the original ski lodges built in Stowe and held 140 guests, dormitory style.



Barbara Baraw serves on the Stowe Historic Preservation Commission since 2002, chair of the Stowe Historical Society, and on the board of Stowe Mountain Chapel. The Baraw family was part of the middle of the second wave of accommodations in Stowe as a ski and summer fall destination. The Inn opened 1963 and added a motel building in 1964. The original name was the Stoweflake Inn and Motel, expanding to Stoweflake Resort, and is currently Stoweflake Mountain Resort & Spa, under new ownership since 2021. Barbara studied Preservation at the University of Vermont, 1976-1977. Her Land Record work and title searches began in 2000. She assisted in updating the “outside the village” survey in 2003-2004, and the establishment of the Moscow District in 2007. In 2017, she began an open-ended project of documenting “Eateries,” Lodges, Bed & Breakfasts (excluding Airbnbs) with a focus on Mid-Century “drive up” motels.



Polly Seddon Allen is an independent consulting Senior Architectural Historian practicing in Craftsbury, Vermont. Her area of focus spans the state's village centers, agricultural landscapes, and industrial sites; providing a wide variety of planning and permitting support for local governments, state agencies, and project proponents. Through her practice, Ms. Allen seeks to situate Vermont's significant and multifaceted historical themes of development into our evolving communities. Ms. Allen holds a B.A. In American History with an emphasis in Environmental History from University of Wisconsin-Madison and an M.S. In Historic Preservation Planning from Columbia University.

Town of Shelburne Adopts New Zoning

SHELBURNE, Vermont – January 28, 2026 –

After a three-year process, the Selectboard of the Town of Shelburne has voted to adopt the new Shelburne Unified Land Use Regulations. The adoption concludes a journey of research, public engagement, and public discussion in many meetings of the Planning Commission, Selectboard, and other Town committees. This achievement marks the first time the town has completely rewritten its zoning since it first adopted land use regulations in the 1960s. The new regulations advance the town's housing, environmental, multi-modal transportation, and economic development objectives. At the Selectboard meeting, Planning Commission chair Steve Kendall observed, "We accomplished a lot of our goals. We've done a really good thing here for the town. Making it consistent with state laws, balance and moderation: economic development, housing, bike-ped., conservation."

HOUSING

Shelburne's new unified land use regulations increase density throughout the areas of town that are serviced by municipal water and wastewater infrastructure, reduce setbacks, increase lot coverage allowances, increase height limits, and allow 3-and-4-unit dwellings by right within the serviced areas. The zoning further embraces current best practices by removing all parking minimums. Lastly, the regulations implement the town's first inclusionary zoning requirements by requiring that developments with more than 20 residential units provide 10% of their units at prices which are affordable to those making 80-150% of Area Median Income.

ENVIRONMENTAL

These regulations create a formal environmental review process meant to protect key natural resources that is led by Shelburne's Natural Resources and Conservation Commission. Additionally, Conservation Subdivision design is required in rural areas of town and permitted in the serviced areas should landowners wish to use it and take advantage of density bonuses from conserving land.

MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

Shelburne's bike and pedestrian infrastructure goals are advanced by the street design standards of the new zoning. These standards require that, "streets in Shelburne must be designed, constructed, improved and maintained as complete streets that meet and balance the needs of all users," by creating explicit design requirements for streets that include: minimum sidewalk widths, required planting strips separating sidewalks from roadways, design standards for shared use paths, requiring raised sidewalks with curbs, and more.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The new unified land use regulations increase lot coverage allowances and height limits in key zoning districts, such as Business and Industry, Village 1 and 2, and Shelburne Road 1 and 2 to enable existing businesses to expand and continue to thrive in Shelburne. Mixed-use development has been substantially incentivized by removing minimum lot size requirements for non-residential uses so that both residential and commercial opportunity on properties can be maximized. Additionally, key employers are empowered to build housing for their workforce in an

effort to alleviate staffing shortages caused by the dearth of nearby housing which their labor force can afford.

Town staff are ready and willing to advise applicants on the new bylaws.

Grapevine

Maine

North Star Planning, based in New Gloucester, is very pleased to share that they welcomed two new planners to the team on December 1, 2025: Natasha Kypfer, Senior Planner and Annarosa Whitman, Associate Planner. They bring their extensive planning experience and enthusiasm to upcoming work, including comprehensive and transportation plans.