



Herbert A. Durfee, III
Town Manager

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Town of Norwich names Roderick Francis as Director of Planning & Zoning

NORWICH, VT – The Town of Norwich is pleased to announce that Roderick Francis is the town's new Director of Planning & Zoning. The town's newest department head brings a host of long-range planning, zoning, and community development experience to town.

Herb Durfee, Town Manager, today announced Francis's appointment. According to Durfee, Francis's responsibilities will involve directing the planning and zoning functions for the town, including working with the Planning Commission, Development Review Board, and Historic Preservation Commission. Francis will also serve as Zoning Administrator, which involves working with landowners and applicants related to land development, zoning permits, and enforcement of those regulations.

Francis brings a combination of hands-on planning experience from both the local and regional level, having most recently served as Brattleboro, VT's Planning Director. Before that, he was a Planner with the Windham Regional Commission. Beyond his practical experience, Francis brings an educational slant to the position, given his Ph.D. in Geography from Australia's Monash University – one of the world's leading universities – where his dissertation focused on the link between employers' labor relations strategies with the fortunes of rural communities dominated by a single, global industry. He also has taught Geography and Regional Planning at various colleges and universities, including Dartmouth College.

Durfee indicated that, "*Rod brings a fresh perspective and unique skill set to the office, especially in anticipation of a new Town Plan that will require significant re-write when it is next amended or updated.*" Durfee further said, "*That new Town Plan, too, will launch needed update to the Zoning Ordinance, renew discussion about affordable housing in town, and give attention to other tasks related to sustainable development, energy, and natural & historic resources.*"

With Brattleboro, Francis helped the community complete the preparation and adoption of a town plan that was recognized as the "Plan of the Year" by the Vermont Planners Association. Francis stated, "*The plan draws a link between Brattleboro's natural and cultural heritage assets and opportunities for future development that protects our landscapes and community life while meeting the challenges of climate change and evolving social and economic trends.*"

Francis begins his new position on July 9th.